



OPERATING PROCEDURE	Managing External Research and Data Requests
OPERATING PROCEDURE NO.	16.1
SCOPE	ACT Corrective Services

PURPOSE

To outline the process for ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) to assess research and data requests from external researchers and the process for advising researchers regarding the outcome of their requests.

PROCEDURES**1. Roles and responsibilities**

1.1. The Research and Evaluation Officer (REO) is responsible for:

- a. assessing and processing external research and data requests and providing advice to the ACTCS Commissioner (the Commissioner) based on the outcomes of these functions
- b. liaising with the Commissioner for approvals on final decisions on research requests.

1.2. The Area Contact is responsible for:

- a. confirming with the REO that researchers have met any preparatory conditions before they commence research (e.g., confirming they have completed Security Awareness Training)
- b. depending on the nature of the research, the Area Contact may facilitate site access, access to clients for interviews and focus groups, and/or distributing and collecting surveys completed by clients and/or staff
- c. assisting researchers when they are proposing incentives or remuneration of clients for their participation in research to complete applications and participant recruitment, information and consent forms, and liaising with the ACTCS Detainee Finance team to transfer remuneration into detainees' accounts
- d. informing the REO and their Senior Director if they become aware that the researcher has not complied with any conditions placed on their approval.

2. Receiving initial research requests

- 2.1. All requests to conduct research including requests for partnership involving ACTCS data, facilities, staff, clients and programs, must be referred to the REO in the first instance.
- 2.2. Where ACTCS staff receive an enquiry from anyone who wishes to conduct research or develop a research partnership, they should advise:

- a. the person that approval can only be granted by the Commissioner and to send requests to the REO via ACTCS.Research@act.gov.au in the first instance
 - b. the REO via ACTCS.Research@act.gov.au that they have been approached about a research/partnership request.
- 2.3. For contracted research requests, the REO receives a notification of approval for research with ACTCS from the ACT Government research contact (*Managing Contracted Research Requests from ACT Government Operating Procedure*).
- 2.4. Requests for aggregate data of a routine nature may be approved by the Senior Director, Strategy, Data and Research, outside of the application process. On approval:
 - a. the Senior Director will lead the compilation of data handled by the Strategy, Data and Research Unit
 - b. requests for unpublished data will be referred to ACTCS Office of the Commissioner where appropriate, for example if the request involves data from multiple business units.

3. Responding to initial research requests

- 3.1. The REO will contact the researcher to:
 - a. seek a brief description of the research and their requirements from ACTCS (if not already provided)
 - b. advise on the commitment expected from ACTCS
 - c. enquire if the researcher has Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval from their university or institution to conduct the research.
- 3.2. Where this research is not within the scope of the *External Research and Data Requests Policy* the REO may direct the researcher to publicly available information, contacts for alternative areas of ACT Government, or any other relevant information to aid the researcher.
- 3.3. Where the research is within the scope of the *External Research and Data Requests Policy*, the REO will:
 - a. refer ACT Government contracted researchers to *Managing Contracted Research Requests from ACT Government Operating Procedure* and partnership scoping research requests to *Managing External Research Partnership Requests Operating Procedure*
 - b. advise the researcher that the Commissioner may consider providing a letter of in-principle support — but not approval — for the research where the researcher has advised that obtaining HREC approval from their institution requires evidence of ACTCS support for their application.
 - c. where the research request has been received from a community organisation that does not have access to a HREC to approve their research, inform the applicant that as part of their application they will be required to detail how they will comply with the *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and how the

researchers/organisation will monitor that their research is conducted in an ethical manner

- d. advise the researcher that for a request to be considered without HREC approval or intention to apply for HREC approval, their request must be linked to the research, evaluation and/or delivery of programs and services, in line with an existing government agreement, and that any requests not linked in this regard will not be granted approval.
- e. upon receipt of the above information, email the Application Form for External Researchers and Application Guidelines for External Researchers.

4. Assessment of research applications

- 4.1. Upon receipt of a completed application, the REO will advise the researcher that ACTCS will endeavour to provide a response within 30 working days and that this timeframe may be impacted by the resources available.
- 4.2. The REO will review the application against the following criteria:
 - a. alignment with ACTCS strategic priorities
 - b. contribution to bodies of knowledge relevant to corrective service practice and to ACTCS policy, procedure and/or practice
 - c. in-kind support required from ACTCS
 - d. likely impact on ACTCS security, operations, resources, staff, clients and programs, including risks associated with the research and operational impacts and support required from ACTCS, including but not limited to:
 - i. fieldwork logistics, including access requirements
 - ii. relevant safety training
 - iii. device exemption forms
 - iv. notification process
 - v. important contacts
 - e. ethical and legal considerations, such as:
 - i. ethical considerations around detainee populations, including accessibility, inclusion and wellbeing where relevant
 - ii. interview and post-interview support
 - iii. dissemination of research to participants/detainees in an appropriate manner
 - iv. capacity of the researcher to handle and store data appropriately
 - v. managing confidential/sensitive information (including potential for statistical disclosure risks), given the small size of the ACT jurisdiction
 - vi. consideration of i-v for potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, culturally and linguistically diverse participants, and participants with low literacy and disability.

