

ESOMAR AND WAPOR KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR OPINION POLLS AND PUBLISHED SURVEYS

1. Be open and truthful when asking people to participate in research and ensure that polls and surveys are clearly differentiated from non-research activities like political campaigning (4.1).
2. Ensure interviewers promptly identify themselves, enable respondents to check their bona fides, explain the purpose of the research and allow respondents to exercise their rights to withdraw from the research interview at any time. Interviewers should also explain that respondent's personal data are not made available to others without consent and that they can ask to delete or rectify incorrect personal data which are held on them. (4.3).
3. Take precautions to ensure that respondents are in no way harmed as a result of participating in an opinion poll or research project and that any personal information which could identify a participant is kept secure, to prevent unauthorised access, manipulation or disclosure (4.2 & 4.3).
4. Ensure that any information collected as part of a research project is never used for any other purpose without the participant's consent (4.3).
5. Use appropriate methods and be transparent about methodology including sampling, weighting variables, question wording and timing of the opinion poll or published survey in order to uphold public confidence in their accuracy and reliability (5.1)
6. Decision-makers, journalists and the public need to be able to differentiate between professional and unprofessional polls. Researchers and those publishing survey data must make available sufficient information to enable the public and other stakeholders to evaluate the results (5.2).
7. As a minimum any published report of the results should include the name of the research company and sponsor of the survey, the universe, the sample size, the mode of interview and dates of interviewing. If space is limited the other relevant information listed in the guideline should be made available online. Any publication should also make clear how additional details can be obtained and this information should be available within 24 hours of publication (5.1 & 5.2).
8. Do not make claims that exceed the limits of the scientific principles on which opinion polling is based, and be sure that interpretations and statements are fully consistent with the data (5.1).
9. Inform clients in advance of the study that the research organisation is bound by ICC/ESOMAR Code and that any publication of the findings by the client must be in accordance with this guideline. Inform clients that if they publish the results, they should consult the researcher as to the form and content of the findings, and if their report distorts the findings, the researcher must not allow their name to be associated with the dissemination of the conclusions from the project unless they are adequately supported by the data and should reserve the right to publish the total study.
10. Exit polls: take extra care about respondent confidentiality as polling is conducted in a public place, use transparent, public and well-documented methods, and follow accepted procedural and technical standards. Release results as soon as is practical after the polls close, along with the required information (8.2).
11. Understand and obey the relevant laws of the country where the research is being conducted and comply with relevant industry codes (1).

Numbers in brackets refer to relevant sections of the ESOMAR WAPOR Guideline on Opinion Polls and Published Surveys available at www.esomar.org or www.wapor.org.