



# 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) and serve a variety of 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's focus is 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 must meet the standards outlined in the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023](#) (*"the National Statement"*) and be conducted in a way that protects the participants, the researcher and the agency.

### INTRODUCTION

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

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.

All research must conform to privacy provisions under the [Privacy Act \(Cth\) 1988](#), and to the standards and principles outlined in the [Australian Research Council Codes and Guidelines](#) (as applicable).

For research that is relevant for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Research Application is assessed on, but not restricted to:

1. The research contribution to Closing the Gap, including [Closing the Gap Priority Reform Area 4](#);
2. Alignment with [WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#);
3. Relevant ethical committee approval (i.e., WAAHEC);
4. Completed Aboriginal Data Governance Questionnaire included in the Research Application; and
5. Specific reference to how the research complies with both:
  - National Health and Medical Research Council [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#); and
  - Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) [Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#).

### Validity and Accuracy

Ensuring the validity and accuracy of data collection and representation is crucial. This becomes particularly significant when professional standards, practices, or policies are influenced by research findings.

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### Methodology

The research approach used should be robust, incorporating empirical, critical, quantitative, qualitative, or a mix of these principles. It should also be in line with the objective of promoting understanding in the field of law enforcement. The researchers participating in the study should have the appropriate expertise and experience in the suggested area of research. Moreover, the study should add value to the current understanding of the particular subject, and it is recommended to critically assess previously published research and other pertinent materials in that field.

### Timeliness

The inherent time limitations in our business environment, necessitate that research be carried out within a relatively brief timeframe. However, this does not prevent the research from possessing all the necessary characteristics outlined and maintaining the highest quality. Research frequently informs policy choices and must be backed by credible 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](http://www.police.wa.gov.au).

Research proposals are assessed on, but not restricted to, the following key attributes:

- Identified alignment of research objectives with departmental research priorities;
- How the research adds to the body of evidence/gap in evidence;
- Culturally appropriate/trauma informed methodologies;
- Operational impost and burden to us;
- Risks for departmental clients and staff are identified. and mitigated, by researchers; and
- Requests for in-kind and financial support (departmental and other sources) are clearly articulated.

## 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.

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.

### Access to 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

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). Research applications must clearly state how the data will be used to enable assessment of the most relevant data option. In relation to offence data, specific offence types must be listed.

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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, and these timeframes should be considered during the proposal development. 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 owners of the data.

### Security and Clearances

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. The cost of obtaining a security clearance is the responsibility of the researcher.

Depending on the type of project, researchers may need to obtain extra security clearances. The local business unit or area must authorise entry to buildings or officers.

### 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.

## 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.

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

Approved research projects will be assigned an internal contact person 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.

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. The WA Police Force reserves the right to withdraw approval or vary conditions of any approved research project/s at any time.

### 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"), *the National Statement*, the WA Police Force *Code of Conduct* and the guidelines for ethics and integrity under the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#).

All research conducted that involves human subjects, is to be approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee. It should be noted that Human Research Ethics Committee approval does not automatically result in WA Police Force approval.

## SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH REPORT

A condition of approval is the requirement to provide the WA Police Force with a copy of the final research findings.

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.

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To obtain approval for public release please complete the [Application to Publish or Present](#) form and email a draft copy of the information to be released to [Research Governance](#) no less than 20 working days prior to the researcher's anticipated release date.

Researchers must note that a final copy of the research report may be made available to WA Police Force personnel.

### 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.

### APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

If you would like to submit a research proposal, please complete the linked [Research Application Form](#) along with any supporting documents. Failure to supply all required documentation may result in delays in assessment.