



**ANZCA**  
FPM

## Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists SURVEY RESEARCH POLICY

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Survey Research Policy is to provide guidance to fellows and trainees, and their research collaborators, regarding the standards of survey research expected by ANZCA.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

College facilitated survey research must be soundly designed, promote safe and high quality patient care, workforce welfare, respect the privacy and confidentiality of participants and avoid burdening fellows and trainees unnecessarily.

The college encourages the distribution of surveys to support its strategic direction of “Driving research and quality improvement.” To this end, the college will only support surveys that are of publishable standard. Despite the widespread perception that surveys are easy to conduct, good survey research requires substantial planning, time and effort. Attention should be paid to rigorous survey design, careful implementation and robust data collection and analysis. A poorly conducted survey can lead to misleading or invalid conclusions, undermine confidence in survey research and leads to survey fatigue.

The college requires that the privacy of participants and their confidential information is respected. The college does not provide the contact details of its fellows and trainees directly to survey researchers. In line with concerns about burdening fellows and trainees, the college avoids sending individual fellows or trainees excessive numbers of surveys or sending poorly targeted surveys.

The survey research process is overseen by Fellowship Affairs using the expertise of the Clinical Trials Network.

### **3. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?**

This policy applies to ANZCA and FPM fellows and trainees wishing to conduct survey research, including trainees who wish to conduct survey research in order to fulfil ANZCA’s training program requirements. Non-college members wishing to survey ANZCA fellows and trainees via the college-facilitated process must conduct this research in collaboration with an ANZCA or FPM fellow or trainee.

This policy also applies to survey research conducted by special interest groups (SIGs) or regional/national committees (RC/NC).

#### 4. WHO DOES THIS POLICY NOT APPLY TO?

This policy does not apply to the following activities:

- Satisfaction surveys at meetings, seminars and conferences.
- Satisfaction surveys of ANZCA staff.
- Satisfaction surveys of ANZCA fellows and trainees.
- Qualitative research involving research activities such as focus groups, interviews, surveys with mostly open-ended questions or with small sample sizes.
- Any survey that is exempted by Council such as a workforce or curriculum survey

#### 5. BODY OF POLICY

##### 5.1 The role of ANZCA Fellowship Affairs and the Clinical Trials Network (CTN)

ANZCA Fellowship Affairs oversees the activities of ANZCA members including survey research, ensuring that the privacy of ANZCA fellows and trainees is protected, and they are not overburdened with surveys. Fellowship Affairs together with the guidance from the CTN, will assess whether it is feasible to proceed with the survey research, given the survey response rate anticipated, the resources required, the risks to the college, and the costs and resources involved. Fellowship Affairs may seek advice from the ANZCA Research Committee when required.

ANZCA Fellowship Affairs will triage all survey applications seeking access to the broad college membership. Fellowship Affairs will source an appropriate expert to review the survey application. The reviewer will assess the scientific validity of the survey, planned outcomes of the research and its anticipated benefits to the college and community, and provide any advice to the researcher. Fellowship Affairs will not send out approved surveys until ethics approval has been confirmed.

Fellowship Affairs will forward approved survey applications to the CTN office when required to create a random sample of 'all' fellows and/ or trainees, and to schedule the survey. For targeted surveys that will be sent to specialised email lists (for example, regional surveys, SIGs, Supervisors of Training etc), Fellowship Affairs will seek review and approval by the chair of the relevant group. The committee support officer or chair will be required to facilitate the scheduling and mailing of the survey in consultation with ANZCA Communications team.

##### 5.2 The role of the ANZCA CTN

The primary aim of the ANZCA CTN is to support multicentre research trials. In addition, the CTN supports survey research for fellows and trainees. The CTN will review survey research applications that will inform multicentre research, assessing the scientific validity of surveys, providing advice to researchers, seeking evidence of ethics approval. The CTN will also be involved in creating distribution lists and scheduling the survey.

Individual researchers are responsible for creating the questionnaire, and collecting, analysing and reporting survey data. Individual researchers are also responsible for obtaining ethical oversight for their research activity (see Section 5.4).

### 5.3 Privacy

The college is committed to ensuring the privacy of individuals in accordance with:

- National Privacy Principles – Australian Privacy Act 1988, Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012
- Information Privacy Principles – New Zealand Privacy Act 1993
- ANZCA Privacy Policy

The ANZCA privacy policy outlines how the college collects, uses and discloses personal information and the procedures that allow access to this information. The college cannot disclose personal information about its members. This includes email addresses and contact details for the purposes of research. The college can, however, facilitate survey distribution on behalf of a fellow or trainee, in which personal information from the college database is only known to the CTN manager.

