Queensland Corrective Services

Research Guidelines

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Queensland Government

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1. RESEARCH AT QUEENSLAND CORRECTIVE SERVICES

1.1 Introduction

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) is committed to ethical, quality research activity that adds to the body of knowledge in relation to corrections and individuals involved with correctional systems. QCS is also committed to applying the understandings gained from research evidence and findings to inform policy and enable best practice in order to deliver on QCS's vision and strategic objectives.

1.2 Purpose and scope

The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist researchers, both internal and external to QCS, to promote and participate in ethical human research within QCS (including all Queensland correctional centres, facilities and services that are operated by companies that are privately contracted by QCS) and to conduct research activities at QCS-run and QCS-contracted centres and services in accordance with QCS safe operation procedures and protocols as well as with the relevant legislation. Fulfilment of this purpose requires that QCS research participants be accorded the respect and protection that is due to them. It also involves the fostering of research that is of benefit to the community and that does not increase risk or cause foreseeable harm to participants, QCS or the community.

1.3 Coverage

These Guidelines apply to all QCS staff, external agencies, consultants, contractors and investigators who share responsibility and accountability for research work conducted with individuals and data from Queensland's correctional system.

1.4 Key definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island	Persons identifying themselves as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island person if they are accepted as such by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island community.
Adverse event	An undesirable event occurring in relation to a research participant, such as an abnormal sign, symptom, worsening of a mental condition, injury, etc. A serious adverse event (SAE) results in death, hospitalisation, persistent disability, or any other outcome that seriously jeopardises the participant's health. Adverse events also include unanticipated problems or issues and should be reported promptly to QCS staff and to the Research and Evaluation Unit.
Confidentiality	Protection of the identity of an individual who has provided personal information, thoughts or opinions, or whose personal, potentially identifiable information is contained in recorded data.

Collaboration	An agreed arrangement between two or more collaborating research individuals/groups concerning the conduct of research. Ordinarily, there should be an MOU or contract in place to address the roles and responsibilities of the researchers, access to data, authorship, and intellectual property.
Community corrections	Community-based management of court-ordered sanctions, post-prison orders and administrative arrangements and fine conversions for offenders, which principally involve one or more of the following requirements: supervision; program participation; or community work.
Competence	The ability to make decisions for one's self, e.g., competence to provide informed consent.
Conflict of interest	A situation in which a person has a financial, personal, political or other interest which may influence, or be perceived to carry the potential to bias, his or her judgment or decision-making concerning the performance of his or her ethical or legal obligations or duties.
Confounding factors	Outside factors that are not being studied or controlled for that influence the dependent variable being studied.
Consent	See informed consent.
Control group	Participants in the study who do not receive the intervention being studied. The participants will have similar characteristics as the participants in the experimental group except for the fact they did not receive the intervention.
Data	Recorded information used to test scientific hypotheses or theories. Data may include electronic records, administrative information, field notes, transcribed interviews, spreadsheets, digital images, audio or video recordings, and outputs from surveys or questionnaires. Original (or primary data) is drawn directly from the data source; secondary (or derived) data is based on the primary data.
Data management	Practices and policies related to recording, storing, auditing, archiving, analysing, interpreting, sharing, and publishing data.
Debriefing	An opportunity for participants to meet with the primary researcher or receive information regarding the study after they have concluded their participation in the study.
De-identified data	Data which has been stripped of information, such as name, date of birth or Integrated Offender Management Systems (IOMS) record number, which personally identifies individuals.
Experimental design	In an experimental design, there must be an element of control, independent variables concerning the participants must be manipulated, and participants must be randomly selected or randomly assigned to groups (in order to measure cause and effect).
Generalisability	The extent to which research findings and conclusions from a study conducted on a sample population can be applied to the population at large.

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)	A group of individuals who safeguard the interests of human research participants by considering the quality and value of proposed research activities.
Hypothesis	A tentative specific explanation of the purpose of the study and its likely finding, which can be directional or non-directional.
Informed consent	Participants must understand the nature of the project, what procedures will be used, and to what use the results will be put. Informed consent is the process of making a free and informed decision, such as to participate in research, having been provided with information on the nature of their involvement and potential risks and benefits. Individuals who provide informed consent must be legally competent and have enough decision-making capacity to consent to research.
Interview	A research tool in which a researcher asks questions of participants; interviews are often audio-taped for later transcription and analysis.
Intervention	A policy, program or process whose effect is being studied.
Qualitative research	Empirical research in which the researcher explores relationships using textual or observational, rather than numerical data. Case study, observation, and ethnography are considered forms of qualitative research. This type of research is usually exploratory in nature and is often used to develop theory.
Quantitative research	Empirical research in which the researcher investigates human phenomena using numerical data, analysed via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques. This type of research is usually concerned with testing theories or hypotheses.
Offender	An individual who is subject to a current custodial or community-based corrections order or suspended sentence, which includes bail orders if those orders are subject to supervision by community corrections officers.
Passive consent	Passive consent refers to consent assumed to be provided unless the participant indicates otherwise, or if a research participant has not returned the consent form to the researcher or active written consent has not been obtained from the parent/caregiver of a participant under the age of 18.
Pilot study	A preliminary trial, or mini-study, which may be carried out prior to a full study being done in order for the larger study to be informed by the preliminary findings.
Population	The population is the entire group of individuals under consideration for a targeted research project. Samples are drawn from populations.
Prisoner	A person held in full time custody under the jurisdiction of an adult corrective services agency. This includes sentenced prisoners serving a term of imprisonment and un-sentenced prisoners held on remand.
Privacy	A state of being free from unwanted intrusion into one's personal space, private information, or personal affairs. In

	Australia, privacy in protected by the *Privacy Act 1998* (Commonwealth) and the *Information and Privacy Act 2009* (Qld).
Randomisation	Used to allocate subjects to experimental and control groups. Participants are randomly assigned to the different groups in order to determine the effect of a particular intervention or treatment.
Remand	A legal status where a person is held in custody pending the outcome of a court hearing, including circumstances where the person has been convicted but has not yet been sentenced.
Research	A purposeful investigation that produces previously unreported information that can be analysed to build new insights that contribute to a body of knowledge.
Research methodology	The method of carrying out the research study, including elements such as design, analyses, participants, instruments and tools and timelines.
Research misconduct	Actions that violate the code of ethics, including negligence or deliberate or reckless behaviour in research that is viewed as unethical or even illegal. This includes fabricating results, conducting research that has not been approved by the university HREC and/or the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee, falsifying or misrepresenting results, plagiarism, misleading ascription of authorship or contributions, failing to declare or manage conflicts of interest, risking human safety and wilfully concealing or facilitating the research misconduct of others. Honest errors and scientific disputes are not regarded as misconduct.
Response rate	In survey research, the actual percentage of questionnaires completed and returned.
Rigour	Degree to which research methods are scrupulously and meticulously carried out in order to recognize important influences occurring in an experiment.
Sample	The sub-set of the full population researched in a particular study. Usually, attempts are made to select a "sample population" that is considered representative of groups of people to whom results will be generalised or transferred. In studies that use inferential statistics to analyse results or which are designed to be generalisable, sample size is critical - generally the larger the number in the sample, the higher the likelihood of a representative distribution of the population.
Survey	A research tool that includes questions which are either open-ended or close-ended. Surveys may elicit verbal, written or electronic responses. The goal of a survey is usually to gain specific information about either a specific group or a representative sample of a particular group. Results are typically used to understand the attitudes, beliefs, or knowledge of a particular group.

Variation	Any change to an approved research project, including amendments to timelines, tools, personnel, design or intended use of outcomes.
Vulnerable participant	A research participant who has an increased susceptibility to harm or exploitation due to his or her compromised ability to make decisions or advocate for his/her interests. Vulnerability may be based on age, mental disability, institutionalisation, language barriers, socioeconomic deprivation, or other factors. All prisoners and offenders on community-based orders are considered vulnerable.

1.5 Acronyms and abbreviations

BOP	Board Ordered Parole
CCO	Custodial Correctional Officer
COP	Court Ordered Parole
CSA	Corrective Services Act 2006
CSO	Community Service Order
DM	District Manager
DPSOA	Dangerous Prisoner (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003
EOI	Expression of Interest
GM	General Manager
ICO	Intensive Corrections Order
IOMS	Integrated Offender Management System
P&P	Probation and Parole
PPO	Probation and Parole Officer
PSA	Penalties and Sentences Act 1992
QCS	QLD Corrective Services
REC	Research and Evaluation Committee
REU	Research and Evaluation Unit
RM	Regional Manager
SLB	State Law Building
YJ	Youth Justice

2. RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

The QCS Research and Evaluation Committee maintains oversight of all research and evaluation activity involving QCS. The Research and Evaluation Unit conducts and coordinates research and evaluations whilst also providing an institutional source of guidance, support, and quality assurance for the design, conduct, dissemination, and synthesis of evaluations and research.

Human research is governed by Australian law that establishes rights for participants and imposes general and specific responsibilities on researchers and institutions such as QCS. Australian common law obligations arise from the relationships between institutions,

researchers and participants. Contractual arrangements may impose obligations on research funders and institutions. Research ethics is only part of an institution's responsibilities for research governance. Compliance with legal obligations (statutory or otherwise) forms another part.

Providing authorisation to commence human research is an important component of research governance. It enables QCS to:

- ensure that the proposed research project complies with appropriate ethical, scientific, regulatory and professional standards;
- consider whether the project should be conducted at and supported by QCS; and
- be aware of all research taking place at sites under their control.

All human research that takes place at QCS or involving QCS offenders, staff, data, or facilities should be authorised by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee before commencement. Authorisation is also conditional upon ethical and scientific approval of the project by an appropriate Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

2.1 Principles

QCS endorses the following general principles of responsible research set out in part A, Section 1 of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (NHMRC, 2007), and adopts them as a requirement for good research practice at QCS:

a. honesty and integrity
b. respect for human research participants, animals and the environment
c. good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research
d. appropriate acknowledgement of the role of others in research
e. responsible communication of research results
f. sharing of research data, where appropriate, with the wider research community and with the public
g. transparent costing and sustainability of research.