- 4.3. Research that focuses on an individual will not be considered, irrespective of whether HREC approval has been obtained.

5. Consultation with relevant ACTCS Divisions

- 5.1. The REO will use the information determined from the assessment above to consult and seek input from relevant business units on whether ACTCS will support the application, including financial and administrative business units on matters of ACTCS contributions, as required.
- 5.2. The REO will determine the ACTCS divisions impacted by the research and will seek the views of the relevant Executives, Senior Directors, and specialist staff.
- 5.3. Where research involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees or impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, the REO will seek the views of the ACTCS Cultural Services unit.
- 5.4. As part of this consultation, the REO will provide advice to the relevant Divisional Executive and business unit on the potential impacts and benefits of ACTCS' participation in the research.
- 5.5. The REO will consult with the relevant Divisional Executive to appoint an Area Contact to liaise with the researcher, in preparation for if the application is supported.

6. Commissioner consideration of research application

- 6.1. The REO will prepare an executive minute for the Commissioner summarising any identified concerns.
- 6.2. The Commissioner may decide to:
 - a. provide formal approval
 - b. provide in-principle support (where the researcher has not yet received HREC approval), or
 - c. decline the application.
- 6.3. The REO will make any necessary amendments to the response letter for signing by the Commissioner. If the research is approved, the REO will also make any necessary revisions to the Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval to Conduct Research with ACT Corrective Services (Acknowledgement of Conditions).

7. Notifying the researcher of the outcome of the application

- 7.1. The REO will email the researcher to advise the outcome of their application. A letter will be attached from the Commissioner with their decision and, if the research is approved, the Acknowledgement of Conditions.
 - a. Formal approval letter (using the template): where the research is approved, the Commissioner's letter will state:
 - i. conditions on approval
 - ii. research activities that have been approved, or denied (if applicable)

- iii. the Area Contact
 - iv. if relevant, guidance on completing Security Awareness Training and the process around accessing this
 - v. action ACTCS may take if the researcher does not comply with the conditions on approval
 - vi. the requirement for all members of the research team to sign an Acknowledgement of Conditions, and that the research cannot commence until the signed form has been received by the REO.
- b. In-principle support letter: the Commissioner's letter (using the same template as above) will agree to provide in-principle support but will advise that this is not approval to commence research. The letter will also advise that when the researcher receives HREC approval they should forward a copy of their approved application and evidence of approval to the REO.
 - c. Declined letter: if the application has been declined the Commissioner's letter will state the reason/s for this.
- 7.2. When a researcher that has been granted in-principle support advises the REO that they have received HREC approval:
- a. the REO will ask the researcher to provide a copy of the approved HREC application and any conditions, including supporting documents
 - b. the REO will send the Acknowledgement of Conditions to the researcher to sign.
- 7.3. When the signed Acknowledgement of Conditions is received by the REO, the REO will email the researcher to advise that the research can commence.
- 7.4. If access to a correctional centre is required, the REO will provide the researcher with the Security Awareness Training Application Form for return. The REO will then email the completed form to the relevant training contact, copying in the researcher and Area Contact.
- 7.5. If the researcher wishes to audio record within the facility, the REO will provide the researcher with the Prohibited Things, Excess and Non-Standard Item Application Form for return to the REO. The REO will then email the completed form to the relevant contact, copying in the researcher and the Area Contact.

8. Notifying ACTCS areas of the outcome of the application

- 8.1. The REO will provide relevant Executives, Senior Directors, nominated Area Contact and specialist staff the signed Acknowledgement of Conditions, and advise that research can commence.
- 8.2. The REO will liaise with the nominated Area Contact and key operational areas to negotiate the logistics of fieldwork access, as required.

9. Conditions on research

- 9.1. All approved ACTCS research is subject to conditions outlined in the Acknowledgement of Conditions as well as any additional conditions specific to the approved research.

- 9.2. Research, including the provision of ACTCS data and field work, cannot commence until:
- written approval has been granted by the Commissioner
 - institutional ethics approval has been obtained, in accordance with the External Research and Data Requests Policy. Note: under the policy, community organisations may be exempt from the HREC requirement where not feasible.
 - the REO has acknowledged receipt of an Acknowledgement of Conditions, signed by all members of the research team
 - the researcher has met any other applicable conditions, such as completing Security Awareness Training.
- 9.3. Breaches of conditions of research are managed in accordance with the Monitoring the Conduct of Approved Research Operating Procedure.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- ACTCS Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval to Conduct Research with ACT Corrective Services
- ACTCS Application Form for External Researchers
- ACTCS Application Guidelines for External Researchers
- ACTCS Alexander Maconochie Centre Research Participant Distress and Safety Protocol Guide
- ACTCS Data Collection/Fieldwork Completion Report Template for External Researchers
- ACTCS External Research and Data Requests Policy
- ACTCS External Researcher Findings Brief Template
- ACTCS Formal Approval Letter
- ACTCS Managing Contracted Research Requests from ACT Government Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Managing External Research Partnership Requests Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Monitoring the Conduct of Approved External Research Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Security Awareness Training Application Form
- ACTCS Prohibited Things, Restricted, Excess and Non-Standard Items Operating Procedure
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research
- Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005
- National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research



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Document details

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