



<b>OPERATING PROCEDURE</b>	<b>Managing External Research and Data Requests</b>
<b>OPERATING PROCEDURE NO.</b>	<b>A4.1</b>
<b>SCOPE</b>	<b>ACT Corrective Services</b>

## PURPOSE

To outline the process for assessing unsolicited 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. **Area Contact:** The Area Contact is an ACTCS employee who has been nominated by their Senior Director to liaise with an approved external researcher during the data collection phase of the research, including:
  - a. Ensuring that any preparatory conditions are met by the researcher before they commence research (e.g. that they complete Security Awareness Training)
  - b. Depending on the nature of the research, the Area Contact may facilitate site access, facilitate access to detainees or offenders for interviews/focus groups, or distribute and collect surveys completed by staff or detainees
  - c. 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 request

- 2.1. Research is any activity where a person seeks to ask for or collect information not normally provided by ACTCS. Examples of a research request include, but is not limited to, a request to:
  - a. Talk to staff, detainees, offenders or clients about their opinions or experiences
  - b. Observe detainees or offenders during a program or group activity
  - c. Ask staff, detainees, offenders or clients to fill in a survey or questionnaire
  - d. Be provided with unpublished information or data held by ACTCS.
- 2.2. All requests to conduct research involving ACTCS data, facilities, staff, detainees, offenders and clients should be referred to the REO in the first instance.
- 2.3. Where an ACTCS employee receives an enquiry from anyone who wishes to conduct research, they should advise the person that approval can only be granted by the Commissioner and that requests should be sent to the REO via [ACTCSPolicy@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTCSPolicy@act.gov.au) in the first instance.
- 2.4. The ACTCS employee will then advise the REO via [ACTCSPolicy@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTCSPolicy@act.gov.au) that they have been approached about a research request.

### 3. Responding to initial research request

- 3.1. The REO will email the researcher and seek a brief description of the research and their requirements from ACTCS (if not already provided) and will enquire if the researcher has Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval from their university or institution to conduct the research.

- a. Where the researcher has advised that obtaining HREC approval from their institution requires evidence of ACTCS support for their application, the REO can advise them that Commissioner may consider providing a letter of in-principle support – but not approval – for the research.
  - b. Where the research request has been received from a community organisation that does not have access to an HREC to approve their research, the REO will ask them to provide a brief description of how they plan to ensure that their research is conducted in an ethical manner.
- 3.2. Upon receipt of the above information the REO will email the researcher to acknowledge receipt and advise that ACTCS will endeavour to provide an initial response to their enquiry within ten working days.

**4. Commissioner considers initial research request**

- 4.1. The REO will provide initial advice to the Commissioner for their consideration, along with a draft response letter to the researcher (if the advice is to reject the request).
- 4.2. The Commissioner may:
  - a. consider the request
  - b. reject the request.

**5. Notification of the outcome of initial request**

- 5.1. The REO will email the researcher to advise:
  - a. The Commissioner has agreed to consider the request and will attach an *ACTCS Application Form for External Researchers* and *ACTCS Application Guidelines for External Researchers*
  - b. The research request has not been approved and will attach a letter from the Commissioner stating the reason/s why it has not been approved.

**6. Assessment of the research application**

- 6.1. Upon receipt of the completed application the REO will advise the researcher that ACTCS will endeavour to provide a response within 20 working days.
- 6.2. The REO will make an initial assessment of the application against the following criteria:
  - a. Alignment with ACTCS strategic priorities, namely:
    - supporting the ACT Government's commitment to reduce recidivism by 25% by 2025
    - the provision of sustainable opportunities for offenders to lead law abiding and productive lives in the community through rehabilitation and reintegration.
  - b. Impact on ACTCS security, operations, resources, staff, detainees, offenders and clients including:
    - risks associated with the research
    - in-kind support required from ACTCS
    - ethical considerations
    - legal considerations.
  - c. Value of the research in terms of academic merit and contribution to bodies of knowledge relevant to corrective service practice.
  - d. Capacity of the researcher to handle and store data appropriately.

- e. Given the small size of the ACT jurisdiction, special consideration will be given to confidentiality (including potential for statistical disclosure risks) when assessing applications.
- 6.3. If required, the REO may email the researcher to seek additional information or clarification.

