



INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

1. Research Applications and Advisory Committee

The Research Applications and Advisory Committee (RAAC) is a committee in the Department of the Attorney General (DotAG) which considers, co-ordinates and monitors external requests to undertake research or requests for data for research and analysis purposes.

The role of the RAAC is to consider these requests to ensure they meet the following requirements:

- maintenance of a high level of ethical integrity;
- proposed projects are of high methodological quality;
- where applicable, there is consistency of approach across research projects;
- the safety and security of Departmental personnel and infrastructure;
- projects comply with relevant laws and public sector standards e.g. confidentiality; and
- proposed projects do not place an unacceptable resource imposition on business areas and they are relevant to the Departments strategic priorities.

Applications for research through the RAAC also provide a clear single entry point and guidance structure for external researchers and enables the Department to maintain records of ongoing research activities for future reference.

2. Ethical standards

As RAAC is not an ethics committee, it does not formally consider the human ethics perspective of research proposals. However, RAAC reserves the right to check applications against its own ethical standards to ensure that the safety, privacy, welfare and human rights of defendants, offenders and their families, victims, prisoners, staff and researchers are protected and respect RAAC's ethical standards to:

- treat people with respect, courtesy and sensitivity;
- recognise their culture, interests and rights; and
- promote and protect their safety and welfare.

Where an ethics approval is required by the researcher's organisation (for example a university), RAAC requires that approval documentation be included with the research application.

3. Research design and methodological quality

Ethical standards also require a sound methodology, including confidentiality, reliability, validity, and accuracy in the collection and reporting of data. The main responsibility for the development of an adequate methodology lies with the applicant and their supervisors. However, RAAC is comprised of members with expertise in justice research practices who will assess the suitability of the research design within the particular context of justice and criminology research. Essentially, researchers are required to use a research design that uses defensible, good-quality methodologies suited to the nature of the research.

4. Consistency of approach and single entry point

Where possible and appropriate, the Department endeavours to apply the same high standards to all research projects being undertaken. The governance structure within RAAC and the Department encourage consistent approval processes across all areas of the Department. Consistent research processes also mean that interpretations of data or analysis are consistent across research projects, including consistent caveats and counting rules.

In addition, a single entry point for external researchers, particularly students has multiple benefits, as follows:

- reduces the burden on Departmental staff from unsolicited research applications;
- researchers and business areas will have a clear support structure during the project;
- researchers and business areas will have a clear governance structure for the duration of the project (this includes guidelines on starting and completing the project);
- an ongoing record of all research projects will be maintained for future reference; and
- both business areas and the executive if necessary can be made aware of relevant findings.

5. Safety, security and legal considerations

All research projects should comply with the rules and safety and security practices of Department premises, including Courts. A significant proportion of the Department's day-to-day business activities are strictly regulated by legislation. Research cannot be supported outside these rules.

6. Resource and other constraints

As DotAG is the main point of access to Courts, court defendants, and victim services, it is asked to support many research projects. However, the capacity to do so is limited. Moreover, DotAG has a duty of care towards its clients, which includes the protection from projects which might cause harm, ongoing stress or inconvenience, or do not sufficiently contribute to knowledge about issues relevant to DotAG. For these reasons, DotAG may restrict research access.

7. Strategic priorities

DotAG is committed to building its policies and service delivery on a good practice and evidence-informed foundations. It is RAAC's responsibility and intention to promote, encourage and support DotAG justice-related research to underpin our strategic directions, planning, resourcing and service delivery.

Accordingly, all DotAG-related research projects must:

- advance knowledge in the various court jurisdictions, other service delivery areas and policy areas of DotAG; and
- contribute to the advancement of knowledge about the justice system.

In its considerations, RAAC will give priority to projects that are orientated towards, and support, the strategic priorities of the Department.

8. Application process

8.1 Who can apply?

To be eligible to undertake research within DotAG, researchers must:

1. Belong to one of the following groups:
 - Masters and PhD level research;
 - Tertiary institutions and entities undertaking post-graduate or other research;
 - Government funded consultancies; or
2. Have received approval from RAAC to undertake the research.
3. Have received approval from the relevant business area or Head of court jurisdiction to undertake the research.

8.2 How to apply?

A research application requires a detailed rationale for the project. It includes information about the selection and size of the sample, the practical implementation, participant consent, protecting data etc. The templates are available on DotAG Website at: www.department.dotag.wa.gov.au under About the Department, or for immediate access go to the DotAG Students and Researchers Webpage at: http://www.department.dotag.wa.gov.au/S/students_researchers.aspx. Please send your research application in electronic format to: RAAC@justice.wa.gov.au.

8.3 Submission deadlines

The RAAC meetings are generally held monthly. Applications and proposals are required to be submitted 16 working days prior to the scheduled meeting to give RAAC members the opportunity to review and assess the proposal.

8.4 Approval process

The RAAC will review all research projects mainly to assess the research design and methodological soundness. Concurrently, RAAC's divisional representatives will review applications to determine if these proposals are achievable and relevant. Both business area support and a recommendation from RAAC is required for the project to proceed. The Chair of RAAC will recommend approval of a project to the Director PAS, will approve or reject the Committee's recommendation.

Applicants will be informed of RAAC decision in writing within 10 working days of the meeting, including the reasons for the decision. The outcome can be:

- approval of the proposal is granted;
- approval is granted, subject to specific conditions;
- approval is pending, subject to further clarification or detail; or
- proposal is not approved.

Please note that while RAAC commits itself to progress all applications as quickly as possible, researchers should bear in mind that the full process might take up to two months or more from the application submission date, due to the requirement for additional information, divisional approval, etc. Proposals that require access to judicial officer, or to court clients will likely take longer to approve.

All successful applicants will be required to attend a start-up meeting with the relevant business area and a representative from the Research and Analysis branch, Policy and Aboriginal Services.

8.5 Appeal process

If an applicant does not agree with the decision of the RAAC, an appeal can be made in writing to the Director, Policy and Aboriginal Services, Department of the Attorney General.

9. Code of conduct

It is a Departmental requirement that researchers agree to the conditions specified in the DotAG Research and Evaluation Code of Conduct prior to commencing their research.

The Code of Conduct states that researcher/s having direct access to DotAG clients, facilities and/or client data may be required to undertake a criminal screening and, if applicable, a Working With Children clearance as per departmental policy. The Code of Conduct also requires that the Department reviews any papers prior to publication release. RAAC requests a copy of the final report at least three weeks prior to its release. Researchers will also be asked to produce a three to four page summary for placing on the Department's website. Researchers who do not comply with the Code of Conduct may jeopardise the success of future applications from the particular research institution.

For further information refer to the [Code of Conduct for Researchers](#).

We thank you for your interest in carrying out research in the Department and hope these guidelines have been of assistance