2.2 Relevant legislation, regulations and guidelines

- *ABS Data Quality Framework* 2009. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. 1520.0
- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* 2007, National Health and Medical Research Council
- *Australian Copyright Act 1968 (Commonwealth)*
- *Australian Privacy Act (1988) (amended 2017)*
- *Australian Privacy Principles Guidelines*, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
- *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service*
- *Corrective Services Act 2006*
- *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*

- *Crimes Act 1914* (Commonwealth Spent Convictions Scheme)
- *Ethical Conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders (NHMRC, draft)*
- *Guidelines on Data Matching in Australian Government Administration*, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
- *Guidelines – Privacy Principles*, Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland.
- *Information and Privacy Act 2009*
- *Keeping Research on Track: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples about health research ethics (2005)*
- *Keeping Research on Track II (NHMRC, draft)*
- *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* 2007 – Updated 2015, National Health and Medical Research Council
- *Privacy Act 1998 (Commonwealth)*
- *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012*
- *Public Records Act 2002*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Public Service Regulation 2008*
- *Public Service Commission Open Data Strategy 2013-2017*
- *Queensland Government Indemnity Guideline*
- *Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture (QGEA) Information Policies, Standards and Guidelines*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*
- *Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (NHMRC 2003)*

2.3 Associated and supporting documents

The *QCS Research Guidelines* describe in detail the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of all parties and define the processes used to ensure compliance, monitoring and ongoing review of research quality. The QCS Research Guidelines complement the *Strategic Research Agenda 2017-2022* which summarises current QCS research priorities.

Other relevant supporting documents include:

- QCS Expression of Interest to Conduct Research
- QCS Application to Conduct Research
- QCS Researcher's Deed of Agreement
- QCS External Research progress report
- QCS Request for Variation to Research Project
- Request for Data – Research Applicant
- Form 27 (a) – Application to Visit – professional, Official or Other Business Purposes
- Request for Criminal History Check
- Request to Interview an Offender/Photograph Facility
- Research Committee Terms of Reference
- Research Committee – Action Sheet

- Research Committee – Assessment Matrix
- Research Committee – Decision
- Disclosure of Confidential Information Procedure
- Visitors to a Facility (Excluding Personal Visitors) Procedure
- DJAG Code of Conduct

3. ETHICAL RESEARCH AT QCS

3.1 National ethical standards

All research performed on behalf of QCS, or by external researchers working with QCS data or participants, will be in accordance with the Deed of Agreement between QCS and the researchers and consistent with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) ethical standards, as set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* 2007 (Updated 2015) and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* 2007.

Research involving Indigenous participants will need to comply with the *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health Research (NHMRC 2003)*. These requirements for ethical conduct must be clearly addressed in any application and associated documentation.

Most research conducted at QCS is human research - that is, it is conducted with or about people, or their data. Human participation in research is therefore to be understood broadly, to include the involvement of human beings through:

- taking part in surveys, interviews or focus groups;
- undergoing psychological, physiological or medical testing or treatment;
- being observed by researchers;
- researchers having access to their personal documents or other materials;
- the collection and use of their body organs, tissues or fluids (e.g., skin, blood, urine, saliva, hair, bones, tumour and other biopsy specimens) or their exhaled breath;
- access to their information (in individually identifiable, re-identifiable or non-identifiable form) as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database.

The term ‘participants’ is therefore used very broadly in these Guidelines to include those who may not even know they are the subjects of research; for example, where the need for their consent for the use of their data has been waived by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). In addition, the conduct of human research often has an impact on the lives of others who are not participants. When this impact is reasonably foreseeable, it may raise ethical questions for researchers and for those ethically reviewing research.

3.2 Values and principles of ethical conduct

The values set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* 2007– respect for human beings, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence – help to shape the researcher/research participant relationship as one of trust, mutual responsibility

and ethical equality. Other values include altruism, contributing to societal or community goals, and respect for cultural diversity, along with the values that inform *Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health Research* (NHMRC 2003).

However, the values of respect, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence have become prominent in the ethics of human research in the past six decades, and they provide a substantial and flexible framework for principles to guide the design, review and conduct of such research. The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* 2007 is organised around these values.

Among these values, respect is central. Such respect includes recognising the value of human autonomy and providing for the protection of those with diminished or no autonomy.

Unless proposed research has merit, and the researchers who are to carry out the research demonstrate integrity and appropriate expertise, the involvement of QCS staff or offenders in that research cannot be ethically justified.

3.3 Informed consent

In accordance with the NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, it is essential that appropriate information and consent procedures are followed in any research involving QCS data, staff, offenders or resources. Participant consent must be obtained in accordance with NHMRC policy, e.g., through one of the following ways:

- written participant information sheet and accompanying consent form signed or otherwise marked by the participant to indicate understanding of, and consent to, research participation; or
- online participation information preceding an electronic survey that then provides for the participant to indicate electronically that they have understood, and consented to proceed with online participation in the research (note that the internet is not available in custodial settings).

The informed written consent of a research participant and parent/caregiver is required if the participant is a minor (under the age of 18 years). Informed written consent from a primary caregiver must also indicate that he or she has discussed the matter with the young person, who in turn has explicitly agreed to participate. Agreement by the young person to participate is documented by the young person co-signing the consent form provided to the parent/ caregiver.

As outlined in the National Statement, research participants (and caregivers if participants are under 18 years of age) have the right to be fully informed regarding the intent, nature and scope of the research when deciding if they will participate. In addition, after research is approved by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee to be conducted in QCS sites, consent to approach participants to invite their voluntary participation must be obtained from the relevant General Manager or Regional Manager. In order to make this decision Managers will be provided with an information statement which describes the research, identifies who will be involved (e.g., offenders, prisoners, staff) and explains what will be required of these participants, including a summary of what has been approved by the University HREC and the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee.

All research participants must be provided with an information statement detailing the purpose of the research project, expected participant involvement and any other factors that might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate. All participants need to be informed that:

- their participation in the research project is voluntary;
- a decision not to participate will not adversely affect their parole eligibility (where applicable) or their relationship with QCS or QCS staff;
- they are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, and have information regarding who to contact if they wish to withdraw from the study; and
- they may seek further information about the project, including a contact person and details for accessing further information regarding the project.

Consent forms and information statements must include information about provisions to protect the anonymity of participants in the data collection, management and publication processes.

Researchers intending to use video, photographic or audio recording to collect data should state this in the information statement and on the consent form detailing how such information will be used and how participant anonymity will be preserved.

QCS will not approve research relying on the passive consent of participants (see definitions).

Approval from the University HREC and the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee must be sought for any changes to an approved research project that alters the initial information provided to participants or new information that can reasonably be considered to influence participants' willingness to continue with the study. Once approved, this variation must be provided in writing to participants.

Consent forms and information statements should be approved by an appropriate institutional HREC prior to QCS granting approval. However, the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee may make further requests or require amendments to consent forms, information statements or the research protocol.

3.4 Privacy and confidentiality

The Queensland Government's Information Privacy Act 2009 (IP Act) regulates the responsible management of personal information including its collection, storage, use and disclosure. Researchers operating within QCS sites must comply with the requirements of the IP Act (and other relevant legislation) to ensure that participants' privacy and the confidentiality of records and other confidential data is maintained.

Personal information is defined as any information or opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from that information. Personal information includes information that enables an individual to be identified, for example their name, age, date of birth, IOMS ID number, biometric information such as a voice recording, or other defining characteristics. Consideration must also be given to information

that may identify a person, locality or centre by inference or through the availability of connecting information.

Researchers who are granted approval to conduct research within QCS must abide by the confidentiality principles and practices as outlined in the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* 2007 and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* 2007. They must not disclose any information about individual offenders, QCS staff, facilities or data that they are privy to, as a result of their research involvement with QCS, to any third party.

3.5 Internet and social media

Increasingly, researchers are using the internet as both a source of data and a venue for research. There are certain ethical issues that may be encountered when utilising the internet for research. Using the internet for human research may potentially create population/sample biases and misrepresentations and may potentially limit the generalisability of research, e.g., demographic influences because older people use the internet less, reduced access to the internet due to disability, geographical or financial limitations.

The internet is a significant source of information, including personal information that can be of a highly sensitive nature. Use of personal information in research can create a number of risks, including: psychological harms if sensitive or embarrassing information is disclosed; legal harms, including discovery and prosecution of criminal conduct; and personal information becoming vulnerable due to changing privacy settings in social media. Where research proposals involve the use of the internet, email or social media for recruitment or conduct of research, QCS will consider the following:

- the vulnerability of the participant cohort and potential impact of participation;
- whether the research is being conducted within a private or public space;
- how recruitment of participants is proposed to occur;
- how use of the internet or social media may impact on sampling and/or interpretation of results; and
- the mechanism/s of consent and data collection.

3.5.1 Use of email

Email is widely used as a tool for recruitment and communication with research participants. In relation to recruitment of QCS staff or offenders, the following apply:

- email addresses that are not public knowledge (e.g., the email addresses of QCS's clients, such as parolees), may not be accessed without specific QCS permission, namely that of the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee and that of the relevant Regional Manager/s;
- because staff email addresses are not in the public domain (e.g., listed on a work website), they may not be used in the same way as a publically listed phone number;

- if permission has been obtained through the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee, to do so, invitations to staff may be made through General Managers, Regional Managers or centrally moderated email lists. List moderators must be contacted before any recruitment notices are sent;
- invitations to participate in research may not be sent to QCS staff or offenders by email or by any other means, without the research project having first been approved by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee. This includes emails and social media posts to QCS staff personal email addresses and social media accounts for the purposes of surveying QCS staff; and
- researchers need to be mindful that email is generally an insecure means of communication and shouldn't be used to distribute confidential or sensitive information. QCS will not approve survey responses being received via email.

