



SURVEY FUTURES

SURVEY DATA COLLECTION
METHODS COLLABORATION

Training and Capacity Building needs for social researchers and commissioners

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University of Essex



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Southampton



Economic
and Social
Research Council



TCB goals

- The goals of the training and capacity building (TCB) Survey Futures work package were to develop:
 - A better understanding of the methodological skills that are needed by survey research staff across sectors and of the barriers and challenges in building survey methodology capacity in the UK
 - Provide opportunities for survey research staff to enhance their methodological expertise and skills, and to facilitate knowledge exchange and training opportunities for researchers at different career stages, working in different contexts
- Target audience
 - Early career researchers working on Survey Futures projects or on surveys
 - Wider survey community, including practitioners, teachers/trainers, commissioners

Activities

ECRs	Wider community
ECR network	Research training needs workshop
ECR conferences (x2)	TCB practice forum/network
ECR visits to survey organisations (ONS, NatCen)	Methodological Special Interest Groups (MSIGs)
ECR Impact awards	

Published report on training and capacity building needs

Report 2: Training and Capacity Building

Report on Workshop with Stakeholders,
November 2023

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August, 2024

Available on <https://surveyfutures.net/reports/>

Training needs – Summary Example

Topic	Foundational knowledge needs	Additional knowledge needs	Skills training needs
Survey data quality (Priority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey data quality • Measures of survey quality e.g. non-response bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors that affect survey data quality • Relationship between survey data quality and survey design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing survey data quality during and after data collection • Evaluating the quality of different survey designs
Survey design, including mixed mode survey design (Priority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key survey concepts: measurement, representativeness, error and bias • Theories and frameworks underpinning survey research, e.g. Total Survey Error (TSE) framework • Advantages and disadvantages of different modes of data collection • Understanding of mode effects – measurement and representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of behavioural insights to survey design • Survey design good practices • Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of changes in survey designs on survey estimates, e.g. non-response bias, measurement error • survey design and post data collection strategies found to mitigate non-response bias and/or measurement error • Designing experiments to assess the impact of different survey designs • Understanding of inclusive survey research design principles and practices • New survey research methods and design approaches e.g. working with non-survey data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of behavioural insights to survey design (e.g. respondent communications) • Evaluating different survey design options (e.g. using the TSE), identifying pros and cons and design trade-offs • Application of inclusive survey design principles • How survey designs impact survey estimates, using real-life examples (e.g. from the COVID-19 pandemic) • Designing, analysing, and interpreting survey design experiments • Data linkage, including gaining access to data sources that researchers wish to link to and good practices

Themes

- Providing opportunities for ECRs to come together
- ECR awards – celebrating and nurturing talent
- Understanding training needs – a diverse ecosystem
- Connecting stakeholders – pooling knowledge and resources

Issues highlighted by the TCB network and suggested ways forward

- Limited pool of methods trainers constrains capacity; exploring Doctoral Training Partnerships and networks of methods trainers to build capability
- Key training gaps in data quality and AI
- Suggestion that grant funders should require applicants to include statements on data quality as part of data management plans
- Exploring revival of the Survey Link Scheme (or similar) to strengthen collaboration and capacity
- These ideas have been shared with the Research Capability Hub

Some thoughts on areas of future focus

- Ways to engage stakeholders across the survey research ecosystem on TCB – as both users and content creators
- Developing the research methods teachers/trainers of tomorrow
- Rapid pace of AI development risks making learning pathways quickly outdated; further work is needed to keep them relevant

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Thank you

Questions

