



External research data requests guidelines

October 2023

Purpose

The External Research Data Request Guidelines (the guidelines) provide you with advice if you are intending to request National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) data for research purposes. These guidelines will help you:

- complete the research requests application form (the request form), and
- understand the external research data request review process.

1. Before you begin

1.1 Publicly available data

Ahpra and the National Boards already make a lot of data related to the National Scheme publicly available. It is recommended that you check the [Ahpra website](#) to see if the data you are requesting is already publicly available.

1.2 Archived material

For any data and/or information that was held by a former state and territory health registration board which existed before the relevant profession joined the National Scheme, you can make a [freedom of information request](#) by emailing foi@ahpra.gov.au.

1.3 External Research Data Request Policy

Please read [Ahpra's External Research Data Requests Policy](#) before making a request for data. The policy outlines important principles which are considered when Ahpra receives your research data request.

1.4 Timeframes

All external research data requests undergo a thorough process of consideration to ensure Ahpra and the National Boards comply with their legislated requirements under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Depending on the scope and extent of your request, and the subsequent resources or time that may be required to extract and prepare the data, finalising your research data request may take up to six months. During the application process, you will be provided with an estimate of time it will take to complete your request. You will need to incorporate these estimated timelines into your projected research project timelines.

2. Who is eligible to request research data?

Anyone (who is not directly employed by Ahpra) can request research data from Ahpra, as long as they are conducting a research project that has the appropriate level of ethics approval from a NHMRC registered Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This includes, but is not limited to:

- external researchers and research bodies seeking access to research data who have had no prior contact with Ahpra or the National Boards,
- external researchers and research bodies who have held previous discussions with or gained tentative support from Ahpra and/or any of the National Boards to conduct research and/or to access National Scheme data for a research purpose, and
- external researchers and research bodies with existing partnerships or other research agreements with Ahpra or National Boards.

3. Making a formal external research data request

Please refer to [5. Internal management of Ahpra's external research data request procedures](#) for more information about the external research data request process.

Please email researchrequests@ahpra.gov.au to discuss your research project and your request for access to National Scheme data for research purposes. This initial email is viewed as a general enquiry to initiate discussion about your research data needs and whether Ahpra can be of assistance.

Once you have emailed researchrequests@ahpra.gov.au, an Ahpra staff member will contact you to provide you with the request form. Completing the request form will assist us in fully understanding your research data request. Regardless of any initial discussions you may have had with an Ahpra staff or a National Board, the external research data request process commences once you've submitted the completed request form to researchrequests@ahpra.gov.au.

3.1 Ahpra key contact

The Ahpra Research, Evaluation and Insights team will be the key contact for your research data request. The Research, Evaluation and Insights team will work with you to:

- 1.1.1 ensure you understand the [policy](#) and processes,
- 1.1.2 discuss your proposed research,
- 1.1.3 provide an overview of what data is available,
- 1.1.4 identify the data items essential to test your research question,
- 1.1.5 meet your requirements as far as possible, and
- 1.1.6 provide an estimate of costs and time to complete your request.

3.2 Completing the data request form

It is your responsibility to complete the request form, providing information and attachments with the appropriate information, including:

- 1.1.1 the research topic,
- 1.1.2 the defined research aims and purpose,
- 1.1.3 the research method,
- 1.1.4 confirmation of ethics approval from a NHMRC registered HREC,
- 1.1.5 clearly articulate how the research aligns with the [policy's principles](#),
- 1.1.6 specify your National Scheme data needs and how the requested data meets your research needs,
- 1.1.7 how you will protect and secure the National Scheme data,
- 1.1.8 how you are intending to disseminate and/ or the research findings, and
- 1.1.9 any other relevant information.

It should be noted that having been granted HREC approval for your project does not guarantee that Ahpra will approve the release of National Scheme research data. The National Scheme external research data request process is a separate mechanism for approval, and HREC approval is only one criterion in Ahpra's consideration in approving release of National Scheme data.

The Research, Evaluation and Insights team may contact you for further clarification once the request form has been submitted.

3.3 Cost recovery

Except where the National Law requires Ahpra to provide data, a cost recovery fee will be charged.

The fees cover Ahpra's administrative and staffing costs related to external research data requests. After the initial review of your research data request, an estimate of costs will be provided for your consideration. The research data request review process will only proceed after you have accepted the anticipated costs.

The fees are stated on the request form and are reviewed on an annual basis in line with annual operational cost increases. Fees are usually non-negotiable.

3.4 Legal requirements

If your research data request is provisionally approved (see [5. Internal management of Ahpra's external research data request procedures](#)), you will be notified via email. You and/or your organisation will be required to enter a Data Use Deed with Ahpra to confirm the formal arrangements for the release and transfer of the data. The Data Use Deed covers the following issues:

- privacy and confidentiality,
- proper use, de-identification, storage and destruction of National Scheme data,
- intellectual property,
- sharing research findings and outcomes with Ahpra pre-publication, and
- Ahpra's requirements for review of articles prior to publication.