3.5.2 Online consent

There are issues specific to gaining consent in online environments, including:

- the ability to assess capacity to consent and understanding of information may not be possible or involve different processes; and
- it can be difficult to verify the identity of participants as some individuals may have different or multiple online identifiers, and/or use pseudonyms and avatars.

Strategies for gaining informed consent should consider the context in which the information was, or will be generated, the participant cohort and any vulnerability, the terms and conditions of use, privacy setting and public or private nature of the online platform, as well as the level of risk involved.

In general, QCS advises that online consent should be gained through an informed consent process e.g., providing an 'I have read the information above about this study and I agree to participate' button at the start of an online survey.

Obtaining consent from list-owners or moderators of online forums is insufficient and will not be approved.

3.5.3 Use of web-based survey tools

When collecting data online, researchers need to consider the type of data they are collecting, particularly if it is private or confidential, as well as the data security measures in place. Where the online data is stored must also be considered. Storage can occur in a single off-site location or in multiple locations spread across the world - this virtual space is known as the Cloud.

If the data to be collected includes private or personal information, storing of such information in a cloud-based service is against the *Queensland Information Privacy Act 2009*. A cloud service provider, such as many online survey companies, would generally be considered as a separate organisation or contractor to the one where the researcher is based.

The transfer of personal information to a contractor is generally considered to be a 'disclosure' for the purposes of the Privacy Act. Researchers entering into contracts with companies that host web-based survey tools that will involve the transfer of personal information need to ensure that, even if the contractor is not bound by the Privacy Act, the personal information will continue to be protected.

Cloud service providers are frequently based outside Australia and thus may not be subject to Australian legislation protections or it may be difficult for a regulator to enforce action against the organisation if something goes wrong. Uploading data into the Cloud will most probably mean exporting data abroad, to locations which might not be precisely disclosed to the researcher. Uncertainty revolves around the lack of geographical boundaries inherent to Cloud storage –data being stored 'in the Cloud' implies that it can be stored anywhere in the world, most probably across different locations, and can be moved swiftly from one country to the next.

No international legal framework specific to cloud computing exists so far, and therefore the rules applicable to the data will mostly depend on the contractual provisions regulating the relationship between the web-based survey provider and the researcher. It is very important that Australian researchers ensure, when they enter into a contract with a cloud service provider, that the terms of the contract enable them to continue to meet their obligations under the Privacy Act and that there is minimal risk in relation to the protection of personal information. Because such contracts often lack transparency, cloud-based survey tools are usually best avoided when research involves personal or sensitive data.

If a web-based survey tool must be used for the research and a tool that stores personal information data within Australia cannot be used, researchers should make this fact explicit to participants so that they can consider this when deciding whether or not they will consent to participate. A statement such as that below could be utilised:

> *If you decide to participate in this survey, the information you provide may be stored on a server outside Australia. This means that your information may not be protected by Australian privacy laws. By consenting to participate, you acknowledge that you understand and accept that the information you provide may be stored and transferred in countries that have different laws that may allow access to stored data for purposes unknown to the researcher.*

3.6 Vulnerable groups

QCS defines vulnerable persons as those who are relatively (or absolutely) incapable of protecting their own interests. More formally, they may have insufficient power, intelligence, education, resources, strength, or other needed attributes to protect their own interests. Therefore, there are specific guidelines designed to protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable persons by requiring special justifications for involving vulnerable individuals in research approved by QCS.

3.6.1 Offenders

Offenders, particularly those in a custodial environment, are in a naturally coercive situation or environment. Their ability to make decisions about daily life is somewhat compromised. The history of human subjects research includes many cases of imprisoned individuals being subjected to human experimentation. Documents such as the Nuremberg Code and Belmont Report were drafted to prevent the abuse and exploitation of research subjects. The Belmont Report contains three ethical principles for human subjects research that are especially relevant to prisoner research:

- autonomy;
- beneficence; and
- justice

Individuals who are imprisoned have diminished autonomy. For this reason, prisoners are designated as a vulnerable population.

Within ethical considerations there is a conflict between protecting prisoners from exploitation in research and prisoners' right to participate in research. They may be more easily persuaded to participate in a study than they would if they were not in prison or on a community-based corrective services order. This is especially the case when proposed participants include those living with a mental illness or brain injury or who have low literacy levels. Therefore, these guidelines attempt to safeguard this vulnerable group without completely restricting them from the benefits of research. This must be kept in mind, particularly when considering the issue of consent. The following conditions must be satisfied for offenders to be recruited to participate in research:

- payments, incentives or inducements cannot be used to unduly influence offenders to participate. It must be remembered that any possible advantages or opportunities for payment, accruing to a prisoner through his or her participation in research, can have a much greater effect than similar advantages or payments would have in a non-prison population. Any incentive within a custodial setting can be seen as providing advantages that are not available to the general prison population and hence are potentially coercive for that reason;
- the risks involved must be commensurate with risks that would be accepted by non-offender participants;
- procedures for selecting participants must be fair and impartial to all offenders in the selected location;
- recruitment should be conducted by the researcher and not by QCS staff because there is an inherent power dynamic in the relationship between offenders and QCS officers. QCS staff may assist in locating suitable participants but care must be taken to ensure that offenders' consent to participate is independent of their relationship with QCS staff;
- all information must be presented in language which is easily understood to the offender population, bearing in mind that many will have low levels of literacy and/or speak a first language other than English;
- prisoners should be made explicitly aware that participation will not affect decisions regarding parole. Except in the case of particular randomised controlled trials, prisoners should also be informed that participation will not affect decisions about their accommodation or other aspects of their incarceration or community-based orders; and

- provisions for any follow-up care or debriefing, as needed, should be provided to offenders in the community, as they would for non-offenders participating in research. If the participants are in a custodial environment, researchers should ensure that appropriate follow-up care or debriefing can be provided by centre-based staff or by services in the community if they are discharged from custody during the study.

3.6.2 Participants with low literacy

For some participants, providing them with a written document does little to prepare them to give full consent. However, this may not mean that they are incapable of providing full consent, only that the approach is unsuitable to those with low levels of literacy. Enhancing participant comprehension may improve participants' ability to provide informed consent. For example, other forms of media (i.e., a combination of pictures and text or verbal explanation) can be used to enhance the message of the consent form. It is also often useful to speak with participants and ask them open-ended questions to determine if they understand the consent information. Once the participant demonstrates that he or she understands the information about the study, the researcher can then proceed with documenting consent.

3.6.3 Participants with diminished capacity to consent

This section addresses offenders whose ability to understand, appreciate, and weigh the risks and benefits of a study and knowingly give consent to participate is in question. Assessing capacity to consent is not only vital for including these participants in a study but also for treating them with an appropriate level of care and respect.

The level of risk presented in the study combined with the capability of the person to understand the risks will vary with each study and study population. For example, an offender with a mild brain injury may be capable of consenting to a minimal risk survey but may not be capable of consenting to a complex clinical trial. Researchers and QCS must be careful to protect participants' rights and at the same time not diminish their opportunity to participate in a study.

Some offenders with diminished mental capacity may not have the legal ability to consent. Researchers need to make themselves aware of these individuals by speaking with QCS staff. If such offenders are flagged as having diminished capacity to consent, it may be determined that their participation can only occur if consent is given by their legally authorized representative, such as the Legal Guardian, who can act in the participant's best interests.

For some studies, particularly those that carry a moderate or high level of risk or that specifically set out to recruit participants who have a brain injury, mental illness or developmental disorder, the Research and Evaluation Committee may require that researchers have procedures in place to assess the capacity of participants to consent. They will also expect that the researcher (or a member of the research team) will have the expertise to assess competency to consent.

In these studies, researchers need to describe their procedure for assessing capacity to consent. Assessing capacity may vary depending on the participants. The participant may

be questioned or assessed to determine competency and this should be carefully documented.

3.6.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island participants

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recently drafted new guidelines, *Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders* and *Keeping Research on Track II*.

These documents provide information about designing and conducting ethical and culturally appropriate research and detail six core values for ensuring respectful, relevant, ethical research is undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples and communities.

Because almost every QCS offender cohort that might be invited to participate in research will include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island people, it is essential that all researchers applying to QCS for approval are familiar with these NHMRC documents and consider how they will deal appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island participants. Researchers are expected to explain how the research will address the core values and principles articulated in these guidelines.

Specifically, care must be taken that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island stakeholders are meaningfully involved in the design, planning and implementation of the research, wherever possible. In addition, attention must be paid to the use of research tools, instruments, surveys and interview protocols that have been designed or adapted for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island participants.

In certain cases, due regard must be given to language and where necessary, the need to involve appropriate local language speakers or interpreters. Researchers should also consider how they plan to cater for inclusion of hearing impaired participants, since hearing loss and middle ear disease is prevalent amongst Indigenous Australians.

If the research proposes not to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, the researcher will need to provide a satisfactory explanation, in the QCS Application to Conduct Research, about why they are to be excluded.

3.7 QCS employees as participants

Recruiting research participants from a work environment can be complicated because of hierarchical relationships in the workplace, drive to get ahead, and/or pressure to keep a job. Because it is important that participation in research is voluntarily, research involving QCS employees as participants should be designed so that these participants are not directly or indirectly coerced into participation. Researchers must carefully consider all of the individuals involved in the study and what their relationships are within the study and outside of the study. Researchers should also consider the following questions when developing their research protocols:

- Who is the researcher/s? Do they hold a position in QCS, particularly a position of authority?

- What is the relationship between the researcher/s and the participants, or between persons collecting consents, conducting recruitment and the participants?

Potentially coercive situations may be resolved with proactive measures such as collecting anonymous survey data and distribution of recruitment information to employees by someone other than their supervisor.

