

**Guide to writing a service evaluation project**

**quality assurance project**

**clinical audit project**

**STOP!** **This document is intended to assist with the writing of a service evaluation project. Service evaluation encompasses both quality assurance/service evaluation and clinical audit.**

**Quick screener:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Does the proposed project have any of the following ethical issues?** | | | |  |
| The project infringes on patients’ rights |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| There is a risk to patient confidentiality or privacy |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project infringes on the reputation of providers or the organisation |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| Participation in the project places a burden on the patient beyond routine care or collects information or biospecimens beyond routine care. |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| Participation in the project involves clinically significant departure from usual clinical care |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project uses untested clinical interventions or changes to clinical systems |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project compares interventions allocated differently among groups of patients or staff? |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| Data used in the QI project will be used for another purposes |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project is designed to look specifically at vulnerable or minority groups whose data will be separated out or are analysed as a main focus of the project |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project provides a direct benefit to patients or patient care |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project informs the delivery of best care |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project is conducted solely to define or evaluate current care |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project is designed to determine if the service reaches a predetermined standard of care |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project is designed to determine what standard this service achieves |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project will measure the current standard/service against a reference (e.g. evidence based practice) |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| The project will measure interventions that are currently in use |  Yes | |  No |  N/A |
| **Answers in the ‘Green’ are suitable for service evaluation/ quality improvement/ clinical audit**  **Answers in the ‘Orange’ require a Human Research Ethics Application** |  |

**If you have ticked any of the ‘orange’ boxes, then your project has elements of research as per the** [NHMRC Ethical Considerations in quality assurance and evaluation activities](about:blank), and **a research protocol should be completed using the ‘guide to writing a research protocol template’,** available [here](about:blank).

If you are **not** **100 percent certain** your project falls within the service evaluation or quality improvement or clinical audit category, please email [research.ethics@mater.uq.edu.au](about:blank) because it will save you from having to do two applications!

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**Frequently asked questions:**

1. **Can service evaluations be completed at multiple sites?**

A service evaluation should be completed at a single site to stay within the definitions of service evaluation, quality improvement or clinical audit. Other sites could undertake their own service evaluation. However, if you then want to compare the results of the each of the sites, then this becomes research, and a research application is necessary.

1. **What role should I specify for my supervisor if I am a Registrar completing this Project?**

If you are a Registrar, then you should be the Project Leader as you will be conducting the project. Your supervisor should be your Project Advisor. All other people participating will be Project Team Members.

1. **Do service evaluations require review by Mater Misericordiae Ltd Human Research Ethics Committee (MML HREC)?**

No, Service evaluation projects, quality improvement and clinical audit do not require full HREC review. They are reviewed by the HREC Chairperson to ensure that they do not involve elements of research and that patient privacy and confidentiality are ensured where data are presented or published externally. Such projects should be submitted via the Ethical Review Manager (ERM) platform using the Mater Quality Assurance/Exempt Research Form so that they can be reviewed by the HREC chair or delegate and provided with a letter of exemption. This letter is often required by journals should you wish to publish the outcomes of your project.

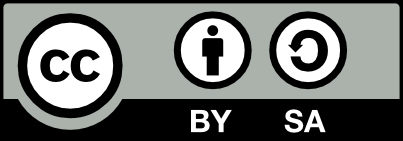
1. **What are the most common reasons to formally submit Service Evaluations, Quality Improvement projects or clinical audits for review?**

The most common reason people submit their project for review is receive an HREC letter stating that the study is ‘not research’, and therefore exempt from full review. This allows presentation outside of Mater

**NOTE:** The Service Evaluation template starts on page 3. Please **delete the first two pages** when your document is complete and ready for submission in your ERM application. Please include CVs in your application.

***All light blue italicized text in the template document is informative information only and should be removed from the template prior to submission.***

* Ensure you update the footer of the document with the **correct document title, version number and date** of your final document.



