



# Department for Child Protection

## Research Directive

### Classification C

## Summary

The Research Directive guides and promotes high quality and responsible research in the Department for Child Protection (DCP) which is compliant with relevant legislation, national and local policies, standards and guidelines. It also sets the parameters for the governance of Research with DCP.

## 1. Purpose

This Directive supports the DCP Research Framework and DCP to meet its legislative requirements and outlines the DCP research governance processes applicable to research being undertaken across DCP.

## 2. Scope

The Research Directive applies to all staff in DCP and research organisations, student researchers, external researchers and evaluators who are undertaking or propose to undertake research regarding DCP sites, services, policies and programs, staff, clients or data. It also applies to research related to services, programs, projects, policies, legislation, interventions, initiatives, and business processes undertaken or managed by, or on behalf of DCP.

## 3. Mandated requirements: Research Application Process

DCP supports quality research projects that focus on generating evidence to inform and support DCP's strategic priorities. The Chief Executive of DCP has the authority to approve research applications.

### 3.1 Application Requirements

#### 3.1.1 Application Form

All research applications must be submitted on the DCP Research Application Template. Researchers can contact DCP's Senior Research Officer if they have any questions on how to complete this form by emailing [DCPResearch@sa.gov.au](mailto:DCPResearch@sa.gov.au). Considerations when completing the Research Application Form should include:

- What are your aims or objectives?
- What methodology will you use for this project?
- Using this methodology, what results or findings will you obtain/create?
- How will this information address your aims/objectives?
- How will the research benefit children and young people, in the short-or long-term?
- Briefly, what do previous studies or evidence show about your research aims/objectives?
- What, if any, risks to staff, children and young people or families will arise from the project?
- What measures will be taken to address the risks above?

#### **3.1.1.1 Conflict of Interest**

Research applications must disclose any conflict of interests. A conflict of interest may exist where there is a divergence between the individual interests of a person and their professional responsibilities such that an independent observer might reasonably conclude that the professional actions of that person are unduly influenced by their own interests. Researchers are responsible for declaring any personal, professional or financial matters that may lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest to the Research Management Committee (RMC) in any research application process and as they arise throughout the research project.

#### **3.1.1.2 Insurance and Indemnity**

All research projects hosted by DCP involving internal and external staff must have appropriate insurance and indemnity prior to the project commencing.

#### **3.1.2 Application Submission**

Research applications must be sent to [DCPResearch@sa.gov.au](mailto:DCPResearch@sa.gov.au). Within 48 hours of receipt of the application, an acknowledgement will be forwarded to the applicant, the application will be registered onto the DCP Research Register and the application will be added to the next RMC meeting for assessment. The DCP RMC is a key element to DCP research governance. It is responsible for leading the development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the DCP Research Framework.

#### **3.1.3 Application Assessment**

The RMC will review and assess applications on a case by case basis based on the below considerations:

- Potential value of the new information to be gained from the research.
- Potential risk of harm to children, young people and their families of the research, including threats to privacy and confidentiality.
- Alignment with DCP's research strategic priorities, including avoiding duplication of research projects.
- Potential operational implications arising from the research activities for DCP.
- Technical requirements including feasibility of data request.
- Perceived risks associated with the research.
- Applicant(s) authentication and the appropriateness of the research methodology.
- Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval requirements and terms.

- Insurance documentation.
- Accompanying documents are included in proposal e.g. Consent forms, Participant information sheets, data collection instruments.

The RMC may seek advice from other Departments and DCP Directorates to inform the assessment process.

Once the RMC has determined a recommendation for the application, the DCP Chief Executive will be briefed with the details of the RMC's findings and recommendations for consideration to approve. The outcome will be advised to the applicant. There are four possible outcomes:

- **Approved** – application is approved with no changes or additional information required.
- **Conditional approval** – application is approved, subject to specific amendments to the application / additional information is required and provided to RMC, or in-principle approval provided from a specific stakeholder).
- **Deferred** – recommendation regarding the application cannot be made because additional information or significant amendments are required. Deferred applications must be re-submitted using the above mentioned process and re-reviewed and reassessed by the RMC.
- **Not approved** – application is not endorsed.

Note: The RMC reserves the right to withdraw approval or vary conditions to an approved research project at any time.

#### 3.1.4 Research Agreements

DCP requires a formal written agreement to be developed prior to the commencement of all approved research projects, which specifies the responsibilities of each party involved in the project. The agreement incorporates sections relating to intellectual property; project funding; confidentiality and copyright; disputes and dispute resolution; and reporting obligations. Once research applications are approved by the Chief Executive of DCP, a draft Research Agreement will be provided to the researcher to provide feedback and approve. Once the terms of the agreement have been agreed, the Chief Executive DCP will approve the Research Agreement and copies will be provided to relevant parties.

#### 3.1.5 Management of Research Data

All Research data must be kept in line with the rules of Section 3.1 of the NHMRC. Research data collected for approved research projects undertaken across DCP should be handled, stored and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, The Australian Code, DCP documents and any other applicable guidelines and policies.

Researchers must give appropriate consideration to the storage of data in such a way as to prevent inappropriate access and must adhere to conditions of HREC approval and/or research governance

authorisation regarding data use, retention and storage. Researchers must adhere to the *SA Public Sector (Data Sharing) Act 2016*.