Researchers should be conscious of QCS employees' time when asking employees to participate. The research may burden an employee or cause them to lose productivity, especially if there is more than one study involving QCS employees over a given period of time. Make sure that the consent form outlines what is required of the participants and that their workplace supervisors are aware of the time required to participate in the study.

In weighing up the value of proposed research to QCS, the Research and Evaluation Committee will take into account what other research is occurring, or anticipated to occur, during the same time period. Researchers considering applying to conduct research involving QCS staff as participants should enquire early in their research planning about other surveys and studies that are occurring within QCS. The Committee is very conscious of avoiding survey fatigue amongst QCS staff.

3.8 Research concerning individual offenders

The QCS Research and Evaluation Committee will not approve research that focuses on individual prisoners or offenders. Such applications are considered against the purpose of corrective services as outlined in Section 3(2) and Section 3(3) of the *Corrective Services Act 2006*. The Research and Evaluation Committee must also consider the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (Section 4) and Section 6.1 of the *Media Access and Public Engagements* procedure.

Specifically, interviews with (or about) individual prisoners/offenders are unlikely to be approved if:

- the offender is on remand for an offence/s and consequently an interview could impact upon the trial or appeal of the person;
- access to the offender may adversely affect the security or good order of a corrective services facility;
- the interview could adversely affect the safe custody and welfare of the offender or any other person or the supervision of the offender in the community;
- the interview could embarrass, injure or distress the victims of crime or their families;
- the person is being detained for immigration purposes on behalf of the Commonwealth; or
- the interview is likely to glorify the offending or add to the notoriety of the offender.

Therefore, research involving individual offenders will not be approved because of the potential for individual offenders to be identified and the possibility that this could add to their notoriety and thus not be in the public interest or of benefit the community.

4. RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Research may be undertaken either independently or in partnership with QCS. Independent research can include research undertaken by academics or postgraduate students. All independent research requires approval from the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee. Where funding is involved, research applicant(s) must identify funding sources.

Partnership research can include research undertaken by QCS in collaboration with external research agencies, universities, government bodies or private industry. Research partnerships may involve applying for research grant funds to support the research and/or require in-kind support from nominated parties. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or contract may be required to establish the roles and responsibilities of each party involved in an approved research partnership.

4.1 QCS responsibilities

When considering research applications, the Research and Evaluation Committee will take into consideration the:

- safety of the researcher;
- management of the range and extent of research to ensure QCS operations are not jeopardised and research topics are not duplicated;
- appropriateness of research methodologies from an operational perspective and from the perspective of scientific rigour; and
- cost (including in-kind support) of providing research assistance and supervision/monitoring, against potential benefits to QCS and the Queensland community.

When facilitating approved research, QCS will work with the researcher to maximise:

- safety of the researcher, participants and others;
- safe conduct of the study;
- responsible and accurate reporting of results; and
- dissemination of findings to relevant parties including those involved in the study.

4.2 Researcher responsibilities

To ensure a fair, equitable and transparent process, where all research proposals align with QCS priorities, researchers should comply with the following:

- all approaches, expressions of interest and applications regarding proposed research should be made through a central process, via the Research and Evaluation Unit (details provided below);
- this centralised approach applies to all centres and facilities including those centres that are operated by privately contracted companies; and
- no direct approaches or applications should be made to any operational QCS staff or facilities (including contracted providers).

4.3 Conflict of interest

It is expected that researchers will declare any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest to both the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee and the relevant HREC. A conflict of interest exists when an individual's own interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence how he or she carries out his or her professional or research obligations. These may include but are not limited to:

- the researcher/s being an employee or previous employee of QCS;
- the researcher/s being a current or potential service provider, or employed by a current or potential service provider, to QCS (including voluntary roles);
- the researcher/s having some personal involvement with QCS, e.g., a past or current relationship, interaction or friendship or advocacy role with an offender, group of offenders, ex- offender/s, or individuals/groups who may reasonably be perceived as being involved in, or potentially involved in, criminal behaviours; or
- the researcher/s having some personal involvement with QCS staff, e.g., past or current relationship or friendship or advocacy role with a staff member or group of staff.

Any potential conflict of interest will be considered by QCS and additional conditions of approval may be imposed to manage these interests should the project be approved. Timely identification and management of the potential conflict is essential. Researchers must advise as to how they plan to address such a conflict.

Such conflicts may arise because the researcher has a dual relationship with QCS and/or prospective participants. For example, a researcher may have previously been a QCS staff member and prior colleagues may feel a sense of obligation or pressure to assist with the research because of that relationship. Another example would be a provider of specialised services to QCS offenders who wants to evaluate the effectiveness of those services. Such a provider would be unlikely to be able to objectivity conduct their own evaluation and would need to convince the Committee that they had devised an appropriate method to overcome this issue.

4.4 Research by current or past offenders

It is QCS policy that offenders in custody or on community-based supervision orders are not allowed to conduct research involving contact with other prisoners, offenders or corrective services officers. Individuals who have previously been convicted are likely to experience difficulties obtaining criminal history clearance to conduct research inside correctional facilities.

4.5 Research by undergraduate, Honours and Graduate Diploma students

Where projects or assignments are to be conducted by undergraduate students, such applications will not be considered by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee. Nor will

the Committee consider projects proposed to be undertaken by Honours or Graduate Diploma students. This stance is taken to prevent student disappointment and inability to complete their studies because of the short time frames of such projects. For example, undue difficulty may be posed for such students in the situation where the Committee does not approve their projects.

Exceptions may occasionally be made to this rule:

- in the case of a very low risk study with minimal impost on QCS, such as use of an existing data set; or
- where an Honours or Graduate Diploma student undertakes to conduct research on a QCS-initiated topic (see the list of Emerging Topics on the QCS Research and Evaluation webpage) and the student's supervisor has negotiated this with the Research and Evaluation Unit.

4.6 Research by QCS employees or service contractors

There are particular issues that must be considered when QCS employees or service provider contractors apply to conduct research using QCS staff or offenders as participants. This is because of the potential for actual, or perceived conflict of interest arising out of the dual relationship that such a researcher would have with their participants.

In the case where the researcher is a staff member and proposes to recruit QCS employees for a study, the researcher must explain how they will manage any actual or perceived conflict of interest. This is particularly the case when the researcher has a more senior position than most of the proposed participants. It is especially important in such a situation that participation is completely voluntary and individual participants' data cannot be linked to their identity. If the study is funded by QCS and the participants are required to participate as part of the job, the researcher cannot automatically gain access to this data because QCS is the employer. Even though the researcher may have access through his or her professional position, the above stipulations still apply.

If it is proposed that the study will be fully or partially funded by the researcher's university or an outside body, the researcher should not apply for this funding until they at least have in principle, written support for their formal Expression of Interest to the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee. Researchers must still understand that in principle support and/or external funding does not guarantee that the project will be approved by QCS.

From time to time, QCS may contract, commission or collaborate with external researchers to complete a targeted research project. Research partnerships may involve applying for research grants to support the research and/or require in-kind support from nominated parties. A Memorandum of Understanding or formal contract may be put in place to establish the roles and responsibilities and key deliverables expected of each party involved in such a partnership.

QCS may also invite researchers to compete for research grants that target questions of interest to QCS.

4.7 Assistance provided to researchers

All researchers who are considering conducting research with QCS staff, offenders or data should first contact the Research and Evaluation Unit. Staff of this unit will assist with advice so that the researcher can complete an Expression of Interest form. In some cases, staff will direct researchers to publically available data such as that published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Productivity Commission (Reporting on Government Services) or the Office of the Government Statistician.

Research and Evaluation Unit staff will provide researchers with the appropriate forms and guidelines and act as a point of contact. If in principle support for the Expression of Interest is gained, the unit will then assist the researcher to progress a full application to the Research and Evaluation Committee. If the application is approved by the Committee, unit staff will then guide the researcher through the other phases of the project, submit security checks, make data requests, provide and submit legal agreements and put the researcher in contact with officers who will liaise with researchers in local centres or regions.

Beyond providing advice and information, QCS is unable to provide external researchers with research support or funding, except via the competitive QCS Research Grants program. The Research and Evaluation Unit occasionally works in partnership with external researchers on specific QCS-led projects, but for other projects, the Research and Evaluation Unit cannot collect or analyse raw data, conduct interviews, recruit participants, or conduct surveys for researchers. QCS staff cannot hand out, collect or post questionnaires for researchers – researchers themselves must undertake these tasks.

Where a research project is approved that involves data from QCS systems such as the Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS), the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit staff will coordinate and quality assure the extraction of this data by the IOMS team and then give the researcher this data in an appropriate, password-protected or encrypted format.

Researchers should note that the process of requesting, accessing and checking IOMS data is labour intensive and time-consuming. Therefore, researchers need to be exact about what data they require and should aim to avoid adding new variables later or making subsequent requests. Researchers should also be aware that internal and external demands for data extraction may at times be high and QCS cannot predict time required, expedite extraction or prevent delays in extraction.

Where an application is approved and the researcher needs to access a QCS facility to conduct the project, a QCS officer at the facility will be allocated as the operational contact for the research. The QCS officer will:

- provide support and guidance to researchers to ensure compliance with local QCS policies, procedures and guidelines; and
- assist with access to offenders for interviews, focus groups or surveys.

4.8 Indemnity and insurance

It is expected that researchers will have their own insurance for public liability and professional indemnity. The university that the researcher is associated with usually provides this. Researchers are required to provide a current professional and public liability

indemnity certificate to the Research and Evaluation Unit by attaching it when they submit their full application.

It is the responsibility of the research applicant to ensure that their research institution has appropriate and sufficient insurance to indemnify researchers and the department for loss or damage suffered by reasons of negligence or breach of the researcher, contractors, sub-contractors or agents for an adequate period of time.

