



RESEARCH INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

Researching with the Western Australia Police Force

Duty | Teamwork | Integrity | Care

RESEARCH INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

Research projects provide a valuable function for the Western Australia Police Force (the agency). They serve various purposes, including:

- Contributing to the body of knowledge on policing;
- Critically evaluating policies, strategies and practices;
- Informing and shaping new policing policies, strategies and practices; and
- Finding solutions to existing and emerging issues which impact on policing

The WA Police Force will focus on research that *'informs policing'* rather than being *'about policing'* and seeks to endorse research topics which focus on excellence in contemporary policing practices.

All research undertaken with the WA Police Force should meet the standards outlined in the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023](#) (*"the National Statement"*); informs and improves policing strategies, practices and outcomes and is conducted in a way that protects the participants, the researcher and the agency.

INTRODUCTION

The National Statement which sets the standard for research within Australia, defines research as *"investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding or to train researchers."*

Sound research provides empirically based information that supports policy development and decision making in key areas. Research conducted in and affiliated with the WA Police Force must be:

- Of a high ethical standard;
- Valid and accurate;
- Methodologically sound;
- Timely; and
- Supportive of the strategic direction of the agency.

Ethical Standards

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all those associated with the research, particularly if they are vulnerable and the project design considers all relevant ethical guidelines.

Validity and Accuracy

Validity and accuracy in the collection and representation of data is essential. This is especially important where professional standards, practices and/or policies may be written or modified in response to research findings.

Methodology

The methodology must be sound and based on empirical, critical, quantitative, qualitative or a combination of principles. The methodology must also be suited to the advancement of knowledge about policing. The researcher/s must have suitable background/experience in the area of the proposed research. The research should contribute to a body of knowledge regarding the particular topic. It is encouraged that the research critically appraises published research and other documents in the particular topic area.

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Timeliness

The time constraints which are inherent in a corporate context, require research to be conducted over a relatively short period. This does not preclude the research from having all the required attributes described, and to be of the highest standard. Research will often guide policy decisions and must be supported by valid evidence.

Supports WA Police Force Strategic Direction

Research must be designed to inform the development and support of the organisation's policy and strategic direction, with a focus on broadly applicable, corporate WA policing matters and issues. For further information please see the WA Police Force internet site www.police.wa.gov.au.

RESEARCH APPLICATION PROCESS

Who can apply to do research?

Research proposals are invited from undergraduate (honours) and postgraduate students, academics, tertiary institutions and other research entities and appropriate persons from relevant agencies. WA Police Force employees are also encouraged to undertake research, however, must be aware of potential conflicts of interest (see *Code of Conduct for Research*).

Expression of Interest

It is recommended researchers seek early feedback to their research idea by submitting an [Expression of Interest to Conduct Research](#) (EOI). This is to ensure that proposed projects are logistically feasible prior to submitting a full application.

The EOI should be written in plain English and include how the project will be of benefit to the WA Police Force and any important dates. If the EOI is supported in principle, the applicant will be asked to provide an [Application to Conduct Research](#) and a signed WA Police Force Code of Conduct for Research.

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This application and supporting documents should be emailed to [Research Governance](#) in MS Word or PDF format. Failure to supply all required documentation will result in delays in assessing the application.

Research applications generally request access to WA Police Force personnel, data, corporate records or facilities. The application should contain as much information as possible, in order to be fairly assessed.

Personnel

This includes Police Officers, Police Auxiliary Officers, Police Staff and contractors. Applications should clearly detail the type of employees required for participation (work type, work area, rank, level, etc.), as well as sample size, sampling method, and duration of time personnel would be required.

Data

Requests for data must include required fields, data ranges, groupings, totals and the preferred format for presentation to the researchers (e.g., SAS tables, Excel spreadsheets, .CSV files and .TXT files). In relation to offence data, specific offence types must be listed. Research applications must clearly state what the data will be used for in order for, the most relevant data option to be considered.

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Data requests for research purposes may take three to six months to action, due to the operational support commitments of the business area. These timeframes should be considered during the proposal development stage. Data storage, transmission and protection should be managed in accordance with the relevant Human Research Ethics Committees approval.

The WA Police Force may have access to various databases administered by other government agencies, for example Department of Communities, Department of Health, Department of Justice, etc. Requests for data from systems not managed by the WA Police Force should be made directly to the relevant department, as custodians of the data.

Facilities

Depending on the nature of the project, researchers may have to obtain National Police Clearance or additional security clearances. The cost of obtaining a security clearance is the responsibility of the researcher and access is dependent on the approval by local business unit.

Corporate Records

Requests for corporate records, artefacts, statements, etc. are assessed in conjunction with the WA Police Force Office of Information Management and Freedom of Information.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Applications take a minimum of four weeks to be assessed (longer for complex or contentious research requests) and therefore, should be submitted in advance of the intended commencement date. This allows the agency to scope the resourcing requirements, and consult with relevant stakeholders within the WA Police Force.

Approved research projects will be assigned an internal contact person of a business unit for the duration of the project. The contact person will make any necessary access arrangements, monitor progress and advise the Research Governance Officer of any issues.

The WA Police Force reserves the right to withdraw approval or vary conditions applying to an approved research project. Applicants are advised to provide information to the Research Governance Officer on any contentious issues during the life of the project, so they may be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application.

Submission of Research Report

The sharing of any findings from the research (including the publication of the research report) to a third party, must be approved in writing by the WA Police Force Research Governance Officer.

To obtain approval for public release, the WA Police Force requires a draft copy no less than 20 working days prior to the researcher's anticipated release date. For more information, please refer to the WA Police Force Code of Conduct for Research.

All research projects will be recorded on the WA Police Force Research Register. Researchers must note that a final copy of the research report may be made available to WA Police Force personnel.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Human Research Ethics Approval

While the WA Police Force does not have a formal Human Research Ethics Committee, all of its work is guided by the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) ("the Code") and *the National Statement*.

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Researchers from other agencies are bound by their own agency's Code of Conduct and by the guidelines for ethics and integrity under the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#).

All research conducted by university students or staff that involves human subjects, is to be approved by the university's Human Research Ethics Committee. University ethics approval does not automatically lead to WA Police Force approval. It is recommended that the Research Governance Officer is informed early in the development of potential research proposals.

National Police Certificate

Each external researcher may be required to provide a current National Police Certificate (issued within the last 12 months). These forms and any information contained are confidential and will not be discussed outside of the WA Police Force.

Working with Children Check

A current Working with Children Check must be held by all researchers, who intend to have any direct contact with children or young people.

COMPLAINTS AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Both the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018* and the *National Statement*, outline the responsibilities of institutions in managing complaints, which may amount to breaches of the Code or to research misconduct.

If you wish to make a complaint or have any queries regarding breaching the Code or research misconduct, please contact [Research Governance](#) in the first instance.