When using an electronic survey tool such as SurveyMonkey®, researchers must choose the option to not collect IP addresses. This action must be clearly acknowledged in the application form, to the Australian Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) or New Zealand Health and Disability Ethics Committee (HDEC) and in the invitation to participate that is issued with the email distribution to recipients.

### 5.4 Ethical oversight

Evidence of ethical oversight from the appropriate body in each of the countries where the investigators reside is required before the CTN will facilitate distribution (e.g. ethics approval from HREC and/or HDEC, or documentation stating that ethical review is not required). The CTN can provide advice about this process.

In most cases, where the survey is anonymous, voluntary and data is kept confidential, the research activity is considered “low or negligible risk”, and does not require full review by an ethics committee. However, where a survey includes sensitive questions that may cause harm or distress to a participant, for example a survey that examines the welfare of anaesthetists, the CTN may request that the survey undergoes a full HREC/ HDEC review.

### 5.5 Scholar role activities

ANZCA encourages trainees to undertake survey research during their training. Evidence of approval from an appropriate college-appointed supervisor must be provided. For trainees undertaking targeted surveys (for example, regional surveys, SIGs, Supervisors of Training etc), approval from the relevant committee chair is required. The Scholar Role Sub-committee will be involved in the approval process of the survey.

### 5.6 Scientific rigor and publication

The college will not facilitate an unscientific or poorly constructed survey. It will not facilitate a survey where the aims of the research activity are unclear. Surveys must be of a publishable standard, and it is expected that the researcher will devote adequate time to investigating their area of interest and design a survey that is well thought out, clearly written and scientifically rigorous.

## 5.7 Survey parameters

Surveys will only be approved to be sent to members if they take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and have no more than 15 questions in length. The survey will be sent up to 1000 members of the college but this may be reduced depending on the available number of members in the sub-group of interest and the number of surveys on the waiting list. Inclusion of trainees in surveys must be justify.

## 5.8 Sampling from the wider membership

For national and bi-national surveys of 'all' fellows and/or trainees: Where possible, stratified random sampling will be applied to create the sample groups for each survey scheduled. This methodology will allow for mutually exclusive groups to be created in a given time frame (usually 6 months). A simple random sample will be taken from sub-groups (strata) of the population of interest from the college's database. The number of recipients randomly sampled without replacement from each sub-group of interest will be adequately representative of the whole population. The researcher will be given the total number of recipients for each sub-group of interest and the whole population numbers for their analysis.

### 5.8.1 Scheduling, quotas and waiting list

The college will facilitate up to eight surveys a year that require sampling from the wider membership. This will occur over two time frames: four surveys scheduled from February to June, and; the other four scheduled from July to November. To optimise the response rate, surveys will not be scheduled in January or December.

The feasibility to send up to four surveys within each timeframe will depend on whether there is an adequate number of members within each sub-group to be surveyed (for example, Australian and/or New Zealand trainees, fellows, new fellows) that make up the total recipient list, the available resources within the college to facilitate the survey research and the number of survey research applications received.

Researchers may be required to reduce their sample size depending on the number of members available within each sub-group (for example, there is limited number of members in New Zealand) or be put on a waiting list. Surveys will be scheduled with ANZCA communications and in accordance with the bulk communications policy. Members will have the option of unsubscribing to survey research.

## 5.9 Surveys within special interest groups (SIGs) and regional/national committees

Special interest groups (SIGs) were founded by ANZCA, the Australian Society of Anaesthetists and New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists to foster the continuing professional development of anaesthetists with sub-specialty interests. The three parent organisations have agreed that the process for approval of surveys will rest with the parent secretariat for the SIG. Therefore, the SIGs that have engaged ANZCA as their parent secretariat must undertake their research according to this policy. In particular, the executive of the SIG must ensure that HREC/ HDEC approval has been obtained. The CTN / Fellowship Affairs can assist where needed.

The Australian regional committees and New Zealand National Committee of ANZCA have access to email distribution lists for their own regions. Nevertheless, fellows or trainees wishing to conduct a survey in one region must still undertake their research according to this policy. In particular the

regional/national committee must ensure that HREC/ HDEC approval has been obtained. The CTN / Fellowship Affairs can assist where needed.

If the SIG or regional/national committee chooses not to seek CTN support, then the cover letter accompanying the survey must state that the survey has SIG executive or regional/national committee approval.