5. QCS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

5.1 Role and purpose

The function of the Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) Research and Evaluation Committee is to ensure that research and evaluation undertaken at QCS is of high quality and scientific merit. All research conducted at QCS should have approval by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee, endorsed by the Commissioner, before it can proceed. The integrity and rigour of this approval process is designed to ensure that external researchers are adequately supported and potential problems are avoided or minimised. It also serves to ensure that high quality research that adds value to QCS, or to the corrective services field, is given priority.

The Committee functions as an authorising body, regarding all research and evaluation projects involving QCS offenders, staff or records. The Committee aims to ensure that all research and evaluation proposals/applications are aligned to the QCS Strategic and Business Plans and in accordance with legislative requirements and Workplace Health and Safety considerations.

The Research and Evaluation Committee provides a 'first point of approval' for all research proposals, identifying any ethical considerations as well as potential impacts or implications for QCS resulting from the research proposed.

Unless the proposed research has merit that outweighs impost on QCS operations and safety, the value of the research to QCS cannot be justified. The QCS Research and Evaluation Committee receives many applications to conduct research each year and these applications, in effect, compete for the limited impost that QCS can bear. The Committee therefore must weigh up the relative value of research proposals and prioritise which applications provide the best value to QCS, the criminology field and the community.

5.2 Membership

The QCS Research and Evaluation Committee consists of at least eight members including representatives from both the custodial and probation and parole operational areas. A quorum is five members or more. Where necessary, the Committee may from time to time, request additional individuals to serve as proxies or to add specialised expertise.

5.3 Meeting frequency

Research and Evaluation Committee meetings shall be held every three months and more often as deemed necessary by the Chairperson. Meeting dates, along with final dates for

submissions, can be found on the QCS Research and Evaluation web page and for QCS staff, on the QCS intranet research and evaluation page.

6. RESEARCH APPLICATION PROCESS

External researchers should not approach individual QCS correctional facilities, offices or individual staff for research approval. The Research and Evaluation Unit can guide researchers through the proper process.

Attempts should not be made to expedite, circumvent or influence considerations by the Research and Evaluation Committee by approaching the Commissioner or other senior QCS staff. Such attempts may result in applications being removed from consideration.

Occasionally, QCS may directly engage researchers to conduct contracted or commissioned research work, and this is often done in consultation with the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit and/or the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee. In these cases, QCS will generally engage in a competitive Request for Quote process to procure the research provider that is deemed to be most able to fulfil the particular identified need.

6.1 QCS Strategic Research Agenda and emerging topics

QCS supports and encourages criminological research relevant to the Agency's strategic goals. In determining research approval, preference will be given to projects that support the research areas highlighted in the QCS Strategic Research Agenda. Please refer to the QCS website for further information on QCS research priorities and specified project opportunities.

6.2 Expression of interest

A formal research application process must be followed with the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit and Committee for the approval of research that requires the use of QCS facilities, subjects and/or resources. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Research and Evaluation Unit early in their project considerations to discuss any proposed research along with resource implications, methodology, relevance to QCS, i.e., alignment to QCS's key strategic and operational priorities and processes prior to submitting an Expression of Interest.

Before progressing to a full Application to Conduct Research, researchers must have been invited to do so on the basis of their Expression of Interest to Conduct Research (available on the QCS website). In some cases, staff of the Research and Evaluation Unit may provide advice to researchers about how they might adjust or improve their EOI to enhance the likelihood of success at the next stage of the process. For example, adjustments may need to be made to ensure that the project could be accommodated and is potentially able to be supported before proceeding to full application. Invitation to submit a full application does not constitute Committee approval and does not guarantee final QCS approval.

Submitting an Expression of Interest prior to a full research application being lodged allows the researcher to benefit from preliminary advice and thus improves the likelihood of the Research and Evaluation Committee approving the project.

6.3 Declaration regarding conflict of interest

If there is an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest, the researcher must declare this in the Expression of Interest and if invited to submit a full application, in that document also. This must also be declared in the HREC application. In addition to declaring the conflict of interest, the researcher must explain how they intend to manage the conflict, to avoid influence on the study, its participants and QCS.

6.4 Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval

QCS require that the full HREC application and approval letter are submitted along with the full QCS Application to Conduct Research. Proposals submitted without these documents will ordinarily not be considered. It should be noted that HREC approval does not in any way assure or guarantee that the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee will approve the project.

If HREC approval is still pending at the time of QCS Research and Evaluation Committee consideration of the application, the researcher must still submit the HREC application along with an email to detail when HREC approval is likely to be issued. In such a situation, if the QCS Committee approves the project, this approval will be conditional on HREC approval being obtained and evidence of this approval will need to be submitted before the project may proceed.

6.5 Full research application

Once in principle support has been given in response to the submission of a QCS Research Expression of Interest, researchers will be invited to submit a full Application to Conduct Research. This application form is available on the QCS website. Applicants are advised to review the website for submission dates to ensure that their applications are received in time for consideration by the Research and Evaluation Committee.

It is preferable that applications are received well before the due date so that Research and Evaluation Unit staff can seek any further information or clarifications required prior to circulating the application to Committee members.

Please ensure sufficient detail is provided including all relevant information so that your application can be processed without unnecessary delay. Please complete all sections of the application. If a section does not apply to your research, please write ‘Not applicable’ or ‘N/A’ in the space provided. Do not leave it blank. Please define all terminology and abbreviations. Please check applications thoroughly to avoid misspelling and grammatical errors, including on participant information sheets, consent forms and questionnaires.

Also to be submitted along with the full application is the following:

- full HREC application;
- HREC letter of approval;
- all research tools, instruments, surveys and interview questions;
- participant information sheet/s and consent form/s; and
- current professional and public liability indemnity certificate/s.

6.6 Participant information sheet and consent form

Researchers may use appropriate templates for giving participants research information and seeking informed consent. The language in these forms should be kept simple and wording should be in plain English. These documents must be submitted along with full research applications. The forms must be on the letterhead of the researcher's institution.

The Participant Information Sheet must contain:

- a plain language warning to participants about disclosure of non-adjudicated offences (see section 8.5) where applicable;
- sufficient explanation regarding the limits of confidentiality, i.e., situations in which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, mandatory reporting requirements (see Section 8.7); and
- provision of information about counselling and safety of participants and how access to counseling will be facilitated or provided. Provision of a phone number for counselling is not sufficient.

6.7 Research instruments and data collection tools

Researchers should submit all research instruments, surveys, interview questions and other materials that they propose to use with participants. These should be submitted to the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee along with full research applications. After initial approval has been given by the Committee, researchers must not add or change the questions asked, surveys, instruments or tools to be used without first seeking approval from QCS by submitting a QCS Request for Variation to Research Project form. In addition, any changes must also be approved by the university HREC. Evidence of the HREC change application and approval must then be provided to the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit before the change can be approved. Implementation of changes may not occur until these approvals have been given.

7. QCS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

7.1 Scheduled meetings

Generally, the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee meets quarterly. Meetings may occasionally be held more often as deemed necessary by the Chairperson. Meeting dates, along with final dates for submissions, can be found on the QCS Research and Evaluation web page and for QCS staff, on the QCS intranet research and evaluation page. Researchers should ensure that their applications reach the Research and Evaluation Unit by the submission due date (preferably well before), as extensions will not be granted under any circumstances.

In cases where the Committee requires specific kinds of information or detailed explanation, researchers may be invited to Research and Evaluation Committee meetings to discuss their proposal.

7.2 Out-of-session consideration of applications

In *exceptional circumstances*, an application may be considered by the Committee at an extra-ordinary meeting or out-of-session. Submissions that may qualify for a review under exceptional circumstances include: studies requiring an urgent review to identify, reduce, expose or eliminate a real or potential risk or burden to participant safety or wellbeing; where it is necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to the research participants; where conduct of the research is of utmost importance to public policy or in the national interest; where submission of the application has been unforeseeably affected by a natural disaster, death, serious injury or grave illness; or the project is considered by the Committee Chair to be of low or negligible risk. Please note that projects carrying low or negligible risk are extremely unlikely in relation to projects conducted with QCS data, staff, offenders or other resources, because of the nature of this work.

Exceptional circumstances do not include the impact of delays during the preparation of the application, such as unavailability of specific personnel, transfer of the project to a new administering university or agency, approaching academic deadlines, delays in HREC approval or difficulties determining a suitable topic or methodology.

7.3 Criteria for evaluating applications

The approval process is designed to ensure that:

- offenders, QCS staff and the community are protected from physical, psychological and other forms of harm;
- participants' privacy and confidentiality is maintained;
- research does not carry risk of impacting negatively on the correctional environment;
- research is of benefit to the correctional/criminology field and the community;
- the research methodologies are appropriate and capable of producing valid and reliable results; and
- research results are accessible to the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit in the form requested, for dissemination to QCS staff.

The Committee may communicate with other relevant bodies, including other research and/or ethics committees, in the interests of facilitating high quality, ethical research. The Committee shall examine all Applications to Conduct Research. All deliberations of the Committee shall be in confidence.

The Committee will examine and evaluate applications for research to be undertaken within the agency in terms of strategic benefit, academic merit and impact on agency operations.

Strategic benefit will be assessed on factors such as the following:

- value of the research to the agency;
- how the research will inform operational strategies for the agency;
- consistency of the research with legislation, policies and procedures; and
- cost effectiveness of the research.

In addition, the research must not be a duplication of previous research conducted at QCS (please check the QCS Research and Evaluation list of current and completed projects on the Research and Evaluation webpage and intranet page).

Academic merit will be assessed on factors such as the following:

- likelihood of the research making an original contribution to criminological and scientific knowledge;
- strength and suitability of the research methodology; and
- competence of the applicant/s or principal investigator/s to undertake the research.