## **7. Consultation with relevant ACTCS Divisions**

- 7.1. The REO will also determine the ACTCS Divisions impacted by the research and will seek the views of relevant Executives, Senior Directors and specialist staff. For example, where the proposed research involves access to:
  - a. A correctional centre, the REO will seek the views of the Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations and appropriate Senior Directors
  - b. Community Operations workplaces, the REO will seek the views of the Assistant Commissioner Community Operations and appropriate Senior Directors
  - c. Release of unpublished data, the REO will seek the views of the Director, Business Performance Unit (BPU)
  - d. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, detainees, offenders or clients, the REO will seek the views of the Senior Policy Officer (Indigenous Policy and Cultural Diversity) and the AMC Indigenous Services Coordinator.
- 7.2. The REO will consult with the relevant Senior Director to appoint an Area Contact to liaise with the researcher.

## **8. Commissioner consideration of research application**

- 8.1. The REO will prepare advice for the Commissioner based on their assessment of the application and feedback from the above consultations. The REO will also advise the Commissioner of the nominated Area Contact.
- 8.2. The REO will also draft a response letter and an *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval to Conduct Research with ACT Corrective Services* outlining conditions on their approval (if the REO advises that the research should be approved) for consideration by the Commissioner.
- 8.3. The Commissioner may decide to:
  - a. Provide formal approval
  - b. Provide in-principle support (where researcher has not yet received HREC approval)
  - c. Reject the application.
- 8.4. The REO will make any necessary amendments to the response letter (and if the research is approved, the *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval*) for signing by the Commissioner.

## **9. Notifying the researcher of the outcome of the application**

- 9.1. The REO will email the researcher to advise the outcome of their application, attaching the letter from the Commissioner and, if the research is approved, the *Acknowledgement on Conditions on Approval*:
  - a. Formal approval letter: Where the research is approved, the approval letter will state:
    - what research activities have been approved
    - any requested research activities that have not been approved (if applicable)
    - conditions on approval
    - action ACTCS may take if the researcher does not comply with the conditions on approval

- that all members of the research team will be required to sign an *ACTCS Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval*, and that the research cannot commence until the signed form has been received by the REO.
  - b. In-principle support letter: where the Commissioner agrees to provide in-principle support, the letter will advise 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 so that the Commissioner can consider approving their application.
  - c. Not approved letter: where the application has not been approved, the letter will state the reason/s the research request has not been approved.
- 9.2. When the signed *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval* form is received by the REO, the REO will email the researcher to advise that the research can commence.

#### **10. Researcher with In-principle support obtains HREC approval**

- 10.1. When a researcher who has been granted in-principle support from ACTCS advises the REO that they have received HREC approval, the REO will ask the researcher to provide the following for review:
- a. Evidence of HREC approval, including any conditions on HREC approval
  - b. A copy of the approved HREC application, including supporting documents and any correspondence with the HREC.
- 10.2. The REO will advise the Commissioner that the researcher has received HREC approval and will draft a formal approval letter and *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval* for consideration by the Commissioner.
- 10.3. The REO will forward the signed approval letter and *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval* to the researcher.
- 10.4. When the signed *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval* is received by the REO, the REO will email the researcher to advise that the research can commence.
- 10.5. The REO will also advise relevant ACTCS areas that the research can commence.