The researcher responsible for making the external research data request will also be required to sign a Confidentiality Deed Poll on behalf of the research team with Ahpra before the release and transfer of the data.

3.5 Transfer of research data

Any information provided is done so in good faith with every intention to provide accurate data however this cannot be guaranteed. Ahpra will transfer the approved National Scheme data in a secure manner determined by Ahpra.

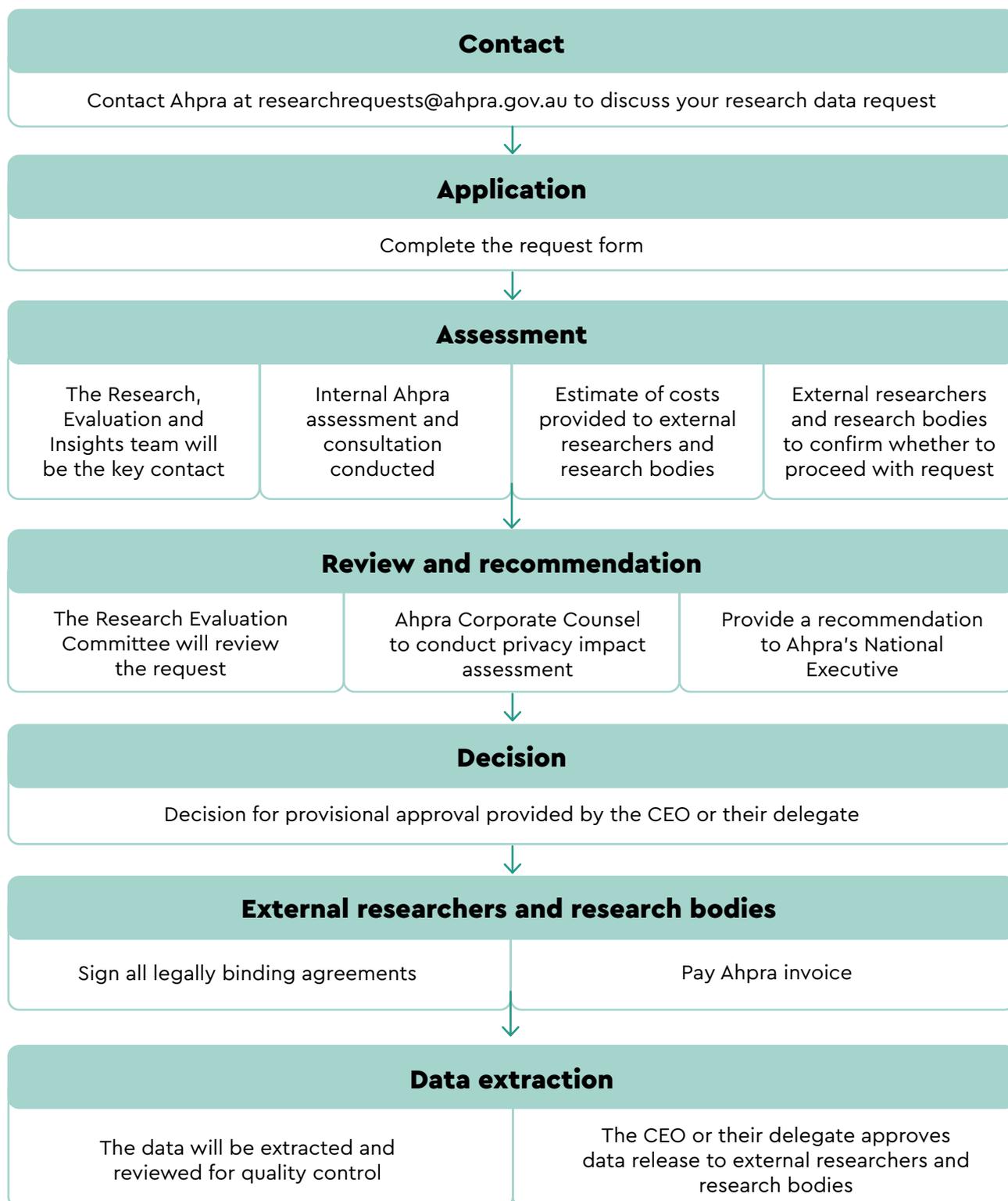
4. Compliance with Ahpra's policies

All external research data requests must comply with the National Scheme External Research Data Requests policy and align with our [Research Framework](#).

5. Internal management of Ahpra's external research data request procedures

The flowchart below summarises the steps in Ahpra's management and review of your request once the request form has been received. The primary purpose of data collection under the National Law is to regulate health practitioners. Accordingly, National Scheme data may not have been recorded in a manner that is ideal for other purposes, including research. Therefore, each research data requests provides different complexities that require careful internal considerations related to Ahpra's operational capacity and legislative requirements.

Our overriding interest when addressing your request is to ensure we meet the information privacy and confidentiality requirements of the National Law. This means requests cannot usually be expedited.



6. Acceptance criteria

The policy outlines the principles which form part of the criteria for Ahpra's decision-making for research data requests. The chart below provides a summary of the key steps Ahpra will take in deciding whether to accept your research data request.