Impact on agency operations will be assessed on factors such as the following:

- management of the range and extent of research to ensure QCS operations are not jeopardised;
- appropriateness of research methodologies from an operational perspective;
- cost (including in-kind support) of providing research assistance and supervision/monitoring, against potential benefits;
- potential benefits and risks associated with the research, to researchers, offenders, staff, the agency and the community;
- research methodology is feasible and suitable for a custodial environment and/or a probation and parole office environment (where applicable);
- consideration of potential ethical issues that might arise when conducting research with an offender/prisoner population; and
- amount of in-kind assistance required from QCS (e.g., escorting researchers within custodial centres and assistance recruiting participants) and effects on the workload of QCS staff and on QCS's normal functioning.

7.4 Communication with researchers

The Research and Evaluation Committee supports open and informal communication with researchers in order to improve efficiency, reduce misunderstandings and encourage a

shared commitment to robust review. To this end, researchers are encouraged to discuss their proposal with QCS Research and Evaluation Unit staff. Where further information or clarification is required or where amendments are requested, communication may be in writing or informal.

Review of a research application by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee will result in one of the following decisions:

- approved;
- conditional approval (approval granted subject to specific amendments to the proposal, additional information being provided, or in principle approval granted from the relevant QCS business area);
- deferred (where applicant is required to provide additional information or make amendments to the proposal); or
- not approved.

The final decision will be as follows:

- approved; or
- not approved

The Research and Evaluation Unit will contact applicants as soon as practicable after the Committee meeting and advise them of the Research and Evaluation Committee's decision, pending endorsement of the decision by the Commissioner. This will be followed by a letter, sent as an email attachment, to the Principal Researcher listed in the application, formally advising on the outcomes of the meeting and (in the case of non-approval) the reasons for the decision.

When an application is not approved by the Research and Evaluation Committee, the applicant may submit a new application for consideration at a future Committee meeting, but the reasons for non-approval must be substantially addressed.

7.5 Commencement of approved projects

If the project is approved, the operational area of QCS in which the proposed research project is to be conducted will also be advised of the outcome and of any conditions imposed by the Research and Evaluation Committee. The project may commence after a formal letter is received by the researcher from the Research and Evaluation Unit, following the Commissioner's approval and the signed copies of the Deed of Agreement have been received by the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit.

It is important to note that final approval for external researchers to access Custodial Centres and Probation and Parole offices, and the timing of the research, is at the discretion of individual General Managers (Custodial) and Regional Managers (Probation and Parole). The researcher will be given the relevant contact details of the Manager, or delegate, who will liaise with them to coordinate access to conduct recruitment of participants. Approval does not guarantee that the research activity may be able to take place in a proposed correctional facility or regional office as this will be dependent on the ability of those

facilities to host the project at the given time. Circumstances may vary at these facilities from time to time and when they do, the researcher may need to be flexible about where and how the research may be conducted.

7.6 Consideration of applications to vary approved research

Researchers are required to seek approval for minor modifications to their research protocol, by submitting an Application for Variation. Examples include the addition of a researcher, an extension to the completion date, change to how the findings will be disseminated, or the addition of items to a survey.

Substantial additions or changes to the project methodology, such as the addition of focus groups, use of a different methodology, addition of a second phase, or extension of the project timelines, must be submitted through a new application.

Depending on the nature of the proposed amendment/s, minor variations may be:

- considered by the Chairperson/nominee between the meetings and the Research and Evaluation Committee notified of the decision at the next meeting;
- sent to the full Research and Evaluation Committee for consideration out of session; or
- considered at the next meeting of the Research and Evaluation Committee.

The Chairperson will decide on a case by case basis which process will be used, taking into account the nature of changes and associated risks, the impact of the changes on participants and potential risk, and the impact of any delays on the conduct of the project.

All requests for changes to research projects must also be submitted to the appropriate HREC; then both the HREC application to change and the HREC approval of the change must be submitted to the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit before the adjusted research activities can occur.

8. CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

8.1 Deed of agreement

All researchers must read and sign the QCS Researcher's Deed of Agreement before they may proceed with approved research projects. This document outlines the terms and conditions under which a researcher can conduct research into issues relating to QCS, and the assistance QCS is prepared to give in relation to the research being conducted. Researchers should read this document carefully and ensure they understand all of the details contained within before signing.

8.2 Confidentiality and data management

All researchers who will be using information or data as part of their research, including QCS systems data, historical offender data, survey or interview data gathered from QCS staff or offenders, must read and sign the Confidentiality and Data Management Agreement. This document outlines the terms and conditions under which a researcher can have access to

data or information relating to QCS, QCS staff or offenders. Researchers should read this document carefully and ensure they understand all of the details contained within before signing.

Procedures to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of data during processing and storage must be established. Researchers must ensure the secure storage of data, including password encryption of electronic files, and hard copies being locked in filing cabinets.

All identifying information must be deleted upon completion of the approved project and data management procedures must be employed to ensure anonymity of participants and QCS sites. Researchers must provide details of the data management procedures they will use to ensure this protection in their research application – for example, strategies for information storage, access and disposal of data.

On completion of the research, all extracted data must be returned to QCS or destroyed and evidence of the destruction must be provided to QCS. Any proposed subsequent use of the data must be submitted to QCS as a new application before any such use can occur.

8.3 Recording or transcribing

If a research project requires interview material to be recorded or transcribed, the details of how and why the researcher plans to do this will need to be carefully explained in the application to conduct research.

Permission to allow electronic devices to be brought into QCS premises and the recording or transcribing of interviews must be obtained from the General Manager of the facility or Regional Manager of the office. A mobile phone or computer cannot be used within correctional centres but may be permitted in P&P offices. The QCS Research and Evaluation Unit will coordinate this request and notify the researcher as to whether permission has been granted. Researchers need to ensure that they have an alternative plan for documenting interviews and information should their request to record or transcribe interviews be refused.

Interviews may only be recorded or transcribed provided that the informed consent of participants has been obtained.

Audio recordings are to be used only for the purposes of the research and should be securely stored. All audio recordings are to be destroyed following transcription or de-identified if needed for another research project purpose. Such records must be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.

The researcher will need to clearly explain, in the application, how recordings or transcriptions will be treated, secured and destroyed. If recordings will be transcribed by a third party, details of the third party will need to be provided and they will also need to sign a Confidentiality and Data Management Agreement.

8.4 Data ownership and conditions of data use

Reliable and defined custodianship and data management is essential to ensure data are collected, maintained and used appropriately. Good custodianship of data by QCS provides

accountability for datasets and gives the user confidence in the level of integrity, timelines, precision and completeness of datasets. QCS ensures as far as practicable, the accuracy, currency and timeliness of data supplied to researchers. Data quality assurance and quality control minimises any potential problems that may arise with data use by preventing errors and reviewing data management practices.

The provision of correct and accurate data is the responsibility of QCS as the data custodian. QCS will not be held responsible for incorrect data submitted by other organisations or agencies. QCS also reserves the right to use monitoring data that has been provided to it by any organisation for whatever purpose it sees fit, including supply of data to a third party.

Use of QCS data must conform to the following principles and conditions:

- access and use must be for authorised purposes, as defined by the approved research application, any conditions attached to the approval by QCS, the researcher institution's HREC and these guidelines;
- researchers must abide by the Researcher's Deed of Agreement and Confidentiality and Data Management Agreement that the researcher and QCS have signed;
- Queensland Government users must conform to ethical work practices as outlined in the Queensland Government Code of Conduct when using QCS data;
- researchers must not use the data for private use;
- researchers found to be engaging in unauthorised use of data may be subject to withdrawal of research approval; and
- researchers must use QCS data according to the stated requirements of their current project only.

8.5 Disclosure of harm or criminal activity

The safety and wellbeing of the community is paramount. If researchers are made aware of, or suspect on reasonable grounds, that an episode of harm to a child or young person has occurred or may imminently occur, they must disclose this to an appropriate authority (nominally the General Manager of the custodial facility or the Regional or District Probation and Parole Manager). Similarly, if a researcher is aware of a research participant engaging, or intended to engage in criminal activity (for example, drug taking, or vandalism), they must disclose this to the General Manager, Regional Manager or other appropriate authority. Similarly, if a research participant discloses to a researcher that they have committed an unreported crime, the researcher is required to report this to the appropriate authority (nominally the General Manager of the custodial facility or the Regional or District Probation and Parole Manager).

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PUBLICATION

QCS supports the publication of approved research project work undertaken with QCS data or participants, whether undertaken independently or in partnership with QCS. However, researchers must comply with the terms and conditions contained in the Researcher's Deed of Agreement.

Researchers must understand that the information contained in QCS records and data sets is highly confidential and sensitive. Therefore, researchers must not reveal, verbally, in written work or in presentations, any personal or identifying information that may identify or could be used to assist in identifying an individual person.

9.1 Intellectual property

The management of intellectual property in QCS is guided by the Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Guidelines (V2). Data owned by QCS is a form of intellectual property. By approving the use of QCS information for research purposes, QCS does not transfer any rights of ownership of the data, but grants the researcher a licence to use the data only for the specified purpose and period of the research. The State of Queensland retains copyright in the records, data and other information that may be made available to researchers. Unauthorised copying or publication of these records, data, etc., will be in breach of copyright.

Contractors and consultants engaged by QCS must abide by the standard contract material clause related to intellectual property used in QCS's Standard Consultancy Agreement. This agreement requires all intellectual property created in performing the contracted services to be transferred to QCS. Contracted university researchers may be granted a non-transferable licence to use new material generated from research for teaching and other internal research purposes.

For researchers who are not employed by or engaged by QCS as a contractor or consultant, QCS places no claim on the intellectual property generated by such research. However, if the project is of high relevance to QCS or could be used in policy development, QCS may negotiate to jointly release the research findings or material or to release the findings with the consent of the researcher/s. QCS will not claim ownership of any intellectual property created as a result of approved research unless it is otherwise agreed between involved parties or the researcher is an employee of the State and conducts the research in the course of employment (see below).