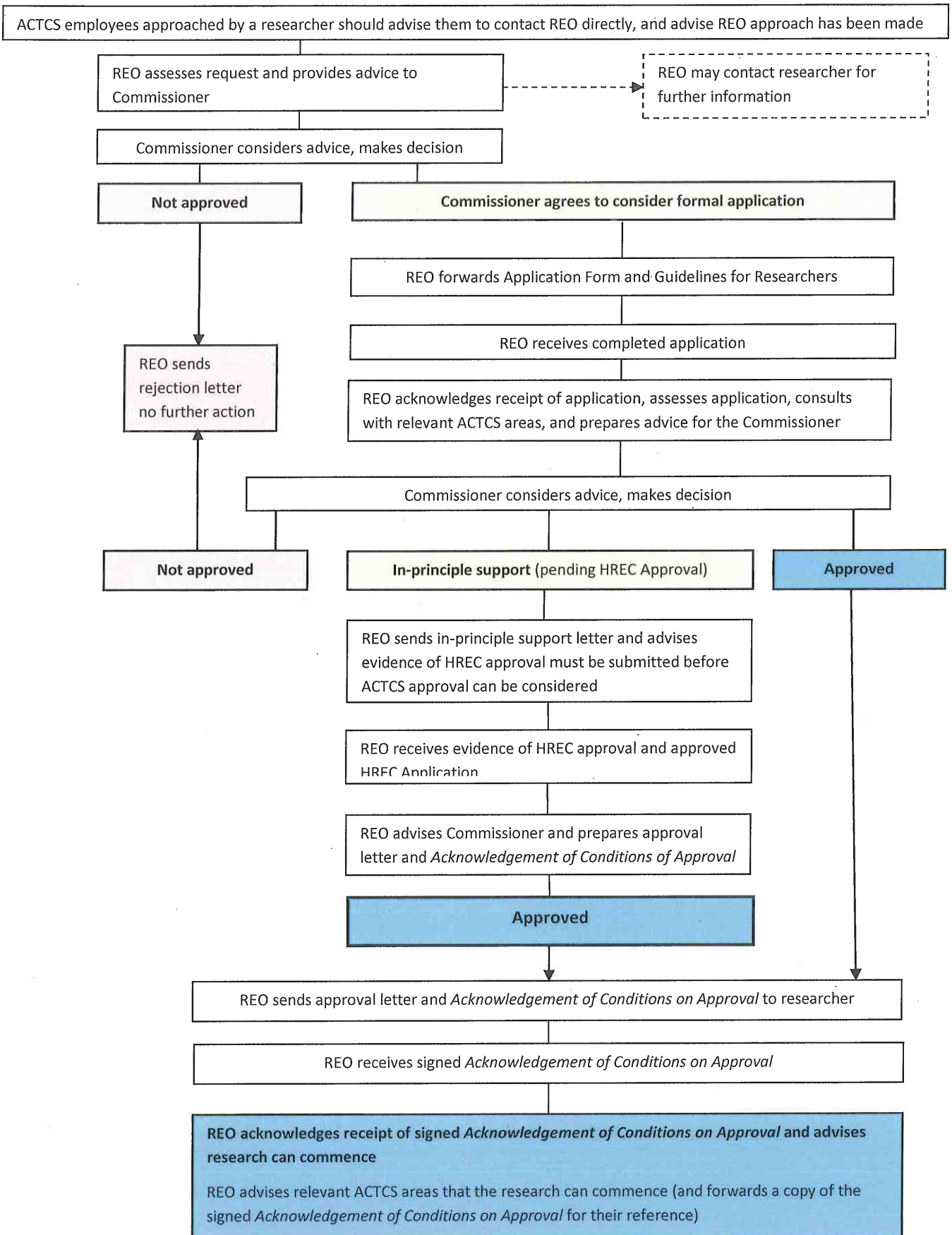
#### **11. Notifying ACTCS areas of the outcome of the application**

- 11.1. The REO will advise relevant Executives, Senior Directors, nominated Area Contact and specialist staff when the signed *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval* has been received, and that research can commence.
- 11.2. The REO will also forward copies of the signed *Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval* to the above so that they are aware of the conditions on the research.

#### **12. Conditions on research**

- 12.1. All approved ACTCS research is subject to conditions outlined in *the ACTCS Managing External Research Requests Policy*, as well as any additional conditions specific to the approved research.
- 12.2. Refer to the *ACTCS Monitoring the Conduct of Approved Research Operating Procedure* regarding the management of breaches of conditions of research.

**Flow Chart**



**RELATED DOCUMENTS AND FORMS**

- ACTPS Code of Conduct
- ACTCS External Research and Data Requests Policy
- ACTCS Monitoring the Conduct of Approved External Research Operating Procedure
- ACTCS Application Guidelines for External Researchers (Academic)
- ACTCS Application Guidelines for External Researchers (Community Organisations)
- ACTCS Application Form for External Researchers (Academic)
- ACTCS Application Form for External Researchers (Community Organisations)
- ACTCS Acknowledgement of Conditions on Approval to Conduct Research with ACT Corrective Services Template



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 Commissioner  
 ACT Corrective Services

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**Document details**

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Compliance:	This operating procedure reflects the requirements of the <i>Corrections Management (Policy Framework) Policy 2019</i>

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V1	November-18	First Issued	A Carroll
V2	November-20	Revision	A Carroll