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Mater Misericordiae Ltd – Mater Research 2021



**Project Title:** XXXX

**Review Reference:** EXMT/MML/XXX *– this is the project number of your ERM application*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Team** | **Institution** | **Project Role** |
| Name  Ph:  Email: | *Mater Adults Hospital, Brisbane* | *Project Leader* |
| Name  Email: | *Mater Adults Hospital, Brisbane* | *Project Team member* |
|  |  | *Add rows as needed* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Head of Department** | Name:  Email: |
| **Upload required:** | **Please attach an email from the Head of Department showing their support for the project** |

1. **Introduction** *(~250 words)*

*The introduction is a very brief overview of the project (~250 words). The introduction should be concise but sufficient to orientate the reader to the main purpose of the project, how it will be conducted and its expected benefits.*

1. **Background** (1/2 x A4 page maximum)

*The background gives the information about why you are conducting the project. If you are looking critically at clinical care you need to identify evidence of good clinical practice standards on which to base your assessment. A literature review can ascertain if there are any recommended standards of practice and provide information on any previous projects which have been conducted on your specific topic. This may help you in designing your service evaluation, especially the method of data collection.*

*Service evaluations relate specifically to reviewing current standards, systems or processes of care with the aim of improving outcomes for patients or improving service delivery. They do not usually involve formally assessing new interventions, new treatments or new methods of service delivery; this is usually considered research (National Statement Chapter 3.3). A service evaluation may, however, be undertaken to provide data for the development of a research project.*

***Note: HREC approval would be required in order to use the data from a service evaluation in a research project.***

1. **Aims/Objectives**

*State here the aims/objectives of your service evaluation.*

*If completing a clinical audit, these may be conducted to provide data to inform the development of clinical standards and guidelines, especially if no higher-level evidence is available, or to guide further review of clinical practice.*

*It is helpful toy define clearly your clinical audit objectives, why you are doing the project and what you are hoping to achieve as a result. Targets should be set at realistic and attainable levels, while not being set too low. When setting targets the following factors should be considered:*

* *Clinical importance*
* *Practicability*

1. **Project Design**

* **Setting/location**

*The location of where the project will be conducted should be documented.   
E.g., Department ‘Y’, Mater Adults Hospital Brisbane.*

* **Duration**

*An estimate of the time in months from commencing data collection to presentation/publication of results.*

* **Outcomes and significance to practice**

*Provide details of the outcomes hoped to be achieved and what significance these may have to clinical practice.*

* **Patient population or service involved**

*Defining in whom or where the project will be carried out provides the setting for which the results have relevance.*

*For clinical audits, this section describes how the results from your sample population can be generalised to the target population of interest. This section should describe the target population, including but not limited to:*

* *Population from which the participants will be drawn*
* *The total number of participants*
* *If relevant to your project you may also wish to include information on age range; gender; or other relevant demographic information.*

*Please include information on how the participants will be identified.*

* **Surveys**

*If the project plans to use a survey to gather information, please include a copy of the proposed survey.*

* **Data analysis**

*It is essential to state what data you will be collecting and how the data will be collected. Please include a copy of the data collection template in the Appendix.*

*When analysing your data, you will generally want to try to reach conclusions about:*

* *The general pattern of actual practice;*
* *The degree to which actual practice (results of audit) is meeting the standards set; and*
* *The limitations of the project.*

*Analysing service evaluations does not usually require complex statistical tests, although these may be necessary in certain situations. The type of data you have collected will determine the type of analysis employed. If you need statistical support, please contact* [*research.engagement@mater.uq.edu.au*](about:blank) *and they will connect you with a statistician.*

1. **Data management**

*As patient consent will usually not be obtained for the projects it is particularly important that attention is paid to ensuring patient privacy and confidentiality. Details s should be provided regarding identifiability of data and how data are stored.*

*In order to be compliant with Mater Policies and Procedures, please refer to the Mater Policy and Procedure Library to ensure that data is being stored safely.*

*Please complete the following table and include it in your project plan:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Data Management questions** | **Responses** |
| Who will collect the data? | *Dr Jones* |
| From where will the data be collected? | *(E.g., Verdi; Department records)* |
| In what format will the data be **collected** ? | *Identifiable| re-identifiable| non-identifiable* |
| In what format will the data be **stored** ? | *Identifiable| re-identifiable| non-identifiable* |
| How long will the data be stored? | *XX months | X years* |
| **Declaration**: The Project Team agrees they are responsible for the data and its secure storage in accordance with Mater Policies and Procedures |  Yes |

1. **Dissemination of results and publications**

Please select all that apply. It is anticipated that the results will be:

* Yes/No: Shared with the Department
* Yes/No: Shared more broadly within the Mater
* Yes/No: Shared at a Conference (if the Conference is known, please include the name of the conference)
* Yes/No: Shared via a journal publication

1. **Glossary of abbreviations**

*All abbreviations used in the project plan, including appendices, should be listed with an explanation of each abbreviation. Accepted international medical abbreviations should be used. Project specific abbreviations should be standardised within the project plan. All abbreviations should be spelled out when first used in the text, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses.*

1. **References**

*Include all references used throughout the application.*