

All research begins with a question. Generating this question, however, can be one of the most challenging aspects of research. This flowchart illustrates a process that may help divide a research project into manageable chunks.

Evaluate information that may lead to a research question (e.g., books, journals, patient interactions, colleague interactions, observations, internet discussion boards).

Evaluate available resources for research (funds, manpower, tools, experimental subjects, assistance, and information).

Begin formulating multiple research ideas (do not limit yourself to a single idea too early in the research process).

Decide whether your idea is best suited for original research or for a repetition/extension of already performed research.

Original Research:

- Rewarding but challenging
- Questions usually derived from conversations, observations, etc.
- Choose most appropriate research design (referring to literature is often helpful for this)
- Propose an experimental method (what data will be collected and how will the collection be done?)
- Decide on unit of analysis (usually individuals, but could be country, state, city, neighborhood, school, etc.)
- Consider methods of data analysis and presentation options (this will not be absolutely necessary until the data is collected, but a researcher should have a rough idea even if the final product changes)

Replication/Extension Research:

- Often more practical for beginning researcher
- Questions usually derived from books or journal articles
- Can lend or remove credibility from already published research
- Methods and experimental design already set up
- Replications often lead to further questions and can become extensions
- A good replication is not a carbon copy of a previous experiment