

# Department of Corrections

## RESC Process – Frequently Asked Questions

Corrections values research partnerships with universities and other institutions and is keen to further develop these.

In December 2025, we made some changes to the process for external researchers to apply to undertake research with our staff, people we manage, or our data.

### What are the changes to the research application process?

We have introduced an additional review process to ensure research is both technically sound and aligned with organisational priorities:

1. **Technical Review Committee (TRC):**

Reviews research methodology, design, data availability, feasibility, and ethical/privacy considerations.

2. **Research and Evaluation Steering Committee (RESC):**

Considers business and operational factors, alignment with strategic priorities, and the ability to address immediate organisational challenges.

Researchers will now submit **one application only** (the previous preliminary application step has been removed). Research applications shortlisted from TRC review will proceed to RESC review.

**Note:** RESC can review many applications per year. Research should align closely with Corrections' strategic goals and capacity constraints.

The new process will be reviewed after one year, and we welcome feedback.

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### Who sits on the Technical Review Committee (TRC)?

TRC membership will foremost reflect a focus on technical research expertise but may also include/invite additional individuals with subject matter expertise as required. Core members:

- Research Manager (Chair)
- Two members of the Research Team
- Representative from Strategic Analysis
- Representative from Psychology Practice Team
- Expertise from Tumu Herenga Group (tikanga and Mātauranga Māori)

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### How will applications be assessed by the Technical Review Committee?

The TRC will review applications prior to them going to the wider Research and Evaluation Steering Committee (RESC). The TRC will take the following into consideration:

- Research methodology and design - this includes the reason for selecting a specific methodology, sampling, research instruments, data collection, data analysis, research limitations
- Data availability and feasibility of research
- Ethical and privacy considerations - these are considerations related to the conduct of the research or impact on the offender population, so that the proposed research demonstrates an understanding of the Department's duty of care towards those under its management which includes protection from projects which might cause harm or on-going stress to participants.
- Ensuring the research is not part of the Department's work plan or will not duplicate existing research. If a situation arises where applications from two sources overlap or duplicate, we will talk to the universities involved to try to resolve how best the work can be achieved, taking into account privacy considerations.

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## Can researchers receive feedback and amend the proposal to resubmit to the Technical Review Committee (TRC)?

The new process enables Corrections to consider two important components to an application separately:

- Research methodology and design; data availability and the feasibility of the research; and ethical and privacy considerations (TRC review)

**AND**

- Business and operational considerations; alignment to organisational priorities; and demonstration of ability to meet organisational immediate challenges (RESC review)

RESC reviews 20-30 research applications per year to carry out research. Corrections is primarily interested in supporting research that is aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation with targeted research to inform critical organisational decisions.

We are also mindful of the significant demand research projects often place on our front-line operations and back-office staff and need to manage the volume of applications.

We are keen to work with researchers and feedback will be provided where possible. However, if a project is deemed unfeasible at the current time, for example, if prisons simply cannot accommodate the request, then resubmission may not be possible. The new process will be reviewed after a year, and we welcome feedback and ongoing conversations with researchers.

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## Could RESC decline a research proposal that has been approved by the TRC?

RESC has representatives from across the organisation. The following will be taken into consideration when RESC reviews applications:

- likely value to Corrections and/or wider public benefit
- anticipation of emerging trends
- contribution to current issues and challenges

- alignment to *Hōkai Rangi*
- contribution to the Correction's ability to achieve its strategic objectives amid a changing environment
- demonstration of an understanding of our duty of care to staff and those in our management to not cause harm, stress or inconvenience and is sensitive to operational issues
- risks and benefits of the research
- clarity of privacy provision, ethical impact and security of data to appropriate standards

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## Are requests for data more favourably received than research requesting access to prison sites?

Requests for data may be more straightforward and easier for Corrections to process. However, data needs and priorities may take priority over research requests.

Information on making a request under the Official Information Act can be found [on our website](#).

Access to the prisons sites requires significant staff time and coordination, and current operational pressures (including high remand populations) mean priority is given to whānau visits, legal meetings, and rehabilitation programmes. Prison Statistics can be found [on our website](#).

Community-based research may be slightly easier to arrange.

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## Universities often put forward funding applications for their research, which require ethical approval as well as RESC approval. When should universities talk to Corrections about a research project?

We encourage researchers to contact our Research Team to discuss any planned research as soon as possible, preferably before applying for funding or ethics approval. You can do this by contacting [research@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:research@corrections.govt.nz)

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## What are Corrections' research priorities?

The research priorities are listed on our website:

[https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/conducting\\_research\\_in\\_ara\\_poutama\\_aotearoa](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/conducting_research_in_ara_poutama_aotearoa)

The following are priority areas of interest for Corrections, but we also welcome other research topics which are in the public interest.

- Improving public safety
- Reducing reoffending
- Addressing Māori over-representation
- Barriers to treatment and successful reintegration
- Remand/bail experiences

- Gangs
- Probation and Community sentences
- Neuro-cognitive strengths and challenges
- Addiction and mental health
- Desistance
- Māori wellbeing and participation
- Rehabilitation and reintegration
- Staff wellbeing and workforce development
- Innovations in custodial and community-based practices

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**We welcome any feedback and comments.**

For more information or to discuss a research idea, please contact our Research Team by emailing [research@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:research@corrections.govt.nz).