

EXTERNAL RESEARCH AND DATA REQUESTS

POLICY NO. 16

ACT CORRECTIVE SERVICES



ACT
Government

Justice and Community Safety

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1 PURPOSE

ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) is committed to supporting ethical research that strengthens the evidence base for its programs and services.

This commitment extends to fostering research that aligns with ACTCS strategic priorities and adds to the body of knowledge in relation to corrections and individuals involved with correctional systems.

This policy establishes the requirements for managing external research requests to ACTCS.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all external researchers, ACTCS staff and contracted service providers.

Divisional Executives may establish operating procedures under this policy.

Out of scope

This policy does not apply to:

- a. ACTCS staff engaged in research as part of their normal work duties or at the direction of their supervisor
- b. requests from government agencies (including where such research is undertaken by an external researcher)
- c. data requests from ACT Government or Commonwealth agencies. These requests must be sent to ACTCS.Data@act.gov.au.

3 DEFINITIONS

External Researchers	Refers to individuals and organisations external to ACTCS who wish to access ACTCS facilities, staff, clients, or unpublished ACTCS data for research purposes.
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External researchers include:

- researchers from higher education institutions who wish to conduct research with the endorsement of a university
- researchers from non-government organisations

- researchers in their capacity as private consultants/ contractors for clients, either government or non-government, external to ACTCS
- staff employed by ACTCS who wish to conduct research for purposes that are not part of their normal work duties (for example, ACTCS staff engaged in postgraduate study)
- individuals employed by external agencies who, in the course of their duties, have access to ACTCS facilities, staff and/or clients.

Research	Any activity where a person seeks to ask for or collect information not normally provided by ACTCS. Examples of research requests include, but are not limited to: • talking to staff or clients about their opinions or experiences • observing clients during an ACTCS program or ACTCS group activity • asking staff or clients to fill in a survey or questionnaire • being provided with unpublished information or data held by ACTCS or held by contracted organisations who facilitate programs and support for ACTCS • doing the above for the purposes of evaluating programs and services delivered by/to ACTCS.
Research Partnership	A research partnership is a collaborative relationship between researchers leading a major externally funded research project and ACTCS designed to improve the corrections environment, where ACTCS has committed significant resources, such as in-kind staff support.
Area Contact	An ACTCS staff member who has been nominated by their Divisional Executive to liaise with approved external researchers.

4 PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Understanding gained from research evidence and findings inform policy, enable best practice and support the delivery of ACTCS' vision and strategic objectives.
- 4.2 ACTCS maintains fairness and transparency in assessing and determining the level of support provided to external researchers for independent projects.
- 4.3 ACTCS is committed to equity and fairness in research participation and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff. This aligns with ACTCS'

strategic priority to build greater cultural competency and deliver culturally responsive services.

5 APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

- 5.1 The ACTCS Commissioner (the Commissioner) has the authority to approve or decline the conduct of criminology or penology research under s322(4) of the *Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005*.
- 5.2 All research involving ACTCS data, facilities, clients, staff and programs must have the written authorisation of the Commissioner prior to commencing any research activities.
- 5.3 Consultation must be conducted with the appropriate business unit and have endorsement from the relevant Divisional Executive.
- 5.4 An ACTCS staff member will be nominated by a relevant Divisional Executive to be the Area Contact.

6 REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTERNAL RESEARCH AND DATA REQUESTS

- 6.1 For research requests to be considered, the research team should have sufficient experience and support for undertaking research and fieldwork from the associated university, or appropriate qualifications in a related area. Examples of relevant qualifications may be, but are not limited to, criminology, sociology, law, social work, or psychology. Lived experience or other relevant workplace experience may also be considered.
- 6.2 When research is focused on clients or the correctional environment, ACTCS will consider whether the research team has sufficient experience conducting research in a complex and sensitive operational environment.
- 6.3 ACTCS will also consider whether members of the research team have sufficient experience in conducting research with vulnerable groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people with low literacy, and people with disability.
- 6.4 Researchers must have, or intend to obtain prior to commencement of the research, approval to conduct the research from a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

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- 6.5 Where an HREC has deemed a research project to be of negligible risk or not requiring HREC review, this must be confirmed in writing to ACTCS.
 - 6.6 The researcher must also detail how their process intends to engage with the values and advice provided in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.
 - 6.7 ACTCS supports incentives and remuneration of detainees for their participation in research. Any incentives or remuneration should be made clear in applications, and participant recruitment, information and consent forms. Remuneration can be transferred to the detainees' ACTCS trust fund accounts.

7 EXEMPTIONS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- 7.1 For evaluation of programs and services provided to ACTCS, community organisations may be exempt from HREC requirement under this policy where not feasible. In this case, the researcher must provide a statement of intention to comply with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and how the organisation will monitor the conduct of the research.
- 7.2 For an exemption to be considered, the request must be linked to the research, evaluation and/or delivery of programs and services as part of an existing government agreement. Requests not linked in this regard will not be granted without HREC approval, or intention to apply for HREC approval.
- 7.3 To qualify for this exemption, the individuals conducting any field work must be different from the individuals delivering programs and/or services.

8 ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH APPLICATION

- 8.1 The Research and Evaluation Officer (REO) performs a secretariat function for assessing and processing external research and data requests and providing advice to the Commissioner.
- 8.2 External research requests and applications submitted to the REO are assessed in accordance with the Managing External Research and Data Requests Operating Procedure.

9 CONDITIONS FOR APPROVED RESEARCH AND DATA REQUESTS

- 9.1 Once approved by ACTCS, all research is subject to the core conditions outlined in the Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval to Conduct Research with ACT Corrective Services, as well as any additional conditions specific to the research project.
- 9.2 All members of the research team are required to sign this document before they can receive clearance to commence research activities. These conditions include, but are not limited to, requirements for:
- a. conflicts of interest
 - b. proposed changes to the research
 - c. access to ACTCS facilities
 - d. ethical and cultural considerations
 - e. research participant distress and safety protocols.
- 9.3 Where ACTCS believes conditions have not been complied with, the Commissioner may take necessary action in accordance with the Monitoring the Conduct of Approved External Research Operating Procedure.

10 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- ACTCS Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval to Conduct Research with ACT Corrective Services
- ACTCS Alexander Maconochie Centre Research Participant Distress and Safety Protocol Guide
- ACTCS Application Form for External Researchers
- ACTCS Application Guidelines for External Researchers
- ACTCS Data Collection/Fieldwork Completion Report Template for External Researchers
- ACTCS External Researcher Findings Brief Template
- ACTCS Formal Approval Letter
- ACTCS Managing Contracted Research Requests from ACT Government Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Managing External Research and Data Requests Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Managing External Research Partnership Requests Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Monitoring the Conduct of Approved External Research Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Prohibited Things, Restricted, Excess and Non-Standard Items Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Security Awareness Training Application Form
- 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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Commissioner
ACT Corrective Services
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