Glossary of Study-Specific Qualitative Research Terms*

**Constant comparative method** is an iterative method of content analysis where each category is searched for in the entire data set and all instances are compared until no new categories can be found.

**Credibility** refers to the quality or trustworthiness of a piece of qualitative research. It can refer specifically to the extent to which the findings and explanations within a qualitative report are recognized and understood by the participants, but can also be extended to include considerations of all aspects of the study.

**Grounded theory** a qualitative research methodology with systematic guides for the collection and analysis of data that aims to generate a theory that is ‘grounded in’ or informed from the data and is based on inductive reasoning. This contrasts with other approaches that stop at the point of only describing the participants’ experiences.

**Iterative** relates to the process of repeatedly returning to the source of the data (e.g., interview transcripts) to ensure that the understandings are truly coming from the data. In practice, this means a constant process of collecting data, carrying out a preliminary analysis (e.g., selecting various codes), and using that to guide the next piece of data collection and continuing this pattern until the data collection is complete.

**Inductive** process is a logical thought process in which generalizations are developed from specific observations: reasoning moves from the particular to the general (e.g., participant views on what they think are the most important goals/objectives in a mentorship program would be given the theme name Goals of Mentorship). Grounded theory uses an inductive process, i.e., explores new, unforeseen issues that emerge during the research and theories are generated from the data.

**Purposive sampling** the process of selecting participants to take part in the research on the basis that they can provide detailed information that is relevant to the inquiry.

**Saturation** the point at which no further themes are generated when data from more participants are included in the analysis. The sampling process can be considered complete at this point.

**Triangulation** process by which the area under investigation is looked at from different (two or more) perspectives. These can include two or more methods, sample groups or investigators. Used to ensure that the understanding of an area is as complete as possible or to confirm interpretation through the comparison of different data sources and/or investigators.