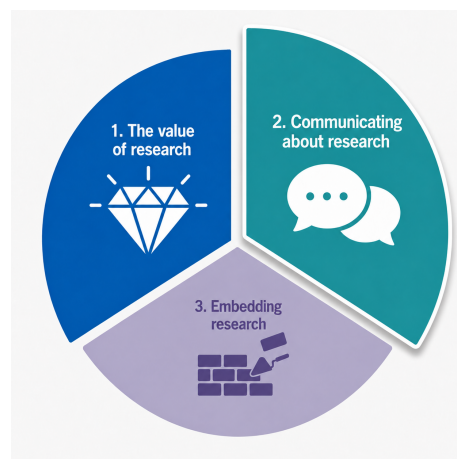


Strategies for communicating with executives

Communicating about research



This document provides practical guidance for health leaders to strategically communicate the value of research within services to their executive leaders, developing executive leadership engagement and advocacy for research.

Why communicate research with executive leaders?

Executive leadership has significant influence over organisational priorities and culture within health services. Executive support and advocacy for research strengthens research capacity and capability across services health teams. Health leaders play an important role in advocating for research by demonstrating how research supports service improvement and the delivery of contemporary, efficient and effective patient care.

The influence of executive leaders in research

When executive leaders actively support research, they help create a culture where patient care, operational challenges, and service performance are viewed as opportunities for evaluation and improvement. Executive teams enable research through their influence on organisational culture, decision-making about resources, and ability to embed research within teams and directorates.

Strategies to communicate with executives about research

Strategies to engage and communicate research to executive individuals and groups include:

Align research with operational priorities	Link research activities to service and organisational priorities to show how research supports strategic goals and service improvement. <i>Example:</i> A falls prevention study is linked to the organization's patient safety and quality improvement goals.
Use research to address service issues	Use existing service challenges to guide research activities that can improve patient outcomes, service delivery, or operational performance. <i>Example:</i> A team investigates reasons for long outpatient wait times and tests strategies to improve access to care.
Recommend practical research resourcing options	Identify simple, achievable ways to support research within existing resources, workflows, and team activities where possible. Streamline or reallocate existing resource options to activities which can enable simultaneous operation and research outputs. <i>Example:</i> Research data is collected during routine clinical documentation rather than through additional processes or appointments.
Tailor communication to the audience	Present research in clear operational and executive language, focusing on service impact, risks, benefits, and outcomes relevant to decision-makers. Focus on how the research supports, aligns or mitigates clinical, financial, or reputational issues or risks. <i>Example:</i> A research proposal highlights expected improvements in patient flow, cost savings, and service efficiency rather than research methodology details.
Embed research in routine communication	Include research updates, outcomes, and milestones in regular meetings, reports, and performance discussions to position research as part of routine operations. <i>Example:</i> Research progress and outcomes are included in monthly team performance reports alongside key service metrics.
Understand executive priorities and preferences	Engage with executives to understand their priorities, expectations, and definition of value, and tailor research communication accordingly. <i>Example:</i> A proposal to an executive focused on workforce sustainability highlights how the research may improve staff retention and workplace satisfaction.