### 3.1.6 Research Misconduct

All Research must be conducted in line with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

## 3.2 Research Findings and Publication Approval Process

As a general principle, publishing the findings of research irrespective of whether they are favourable or unfavourable is considered good ethical practice that promotes transparency and knowledge. In accordance with the DCP Research Agreement, it is imperative that DCP reviews all research findings and publications to grant permission prior to publication or making the findings publically known. The purpose of reviewing the publication is not to impose censorship. It is a precaution to ensure that confidentiality, the rights of participants and the requirements of the Research Agreement have been complied with. 'Publication' includes reports, thesis, papers, journal articles, presentations and/or any sharing of research findings. Proposed publications must be provided to the RMC at least 45 days prior to the intended release.

DCP should be appropriately acknowledged in publications for research projects for which it has contributed funding, resources or in-kind contributions, including publications authored by internal DCP employees. Additionally, all research projects must clearly acknowledge *"The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Department for Child Protection."*

## 3.3 Complaints and Appeals Process

Where a research applicant wishes to appeal the decision of the RMC and/or Chief Executive DCP or make a complaint about the DCP research governance process or appeal a decision, the applicant must lodge the grievance in writing to the DCP Chief Executive.

The DCP Chief Executive will consider the complaint or appeal and make recommendations. The research applicant and RMC will be notified of the outcome.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection	Responsible for ensuring the overall effective and Responsible governance of research across DCP.  Consider approving research applications as recommended by Research Management Committee (RMC).

<p>Research Management Committee</p>	<p>Responsible for leading the development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the DCP Research Framework. The RMC will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the DCP Research Framework</li> <li>• Supporting a culture of responsible and ethical research practice that is child and family focussed and culturally sensitive.</li> <li>• Determining DCPs strategic research priorities and directions, including alignment of research to the organisation’s strategic priorities.</li> <li>• Reviewing, assessing, and making recommendations for research applications, amendments and publications to be endorsed against DCPs priorities and guidelines.</li> <li>• Monitoring approved research progress until research is completed.</li> <li>• Reviewing draft research publications to approve publication.</li> <li>• Facilitating partnerships and collaborative activity with internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Developing a Research Communications Strategy to ensure research findings are shared and translatable across DCP..</li> </ul>
<p>Researchers</p>	<p>Required to apply for and carry out research in a professional, safe and ethical manner in accordance with this Framework, the Research Directive and their Research Agreement.</p>
<p>Senior Research Officer</p>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the efficient and effective coordination of research governance applications, procedures and processes.</li> <li>• Providing expert advice to researchers seeking to undertake DCP research.</li> <li>• Providing expert advice to the Chief Executive DCP and RMC on all research governance matters</li> <li>• Registering and maintaining all research applications, submissions, decisions and updates on the DCP Research Register.</li> <li>• Provision of secretariat support to the RMC.</li> </ul>

## 5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

### 5.1 Research Monitoring

To ensure research projects continue to meet the ethical and governance requirements of DCP, it is essential that DCP effectively monitors approved research activities. Ongoing monitoring of research

projects ensures compliance with conditions of ethical approval, the DCP Research Agreement in place and appropriate publication and dissemination of research findings.

All researchers are required to submit:

- Quarterly progress reports to the RMC on the DCP Research Progress Report Template.
- A Final Report to the RMC when the research project has been completed on the DCP Research Final Report Template, including a copy of the research findings and/or publication for approval.

## 6. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Research	Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge or the use of existing knowledge in new, creative and systematic ways so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings” (OECD, 2002). A studious inquiry or examination; especially investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws.
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
RMC	Department for Child Protection Research Management Committee

## 7. Related documents

<b>The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)” Updated 2018</b>	<a href="https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018">https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018.</a>
<b>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</b>	<a href="file:///C:/Users/wjapet/Downloads/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research.pdf">file:///C:/Users/wjapet/Downloads/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research.pdf</a>
<b>DCP Research Application form</b>	<a href="\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Application Oct 2019 LB changes .docx">\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Application Oct 2019 LB changes .docx</a>
<b>DCP Research Agreement</b>	<a href="\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Agreement - template August 2019.docx">\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Agreement - template August 2019.docx</a>

<b>DCP Research Progress Report Template</b>	<a href="\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Progress Report template.docx">\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Progress Report template.docx</a>
<b>DCP Research Final Report Template</b>	<a href="\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Final Report template (1).docx">\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Final Report template (1).docx</a> <a href="\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Final Report template (2).docx">\\Famsa02\user1\DATA\Plan Report Eval\Research\Research Management Committee\2019\Documents\Fdocs for New process\DCP Research Final Report template (2).docx</a>

## Document control

<b>Publication date</b>	
<b>Replaces</b>	Policy; Research and Evaluation in DCP DECD 14/11161 Conducting Research and Evaluation in DCP procedure DCP Evaluation Framework DCP Research Application form
<b>Policy document owner</b>	Manager Practice Strategy
<b>Policy document owner (phone)</b>	8124 4235
<b>SEG member responsible (position)</b>	Director Quality and Practice
<b>Applies to</b>	The Research Framework applies to all staff in DCP and research organisations, student researchers, external researchers and evaluators who are undertaking or propose to undertake research regarding DCP sites, services, policies and programs, staff, clients or data.
<b>Approved by</b>	Senior Executive Group
<b>Approval date</b>	
<b>Commencement date</b>	

REVISION RECORD		
Date	Version	Revision description
11/02/2019	V1	CT approved version
10/9/2019	V2	CT approved version amended to comply with RA and Framework