Intellectual property created by collaborative research between independent researchers and QCS employees, such as ARC Linkage projects, is subject to the specific clauses in the project contract. Any samples of work by research participants such as drawings, test results, essays, photographs and websites, remain the intellectual property of the participants. Researchers require written consent from the research participants to reproduce participants' work, although this consent does not constitute a transfer of intellectual property rights.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Australian Copyright Act 1968* and the *Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture (QGEA) Information Policies, Standards and Guidelines*, the State of Queensland owns any intellectual property resulting from research undertaken by QCS's employees in the course of their employment. According to the Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Guidelines, knowledge generated by staff conducting or contributing to research remains the intellectual property of QCS.

If research participants, who are also QCS staff, contribute their own work to the research, QCS retains copyright ownership of their original work. Participants must sign release forms

if research including original contributions from participants is intended for publication. QCS has certain rights to reproduce copyright material for training purposes.

Due to complexities in copyright law, it is prudent for researchers to obtain professional legal advice. Researchers may refer to Copyright Law in Australia: A Short Guide.

9.2 Moral rights of authorship

Authors retain moral rights of attribution of authorship, rights against false attribution of authorship and the right of integrity of authorship. QCS duly refers to authors when citing research reports, in accordance with the Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Guidelines.

Researchers should be aware that information regarding research applications, including name of institution, title of research, research summary, individuals to be approached, and start / conclusion dates may be included in QCS reports.

9.3 Acknowledgement

In all publications and presentations relating to the research, researchers must acknowledge QCS for any direct technical assistance, including help with accessing participants, or provision of data, as well as more indirect assistance via intellectual discussions and guidance regarding methodology and appropriate research topics.

If QCS provides any financial assistance or funding, the researcher must appropriately acknowledge this is any publication. The QCS Research and Evaluation Unit can advise regarding appropriate publication of QCS logos and templates.

If QCS staff have provided a substantial amount of input regarding methodology, data extraction, and /or review of written material, consideration should be given by the researcher to including those QCS as authors on publications.

9.4 Disclaimer

Any report, publication or presentation arising from the approved research must carry a disclaimer to the effect that:

- the material published cannot be considered as either endorsed by QCS or taken to represent the policies or views of QCS; and
- that errors or errors of omission are the responsibility of the researcher/s.

9.5 Review prior to publication or public release of findings

Researchers must supply QCS with a full draft copy of any material that they propose to make public or to publish in any way, and seek permission from QCS at least 30 days prior to submission for publication consideration. As per the Researcher's Deed of Agreement with QCS, QCS may require changes to such publications if it is believed that:

- there are errors of fact;
- the publication poses a potential security risk, including risk to QCS staff or the safe operations of QCS facilities or the safety of the community;
- confidentiality or other rights of participants have not been adequately protected;
- copyright rules have not been observed; or
- the publication does not include appropriate disclaimers and acknowledgements.

The purpose of this precaution being taken with draft publication material is not to impose censorship or editorial changes.

The term "publication" is defined here to mean reports, papers, articles, theses, presentations, newsletters, or any public or potentially public dissemination of all or part of research that makes use of data or information gathered from QCS, QCS staff, offenders or other resources.

In the case of partnership, commissioned or contracted research, notification and submission of proposed publications should also be sent to the QCS representative/s nominated in the MOU or project plan.

On occasion, research outcomes that have implications for sensitive policy and/or political issues will be of interest to the media. Researchers must inform QCS's Research and Evaluation Unit if the media contacts them about research activities specifically conducted within QCS, or if the researcher intends to issue a media release about QCS-specific research. If possible, researchers should submit media releases to the Research and Evaluation Unit for review prior to release to the media.

If it is proposed that the media coverage will take place in or around QCS sites, permission must also be obtained from the relevant General Manager or Regional Manager.

10. CONDUCT OF APPROVED PROJECTS

10.1 General conditions

Researchers must ensure that they:

- adhere to these Research Guidelines, QCS's Code of Conduct, Researcher's Deed of Agreement, and the Confidentiality and Data Management Agreement;
- adhere to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research;
- adhere to the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health Research;

- adhere to the requirements of relevant health services regulatory bodies if conducting health and medical research;
- behave and conduct themselves ethically, responsibly, professionally and diligently in all aspects of the Approved Research Project;
- ensure that the safety, privacy, welfare and human rights of the Department's clients, staff and contractors are protected;
- adhere to the scope and terms of the Approved Research Project as it was approved by QCS and the relevant HREC, including any additional conditions of approval;
- give special regard to the interest and needs of specific groups of participants including young people, people in vulnerable or dependent relationships, people with cognitive impairment, intellectual disability or mental illness, cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and people from culturally diverse backgrounds;
- do not provide any detailed or specific information about any of QCS's premises, especially correctional centres, to any person, unless approved in writing by QCS;
- do not convey any impression that in carrying out the approved research project (including contacting third parties) that the researcher is an employee of QCS or conducting research on behalf of QCS unless this is actually the case; and
- immediately inform QCS of any arising, potential contentious or conflicting issues or conflict of interest.

10.2 Criminal history check

All researchers who are approved to conduct research at QCS must complete a Request for Criminal History Check form. Such checks remain valid for 12 months, but if something changes that may affect the criminal history check, researchers have a legal obligation to advise QCS. Further checks are subsequently required at intervals of not more than 12 months. This criminal history check is valid across facilities.

Applications for criminal history checks, along with a certified copy of drivers licence, should be forwarded to the Research and Evaluation Unit via the email provided (please note that processing of these checks may take 4–6 weeks).

Researchers with previous criminal convictions or outstanding warrants may be denied entry to Queensland correctional facilities.

10.3 Access to QCS custodial facilities

All researchers seeking access to a custodial facility must first apply on the Application to Visit – Professional, Official or Other Business Purposes – Approved Form 27 (a) before visiting a corrective services facility for the first time. This form will be emailed to external researchers and must be submitted to the Research and Evaluation Unit at least a week in advance of the proposed visit.

On each occasion that the researcher enters a correctional centre, proof of identification must be provided. If any doubt exists regarding the identification and/or authorisation of the researcher, they may be denied access to the facility.

All visitors entering a facility must wear, in plain view, an identification card or visitor's pass on the outside of their clothing. Visitor passes must be returned by the bearer prior to departure from the facility.

10.4 Mandatory security requirements for research in custodial settings

All researchers conducting research activity within a correctional facility must undertake the mandatory security requirements of QCS which are outlined below:

- criminal history check (see above);
- induction training including a 1 day Custodial Awareness session and an on-site induction at the correctional facility research is to occur at;
- biometric identification at the correctional facility/s;
- compliance with regulations regarding unauthorised items; and
- agreement to privacy and confidentiality policies.

10.4.1 Custodial awareness and on-site induction

A condition of approval to conduct research within a correctional facility is that the researcher must undertake a custodial awareness induction program comprising of two segments namely:

- reading a QCS custodial awareness booklet, signing a statement to verify that the researcher/s have read and understood the material and returning this signature page to the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit.
- researchers will be required to undertake a local centre induction at each correctional facility they will be conducting research at, prior to the commencement of research.

  The custodial awareness and local centre induction outlined above is intended to cover general topics relating to correctional facilities in Queensland and general orientation to the local facility where the research is taking place. The researcher acknowledges and agrees that this induction in no way affects or replaces their obligation to conduct the research as approved by the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee and the relevant university HREC.

10.4.2 Corrective service facility dress code

There are strict rules about what visitors may wear when visiting a corrective services facility, including community corrections offices. You must wear:

- shoes or sandals with a strap around the heel (no thongs) if entering a correctional centre; and
- clean clothes in good condition.

Visitors should not wear:

- clothing that has obscene or discriminatory words on it;

- shirts or tops without sleeves, including tank tops and singlets;
- short skirts or short shorts;
- very tight clothing;
- clothing that you can see through; or
- clothing that is revealing.

Visitors may wear a wedding or engagement ring, but must remove all other jewellery before entering a correctional centre.

10.4.3 Biometric identification at the correctional centre

Researchers who need to enter QCS custodial facilities are required to submit to the biometric identification process and be registered and processed on this system where this technology is available. A reminder to renew the criminal history check will be presented when the visitor accesses a biometric access point, once ten months from the date of the last criminal history check have elapsed. If the criminal history check is not renewed, the biometric system will deny the visitor any further access.

10.4.4 Compliance with regulations regarding unauthorised items

Queensland correctional facilities became tobacco and smoke free on 5 May 2014. Under s20 of the Corrective Services Regulations 2006, tobacco and smoking related products are prohibited. The following applies:

- smoking is not permitted anywhere on correctional facility grounds, including car parks. Personal tobacco or other smoking related products (including e cigarettes) should not be brought onto the grounds of a correctional centre; however, if a person entering the grounds of a correctional centre is in possession of tobacco or other smoking related products, these products must be secured in either a motor vehicle or a visitors locker;
- tobacco or other smoking related products (including e cigarettes) must not under any circumstances be taken inside a correctional centre;
- no smoking will be permitted anywhere on the grounds of a correctional centre (including car parks, walkways, visits processing etc.); and
- failure to comply may result in a direction to leave the prison grounds or suspension of access to correctional facilities.

With the exception of wedding and engagement rings, visitors to a custodial facility, including researchers, must not take any personal items, except for paper and pens into a correctional centre. All other personal property is unauthorised and must be left by the visitor in their vehicle or stored in an appropriate storage locker provided by QCS. QCS accepts no responsibility or liability for loss or damage to visitors' personal possessions stored in a QCS facility.

