

Template for a Case Study Protocol

1. Change Record

This should be a list or table summarizing the main updates and changes embodied in each version of the protocol and (where appropriate), the reasons for these.

2. Background

- a) identify previous research on the topic
- b) define the main research question being addressed by this study
- c) identify any additional research questions that will be addressed

3. Design

- a) identify whether single-case or multiple-case and embedded or holistic designs will be used, and show the logical links between these and the research questions
- b) describe the object of study (e.g. a new testing procedure; a new feature in a browser)
- c) identify any propositions derived from each research question and the measures to be used to investigate the propositions

4. Data Collection

- a) identify the data to be collected
- b) define a data collection plan
- c) define how the data will be stored

5. Analysis

- a) identify the criteria for interpreting case study findings
- b) the analysis should take place as the case study task progresses
- c) the plan should identify which data elements are used to address which research question and how the data elements will be combined to answer the question
- d) ensure that you identify alternative explanations of the results and identify any information that is needed to distinguish between these

6. Plan Validity (see Figure 2.3 and Chapter 5 in Yin (2003))

- a) construct validity - show that the correct operational measures are planned for the concepts being studied. Tactics for ensuring this include using multiple sources of evidence, establishing chains of evidence expert reviews of draft protocols and reports
- b) internal validity - show a causal relationship between outcomes and intervention/treatment (for explanatory or causal studies only).
- c) external validity – identify the domain to which study finding can be generalized. Tactics include using theory for single-case studies and using multiple-case studies.

7. Study Limitations

Specify residual validity issues including potential conflicts of interest (i.e. that are inherent in the problem, rather than arising from the plan).

8. Reporting

Identify target audience, relationship to larger studies (Yin, 2003)

9. Schedule

Give time estimates for all of the major steps