



## Research Information and Guidelines

## Research with the WA Police Force

Research projects provide a valuable function for the Western Australia Police Force. They serve 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, 2007 (Updated May 2018)* (*"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 *"original investigation to gain knowledge, understanding and insight."*

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 that 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 the principles of the chosen methodology (empirical, critical, quantitative, qualitative, or a combination). 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.

### 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 herein and to be of the highest standard. Research will often guide policy decisions and must be therefore supported by valid evidence.

### Supports WA Police's 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 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](#) form (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](#) document and a signed [WA Police Force Code of Conduct for Research](#).

### Application to Conduct Research

This application form 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. Applications 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, date 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.

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 Human Research Ethics Committees approval.

The WA Police Force may have access to various databases administered by other government agencies, for example Main Roads, Department of Transport, 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 Clearances or additional security clearances. The cost of obtaining security clearances is borne by the researcher. Access is dependent on approval by local business unit and/or facility manager.

#### **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 legislation.

## Approval Process

Applications take a minimum of four weeks to be assessed (longer for complex or contentious research requests) and therefore should be submitted appropriately in advance of the intended commencement date. This will allow 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 for the duration of the project. The contact person will make any necessary access arrangements, monitor progress, and advise the Research Governance Unit of any issues. The contact person will be available by appointment and should not be assumed to be openly available to the researcher/s on demand.

The WA Police Force reserves the right to withdraw approval or vary conditions applying to an approved research project at any time. Applicants are advised to provide information on any contentious issues at any stage during the life of the project, so they may be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. Any adverse events identified by the researcher or research team members during the course of the project are to be reported forthwith to the WA Police Force contact and to the Research Governance Project team.

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 Unit.

To obtain approval for public release the WA Police Force requires a draft copy no less than 14 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 the 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* ("the Code") and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 (Updated May 2015)*. Researchers from other agencies may also be 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 therefore recommended that the Research Governance Unit 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 twelve months). These forms and any information contained therein are confidential and will not be discussed outside of the WA Police Force.

### Working with Children Check

All researchers including minors in their project are required to hold a current Working with Children Card.

## Complaints and Research Misconduct

Both the Both the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 \(Updated May 2018\)](#), outline the responsibilities of institutions in managing complaints which may amount to breaches of the Code or to research misconduct.

In accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, research misconduct can be defined as “*fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research, and failure to declare or manage a serious conflict of interest*”. It also includes failure to obtain ethics approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) as required by the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007*.

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.