

**Quality Improvement (Research) Hours – Information for Researchers**

**What are QI (Research) hours?**

Dentists on an NHS Health Board ‘dental list’ are required to undertake at least 15 hours of quality improvement (QI) activities during each ‘relevant’ three-year QI period[[1]](#footnote-1)[[2]](#footnote-2). Participation in eligible practice-based research that explores the quality of dental care can count towards dentists’ QI activity requirements. Within each three-year QI period, participation in approved QI (Research) activities will be eligible for up to **seven** hours QI credit[[3]](#footnote-3). General Dental Practitioners can claim QI Allowance in respect of their QI (Research) hours.

**What types of research are eligible for QI (Research) hours?**

Four main categories of research studies are potentially eligible for QI (Research) hours. These are:

**Category A** Rapid Evaluation Practitioner practice-based dental research studies conducted by the Scottish Dental Practice Based Research Network (SDPBRN).

**Category B** Practice-based dental research studies conducted by Higher Education Institutions or NHS Health Boards.

**Category C** Practice-based dental research studies that were awarded research funding through a process of open competition including high quality peer review.

**Category D** National, practice-based, dental quality improvement initiatives that include a reflective research component.

Within these categories eligible studies must investigate the quality of dental care and include a QI component designed to enable dentists to: 1) reflect on the quality of the care they provide; and 2) develop and take forward action plans as required. At a minimum, this QI component will comprise a reflective report. More information about the types of research studies that are eligible for QI (Research) hours can be accessed here.

**How do I apply for QI (Research) hours to be credited to my study?**

In order for QI (Research) hours to be credited to your study you must apply for the study’s adoption to the SDPBRN QI (Research) Portfolio. The application form can be accessed [here](http://www.sdpbrn.org.uk/how-we-work/). Guidance for completing the application form is also available. The application should be made at least six weeks in advance of the study’s anticipated start date.

Your study will be assessed against the eligibility criteria for QI (Research) hours by NHS Education for Scotland’s Dental QI (Research) Group.

If your study meets the eligibility criteria, it will be adopted onto the SDPBRN [QI (Research) Portfolio](http://www.sdpbrn.org.uk/how-we-work/) and will be credited with QI (Research) hours.

If your study does not meet the eligibility criteria, it cannot be adopted onto the SDPBRN QI (Research) Portfolio and will not be credited with QI (Research) hours. If your study is assessed as not meeting the eligibility criteria, you will be given the opportunity to amend and re-submit your application.

**How many hours will be credited to my study?**

The number of hours credited will differ across research studies and will be agreed with SDPBRN before adoption to the QI (Research) Portfolio. Hours are credited for research activities that potentially may influence the quality of care delivered once a dentist’s participation in the project is complete. Examples include, but are not limited to, activities requiring:

* measurement and self-report of clinical or non-clinical practice;
* self-report of beliefs regarding clinical or non-clinical practice;
* identification of the barriers and facilitators to changing practice;
* delivery of clinical interventions following a research protocol;
* piloting of new processes following a research protocol.

QI (Research) hours cannot be credited for activities that attract NHS Research and Development support or financial support from Research Funders.

**Is the SDPBRN QI (Research) Portfolio publicly available?**

Information about all studies on the SDPBRN QI (Research) Portfolio will be publicly available on the [SDPBRN](http://www.sdpbrn.org.uk/) website.

**My study has been credited with QI (Research) hours, what do I do next?**

When inviting dentists to take part in your study, you should include information to let them know that participation in the study can count towards their QI activity requirements and the number of hours available. You should also provide the QI (Research) reflective report template and any other templates (e.g. action plans) that you have developed for the reflective QI component of your study. SDPBRN will advise on the development of these templates if requested.

Once a dentist has completed their participation in your study their name and GDC number (if available) must be emailed to SDPBRN for the administration of QI (Research) hours to individual dentists via the [NES Portal](https://www.portal.scot.nhs.uk/).

All administration of QI (Research) hours will then be taken forward by SDPBRN. You do not have to do anything else.

**Can dentists take part in my research study without claiming QI (Research) hours?**

It is entirely up to each individual dentist taking part in your study to decide whether or not to claim QI (Research) hours. If they do not want to claim QI (Research) hours they can still take part in the study. It is advised that you let dentists know this during recruitment.

If a dentist decides to claim QI (Research) hours, they must complete and submit the reflective QI component associated with your study using the templates provided. Instructions for doing this will be provided by SDPBRN to all dentists who have completed their participation in your study via the NES Portal.

If a dentist decides not to claim QI (Research) hours, they do not need to complete and upload the reflective QI component.

**How will SDPBRN administer QI (Research) hours for my project to individual dentists?**

SDPBRN will set up a QI (Research) project in the QI section of the NES Portal using the study information provided on the SDPBRN QI (Research) Portfolio application form.

Once you have notified SDPBRN that a dentist has completed their participation in your study, the dentist’s name will be added to the QI (Research) project in Portal. The dentist will then be able to access all guidance, documentation and templates required to complete the QI (Research) component associated with your study. For information only, the QI (Research) project’s documentation and templates will also be publicly available via the SDPBRN website.

When a dentist submits a satisfactory reflective report and any other required reflective activities (e.g. action plans), SDPBRN will certify that this has been done and the dentist will be awarded the number of QI (Research) hours credited to your study.

**Who can I contact for more information?**

If you would like more information please contact:

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1. See the NHS (General Dental Services) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2017 available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/289/made> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See NHS (General Dental Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2010 Part IV 40 (5) for proportionate arrangements when a dentist joins a Health Board list after the first day of a ‘relevant’ period. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Vocational Dental Practitioners (VDPs) are required to participate in a QI project which their VT Adviser will review, approve, sign off and certify. This is the only QI activity VDPs can be credited with during their VT year, and it is not possible to award VDPs QI (Research) hours. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)