

The Melbourne Children's Campus Qualitative Research Community of Practice | Terms of Reference

Background

The Melbourne Children's Campus Qualitative Research Interest Group was piloted in 2017 after increasing interest across campus to formally support researchers in undertaking qualitative and mixed methods methodologies and methods. Following the success of the pilot, the Qualitative Research Interest Group was formally established in January 2018. In June 2023, this group was renamed the MCC Qualitative Research Community of Practice. This was to reflect the broadening of the scope of the activities of the group.

Terms of reference

1. Purpose:

- Support researchers designing and implementing rigorous, methodologically, and ethically sound qualitative and mixed methods projects at Melbourne Children's Campus. This will be achieved by:
 - Fostering relationships within and between research groups,
 - Establishing peer to peer support networks and mentoring,
 - Developing resources and educational offerings to support researchers
 - Raising awareness of qualitative and mixed methods research across campus,
 - Developing a programme for cross campus capacity building in qualitative and mixed methods methodologies and methods,
 - Building expertise in qualitative and mixed methods research skills within clinical departments and research groups,
 - Promoting consultation and collaboration across the Melbourne Children's Campus on qualitative and mixed methods research.
 - Advocating for qualitative and mixed methods research to be considered in organisational procedures

2. Term

These Terms of Reference are effective from 1 July 2018 and will be ongoing until terminated by agreement between the committee members.

3. Membership

This MCC Qualitative Research Community of Practice (QR CoP) has broad representation from professional, clinical, and academic staff and students within MCRI, RCH and the University of Melbourne but is open to qualitative researchers from external organisations who wish to join. The MCC Qualitative Research CoP consists of (1) a Steering Committee (2) Qualitative Research Champions, and (3) a membership base who attend the events and programs run by the community of practice. Membership to all three elements of QR CoP is inclusive; any interested person may join by emailing the Steering Committee at qual.research@mcri.edu.au. There is no cost to become a member of the QR CoP. Steering Committee members can serve as many terms as they wish. The Steering Committee has a Convenor and a minimum of three members but may increase depending on needs and function of the Qualitative Research Community of Practice.

The Qualitative Research Champions are MCRI, RCH and University of Melbourne staff who act as local champions within their research groups to disseminate the Qualitative Research Community of Practice information and provide support when needed and if appropriate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. Members of the QR Community of Practice Steering Committee are responsible for:

- Identifying and approaching potential speakers to present at the meetings,
- Contributing to education, mentorship, resource development, and support across campus.
- Preparing for and organising meetings,
- Advocating for support for qualitative and mixed methods research,
- Seeking funding,
- Strategic planning,
- Providing regular updated internal communications,
- Seeking and considering relevant ideas from staff and students.
- Developing and reviewing Annual plan to prioritise Qualitative Research Community of Practice's efforts.
- Developing and directing activities in the Strategic plan developed by members of the Community of Practice.
- Disseminating relevant employment opportunities to its membership base.

4.2. The QR COP Qualitative Research Champions are responsible for:

- Acting as local champions within their network of colleagues,
- Supporting researchers in designing and implementing their qualitative and mixed methods research by providing advice and direction including peer review for ethics applications,
- Disseminating updates and relevant information,
- Reporting back ideas and suggestions from staff and students to the Steering Committee.

In addition, specific operational support for the QR Community of Practice will be provided by the CRDO Project Officer.

5. Meeting times

- The QR CoP Steering Committee meets once a month.
- At minimum one annual open meeting will be held to provide an update on the work of the group.

6. Process

- The Steering Committee will review an annual plan to prioritise QR CoP's meeting priorities. During 2024 a group of members developed the QR Strategic plan for 2025-2027. Discussion of the priorities set out in that plan will also occur at that meeting.

7. Sharing of information

Updates from QR CoP will be made available on the Group's website along with the recording from each Group meeting. All Group meetings have an open-door policy, and any interested person may attend.

8. Groups/Programs of Interest

QR CoP will foster relationships with the following groups/programs:

- the Child and Community Wellbeing Unit, Centre for Health Equity, The University of Melbourne
- Other Qualitative Interest Groups in Universities' and Research Institutes as appropriate

9. Review

To ensure that QR CoP is effectively meeting the needs of its members in accordance with these "Terms of Reference", the Steering Committee will annually:

- Formally discuss QR CoP's performance against the requirements of the Terms of Reference and discuss on the outcomes of this assessment.
- Formally review and assess the adequacy of the Terms of Reference.

The Melbourne Children's Qualitative Research Interest Group's current membership: approximately 325

The Qualitative Research Community of Practice Steering Committee for 2026/27 is comprised of:

- Kate Paton, Clinical Research Development Office (CRDO), MCRI
- Free Coulston, The University of Melbourne
- Jess Wilson, University of Melbourne
- Kate Masterson, Clinical Sciences, MCRI
- Rigan Tytherleigh, University of Melbourne
- Kelly Weir, Allied health, RCH
- Kayla Elliot, Prevention Innovation, MCRI
- Clara Tjiandra, Speech and Language group, MCRI
- Bianca Devsam, Vaccine Uptake group, MCRI
- Rowena Coe, Global Adolescent health group, MCRI
- Shadow Toke, Policy & Equity group, MCRI
- Misel Trajanovska, Clinical Sciences group, MCRI.

The QR CoP Qualitative Research Champions for 2026/7 are:

- Kate Paton, Clinical Research Development Office (CRDO), MCRI
- Rigan Tytherleigh, University of Melbourne
- Kelly Weir, Allied health, RCH
- Kayla Elliot, Prevention Innovation, MCRI
- Clara Tjiandra, Speech and Language group, MCRI
- Bianca Devsam, Vaccine Uptake group, MCRI
- Rowena Coe, Global Adolescent Health, MCRI
- Misel Trajanovska, Clinical Sciences group, MCRI.