Under the *Corrective Services Regulation 2006*, Section 20, no visitor to a QCS custodial facility is permitted to bring a prohibited thing into a prison facility. Each of the following is a prohibited thing:

- a weapon, replica of a weapon or other replica under the *Weapons Act 1990*;
- an explosive or ammunition under the *Explosives Act 1999*;
- a flammable substance;
- anything capable of being used to scale a fence, wall, door or gate, e.g., grappling hook, ladder, rope;
- anything capable of cutting or spreading metal bars;
- anything capable of damaging or destroying a fitting or fixture designed to detain prisoners;
- a key, card, or other device capable of opening a mechanical or electronic lock;
- soap or another substance containing an impression of a prohibited thing, including, for example, a key;
- a knife, a saw, scissors or another cutting implement;
- kitchen utensils or equipment or tools;
- a spirituous or fermented fluid or substance of an intoxicating nature;
- a drug or medicine;
- a syringe or other device capable of administering a drug;
- cash, a credit card, debit card, cheque or money order or another negotiable instrument;
- a document containing a person's credit card or debit card details;
- a form of identification, including, for example, false identification, e.g., a passport, or a document that appears to be a passport;
- anything capable of being used to alter a prisoner's appearance so that it significantly differs from the prisoner's appearance described in the record kept under section 10 of the Act, e.g., a tattooing device;
- a communication device, e.g., a computer, modem, phone, radio, radio scanner or universal serial bus (commonly known as a 'USB');
- a device capable of enabling a prisoner to access information that could be a risk to the security of a corrective services facility;
- an objectionable computer game under the *Classification of Computer Games and Images Act 1995*;
- a film classified as an "R" film under the *Classification of Films Act 1991*, an objectionable film under that Act, or a film that, if it were classified under that Act, would be classified as an "R" film or an objectionable film;
- a prohibited publication under the *Classification of Publications Act 1991*;
- anything modified from its usual form to enable something to be concealed in it;

- anything that poses a risk to the security or good order of a corrective services facility, including, for example, a drawing, plan or photo of the facility; and
- any part of a thing mentioned above.

10.4.5 Operational limitations

Researchers need to be aware that safety and security over-ride all other considerations within QCS correctional facilities and probation and parole offices. This may mean that the ability for the researcher to conduct their research activities is restricted or confined to certain areas or times of the day or that access to particular offenders or groups of offenders is not permitted.

To facilitate safe movement of offenders and staff and the smooth running of facilities, most correctional centres operate on a fixed schedule each day. It is important that research does not cause disruption to this schedule or to the normal activities of the centre. From time to time, facilities or units within facilities may be "locked down" for periods of time and researchers need to allow extra time for such occurrences.

Restrictions can sometimes make certain research methods impractical. For example, prisoners have restricted access to telephones and their conversations may be recorded. Consequently, research proposing to collect data via lengthy telephone interviews with prisoners would not be possible. The Research and Evaluation Unit staff will provide advice regarding designing the research so that it can be practically and safely accommodated in a prison environment.

10.5 Recruitment of participants

Except where an approved research project involves the use of unidentifiable administrative data sets or information, researchers will be required to seek informed consent from individuals who are participating in research. Such informed consent must be consistent with Chapter 2.2 and 2.3 of the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Section 3 of these guidelines.

Recruitment of prisoners and offenders in the community must be done with consideration of fairness to all prisoners in a facility or offenders reporting to a regional office. This means that all eligible participants should have equal access to the opportunity to participate. This may require a randomised recruitment strategy that is made explicit to potential participants at the outset.

10.6 Incentives and inducements

In general, QCS does not support the offer of reimbursement or incentives to any prisoners as inducement to participate in research.

Reimbursement of travel expenses for offenders on community corrections orders is generally considered acceptable, but QCS will not accept any reimbursement that they consider to be excessive.

11. VARIATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECTS

QCS reserves the right to vary conditions to approved research projects as may become operationally necessary. When such a situation arises, QCS will explain the reason for the change and wherever possible, provide access to a similar participant group or data set as that originally approved.

Any requests for repeat or subsequent research studies, or extensions to previous studies, must be submitted to QCS as a new application. Previous approvals or approvals from other agencies or jurisdictions will not be accepted.

Long-term longitudinal projects will only be granted approval for five-year periods at a time and continuation of such projects is contingent on the submission of annual reports outlining progress and interim findings.

12. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Responsibility for monitoring research lies with the institution under which the research is conducted and with the researchers responsible for research conduct. The Research and Evaluation Committee, as a reviewing body, may request researchers to provide information relating to the conduct of the project.

The Research and Evaluation Committee will, as a condition of approval, require that researchers immediately report anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project. This includes reporting of:

- adverse events;
- early termination of a research; or
- variations, extensions or modifications to the research protocol, methods, tools, survey or interview questions, etc.

12.1 Progress reports

Specifically, the Research and Evaluation Committee will require applicants to provide a report at least annually and at completion of the study, outlining progress to date (or outcomes for completed research), maintenance and security of records, compliance with the approved proposal, compliance with any conditions of approval and compliance with the Researcher's Deed of Agreement and Confidentiality and Data Management Agreement. Failure to submit progress and completion reports may result in QCS withdrawing approval for the research project.

12.2 Completion reports

Researchers are required to submit a final completion report upon completion of the research phase of the project. The report should include a short executive summary of the research findings that is suitable for QCS to disseminate internally. Long-term longitudinal projects must submit reports including interim findings on an annual basis.

12.3 Adverse events

Adverse events may include adverse responses from participants or other bodies (including media) in reaction to research, research methods used or the content of the research instruments. Adverse events have the potential to have longer term implications for the data collection process or the organisations involved in the research, including the institution responsible for the research and/or QCS.

The Principal Researcher is responsible for reporting all adverse events, firstly to a responsible officer or manager at the correctional centre where the research is being conducted, and secondly to the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit. The researcher must include the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit in all correspondence regarding adverse events, and forward updates on adverse events to the unit.

For serious adverse events, the Principal Researcher must report the event as soon as possible and if practicable, within 24 hours of the event. In reporting an adverse event, the Principal Researcher must provide written notification to the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit via email detailing:

- information about what occurred;
- events leading up to the adverse event;
- details of any harm suffered by anyone associated with the research;
- what action was taken to manage the adverse event;
- whether the researcher believes it is appropriate to continue or discontinue the project; and
- consideration of whether participant information sheets or consent forms may require amendment, given any change in risk associated with the project.

In such a circumstance the Chairperson may refer the matter to the responsible institution and request an investigation.

12.4 Early termination

Should the researcher, for any reason, decide to terminate the project before it has been completed, the researcher must notify the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit.

In certain instances, QCS may terminate research projects (see Section 15 below).

13. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Suspected research misconduct will be reported to the University HREC associated with the project as soon as any misconduct is thought to have occurred. Research misconduct includes (but is not limited to) any fraud, corruption, misuse of data, unethical, deceptive or illegal conduct, unprofessional behaviour, or conduct of unapproved research activities. There is no requirement for preliminary inquiries. Nor is it necessary to have evidence of a particular standard to verify suspected research misconduct. QCS needs only to have reasonable suspicion to notify a University HREC of suspected misconduct, as any

investigation into the matter is the responsibility of the HREC that approved the research activity and has jurisdiction over the researcher/s involved.

14. HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

14.1 Complaints concerning the conduct of a project

As per the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007,* QCS has nominated a '*designated person*' for handling internal research concerns, allegations or complaints about the conduct of a project, including research misconduct or fraud. The '*designated person*' for QCS is the Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance. Complaints regarding the conduct of research may also be lodged with the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee Secretary or Chairperson detailing the grounds of the complaint. Any concerns that QCS has in relation to concerns, allegations or complaints relating to possible breaches of the Code or misconduct by external researchers will be reported to the Chair of the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee who may then in turn, report the matter to the appropriate University HREC.

14.2 Complaints concerning the Research and Evaluation Committee's review process

Applicants are entitled to lodge complaints about the conduct of the Research and Evaluation Committee in reviewing applications if they feel they have been dealt with unfairly. Complaints must be lodged in writing with the Research and Evaluation Committee Secretariat within 10 working days of the Research and Evaluation Committee's final decision being communicated to the applicant.

The Chairperson will investigate the complaint and make recommendations to the Research and Evaluation Committee about the appropriate course of action. A review of the Research and Evaluation Committee's decision will only be conducted if it is found that the conduct of the Research and Evaluation Committee substantially affected the decision that was made.

Complainants who are not satisfied with the management of the complaint may contact the Commissioner and seek final resolution of the complaint. This must be done in writing within 10 working days of advice from the Chair regarding investigation of the complaint being received.

The Commissioner's decision will determine the appropriate course of action and will communicate this to the complainant and the Research and Evaluation Committee within 20 working days. The matter will subsequently be considered closed.

15. SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL

The QCS Research and Evaluation Committee approval applies for a maximum of five years, except where action is taken to suspend or terminate the decision. A request to extend the duration of the research project is submitted by the Principal Investigator as a Variation to

Project for review by the Committee in the first instance. Research and Evaluation Committee approval for an extension applies for a maximum of five years, except where action is taken to suspend or terminate the decision.

The Research and Evaluation Committee may suspend or withdraw approval if it has reason to believe that the project may compromise participants' welfare. The Research and Evaluation Committee will take whatever steps necessary to ensure researchers, institutions and other stakeholders are informed of this decision. If the Chairperson considers that urgent suspension of research is necessary, he or she will contact the responsible institution.

Should QCS need to withdraw or suspend approval for the project for operational reasons, the researcher will be notified as soon as is practicable. In cases where operational matters preclude continuation of the project, QCS will endeavour to work with researchers to make substitution arrangements. For example, if it becomes unworkable for the project to be conducted with offenders in custody, it may be possible for the project to continue with offenders in the community who have recently been released from custody.

Version Control

Version	Date	Comments
1	11/2017	New document

Contact with the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee

Contact with the QCS Research and Evaluation Committee can be made through the QCS Research and Evaluation Unit.

Email contact via Research@dcs.qld.gov.au

Phone contact via (07) 3006 4103

Postal address: QCS Research and Evaluation Committee
C/O Research and Evaluation Unit
Queensland Corrective Services
GPO Box 1054
Brisbane Queensland 4001

Research and Evaluation webpage: https://www.qld.gov.au/law/sentencing-prisons-and-probation/data-and-research