#### 5.9.1 Process

Surveys that will be sent to specialised email lists (for example, regional surveys, SIGs, Supervisors of Training etc) will be triaged by Fellowship Affairs. Fellowship Affairs will seek review and approval by a relevant department or group.

Surveys sent to SIGs of the college will require the approval of the SIG Chair and must comply with this ANZCA Survey Research Policy V 3.0. Requests must be made by completing the online application form. The SIG committee will be responsible for processing the survey application and scheduling the survey to be sent to their members. SIG survey applications are counted in addition to the eight surveys quota by the CTN (section 5.8.1), and scheduling of SIG surveys will be ad-hoc.

#### 5.10 Piloting the survey

Surveys must be piloted with colleagues, prior to submission. A working link to the survey must be included in the application form.

#### 5.11 The application and review process

The applicant is required to submit an online application via the ANZCA website about their research proposal. Fellowship Affairs will seek an appropriate expert for the applicant to discuss their proposal.

The applicant will then be invited to submit a formal application for survey research. The survey research application form includes details of the application and review process and is submitted to the Fellowship Affairs unit. Fellowship Affairs will seek an expert in the field to review and approve the survey application.

Following peer-review, feedback to investigators is provided via the Fellowship Affairs unit, although in some instances it may be necessary to resolve issues via direct communication between the investigator and the reviewer.

The college will not facilitate a poorly constructed or unscientific survey even if the survey has prior ANZCA Scholar Role activity approval and/or HREC/NZ-HDEC approval. The college will also not send out surveys with unique tokens or where the survey that has already been distributed through other avenues where there is likely to be overlap in membership (for example ASA members).

Where a survey asks sensitive questions that may cause harm or distress to a participant, for example a survey that examines the welfare of anaesthetists, the college may escalate the review process through the Research Committee chair to the ANZCA Council Executive. The Research Committee chair has the final discretion on whether the survey can proceed.

Any person who is dissatisfied with or adversely affected by a decision under this process has access to the ANZCA reconsideration, review and appeal processes. These policies can be found at [www.anzca.edu.au/ctn](http://www.anzca.edu.au/ctn).

## 5.12 ANZCA website

The ANZCA website contains detailed information about survey research, including references and the survey research application form. The ANZCA website also has information about tools and other survey methodology available to researchers.

Surveys that have been published or presented at scientific meetings will be listed at [www.anzca.edu.au/fellows/Research/clinical-trials-network](http://www.anzca.edu.au/fellows/Research/clinical-trials-network)

## 5.13 Costs

The college may levy fees for facilitating electronic surveys on behalf of fellows. Surveys that are trainee projects to fulfil ANZCA's training program requirements do not incur a fee. The college no longer facilitates hard-copy surveys.

## 5.14 Acknowledgement of ANZCA CTN

All surveys that are facilitated by the college and are published or presented at a conference or meeting are required to acknowledge ANZCA / CTN.

## 5.15 Reporting

Investigators are required to report their initial and final response rates. In addition, the investigators are required to complete a six month progress report and a final report. The investigators are also required to report forums that they have presented the results at and also the reference to the published results.

## 5.16 Publication

Particularly for sensitive topics, the college may require to review the manuscript before submission to a journal and / or be informed of the publication date to mitigate any real or perceived risks to college members.

## 6. Concerns or comments

If there are any concerns or comments in regard to this policy, please contact the Membership Services at [membership@anzca.edu.au](mailto:membership@anzca.edu.au). Resolution of concerns will be sought as soon as possible.

## 7. Changes to this policy

The college may modify or amend this policy at any time. Formal notice of amendments is not ordinarily given, but this policy is available via the website, [www.anzca.edu.au](http://www.anzca.edu.au), or by contacting the college on +61 3 9510 6299.

## 8. REFERENCES

Story DA, Tait AR. Survey research. *Anesthesiology* 2019;130(2):192-202.

## 9. CHANGE CONTROL REGISTER

Version	Author	Approved by	Approval Date	Sections Modified
1.0	ANZCA Trials Group	Council	February 25, 2012	Created
2.0	ANZCA Trials Group	Council	October 23, 2013	All, to match updated application form
2.1	ANZCA Trials Group	CEO	March 11, 2014	Copyright statement added
2.2	ANZCA Clinical Trials Network	Council	April 30, 2015	Revised
3.0	ANZCA Clinical Trials Network and ANZCA Fellowship Affairs	Council	February 22, 2020	Major revision

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