

Research Policy

Applies to

- All ABA volunteers and staff
- ABA members past and present
- All researchers conducting research for or in conjunction with ABA, or utilising ABA data or resources (including access to ABA membership or workforce, past or present).

Definitions

Word or Phrase	Definition
Learning and Innovation team	the team responsible for approval processes and oversight of research applications and or requests involving ABA
ABA communication channels	includes, but not limited to, traditional mail, telephone, email, ABA website, ABA social media platforms, print and e-publications
Research approval number	a number allocated to a research project or survey after it has been approved in accordance with this policy
Research	diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts, theories, applications
Survey	a data collection tool used to gather information about and from individuals
Breastfeeding-related subjects	Lactation, breastfeeding, breastmilk, breastfeeding environments, the Australian Breastfeeding Association, ABA volunteers, staff, or members (past or present)

Scope

- Small or large research projects or surveys requiring the use of ABA resources or involvement by ABA volunteers, staff or members
- Research into ABA service and/or history.

Objectives

- To support and facilitate high quality, ethical breastfeeding-related research within organisational strategic framework and capacity
- To provide a fair and reasonable research application process for requests to ABA for any form of research collaboration, partnership and or sponsorship to clarify

stakeholder expectations including but not limited to timeframes, financial and in-kind support and data collection methods

- To ensure ABA receives ongoing public acknowledgement for research project contribution and appropriate access to research data and results and permissions to disseminate and publicise research outcomes.

Principles

- ABA cooperates with medical and allied health professionals, public health and education authorities, students and governments conducting research into breastfeeding-related subjects, where it is in the interests of the Association or our members (past or present).
- ABA acknowledges and affirms the right of ABA volunteers and members and staff (past and present) to choose whether to participate as subjects in any research request.
- ABA acknowledges and affirms its adherence to its obligations under Australian privacy legislation.
- Any research communication or request using ABA communication channels must be approved in accordance with this policy, and comply with the relevant communications policies or guidelines.
- To ensure stakeholder alignment with ABA principles, organisations and/or individuals provisionally approved to conduct research in collaboration with ABA must hold or take on a professional membership before approval is finalised.

Policy Statement

- Research applications must meet ABA's criteria for breastfeeding-related research in order to be considered for approval and must be submitted using the prescribed form.
- Research applications requiring ethics approval may be submitted for provisional approval from ABA with final approval granted upon proof of ethics approval.

- All research requests that require the participation or support of ABA, its volunteers, members or staff (past or present) must be approved in accordance with this policy.
- Approved applications must include the research approval number on all ABA communications and relevant documentation.
- ABA will not approve any research requests where that research is funded by companies or entities that are not WHO Code compliant according to the *ABA Position Statement on the International Code of Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes and the subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions* (referred to as 'The Code' or 'WHO Code').
- ABA will not approve any research requests where that research is funded by companies that manufacture, distribute or sell infant formula or artificial baby milk (including 'follow-on' or 'toddler' formulas for children up to 36 months) or other foods and beverages promoted to be suitable for feeding a baby during the first 6 months of life when exclusive breastfeeding is recommended. This would include baby teas, juices and waters.
- ABA reserves the right to determine its own organisational capacities and criteria for selection and to limit or reject research surveys and or requests accordingly.
- Personal information about ABA volunteers, members or staff (past or present), including contact details will not be released to researchers.

Publication

- All researchers whose requests are approved under this policy are encouraged to submit a synopsis/report of their research to *Breastfeeding Review* for consideration of publication.
- Research into ABA or the services offered by ABA will only be approved where it is intended to be published in *Breastfeeding Review* or another ABA publication.
- Where approval is granted in accordance with this policy:

- ABA must be appropriately acknowledged in all research publications and presentations
- A copy of the research publication that involved ABA members, staff or resources must be sent to the Learning and Innovation team.

Research about ABA

If research is being undertaken on behalf of ABA by external researchers who are ABA volunteers, then:

- A member of the Learning and Innovation team must be included as an associate investigator and will be included in all correspondence relating to the research project
- All data relating to ABA projects and any resulting abstracts/reports/articles/papers/presentations will remain the intellectual property of Australian Breastfeeding Association
- All raw data collected will be provided, in an appropriate format, as soon as data collection is finished
- All analysed data (quantitative and qualitative) will be provided as soon as completed
- The Senior Manager Learning and Innovation will make the final decision on whether data will be shared internally within ABA or published externally
- Before commitments are made (i.e. abstracts are submitted) for presentations at ABA or external conferences, approval is required from the Senior Manager Learning and Innovation
- Before papers are drafted and submitted to journals for publication, approval is required from the Senior Manager Learning and Innovation
- Authorship of papers will follow well-accepted publishing conventions i.e. *Authorship: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Request for approval

- Researchers who submit requests for approval in accordance with this policy must submit their requests using the **prescribed form** and pay the **prescribed administration fee**.
- Requests for approval in accordance with this policy must set out clearly and concisely the extent of ABA's involvement, including any cost to the Association or its members in monetary or other form (for instance, time).

Evaluation

- The Learning and Innovation team will evaluate requests by considering the following:
 - Relevance of the research to ABA's Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan and *Code of Ethics*
 - Extent of involvement of the Association (for instance, the cost in monetary terms or in staff time, of informing members of the project, in the use of members and volunteers in the project, in the distribution of questionnaires or other literature)
 - Whether the help requested is within the current or ongoing capacity of the Association
 - The possibility of risks to the establishment and maintenance of breastfeeding.
- Evaluation will take into account the *National Health and Medical Research Council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007* (updated May 2018).
- Possibility of risks to the establishment and maintenance of breastfeeding.
- The Association will seek medical and/or legal advice regarding the request in its discretion.
- The Learning and Innovation team may approve the request where the research is in the interests of ABA and the extent of involvement of the Association is minimal.
- Where the Learning and Innovation team considers that the request will involve a monetary cost to the Association or will involve considerable work by ABA staff or volunteers, it must refer the request to the Board for determination.

- Where the Learning and Innovation team considers that a request is not in the interests of ABA or its members, or the request does not comply with this policy, then the request will be refused and is entirely at the discretion of the Association.

Approval

- Approval is given in writing only, and includes a research approval number obtained from the Learning and Innovation team.
- Decisions made by the Learning and Innovation team or the Board regarding research requests are final and no further correspondence will be entered into.
- Applicants may resubmit, with amendments based upon feedback received when the original application was submitted.
- ABA retains the right to remove promotion of research projects on any and all ABA communication channels that do not meet the agreed criteria, and/or if justified complaints are received concerning the research project.

Exclusion

- Small scale surveys (in any format) at group, regional, branch or national level which assist in provision of services to members or in organising operational matters are excluded from this policy.

Approved by

ABA Board

Relevant documents

- ABA Strategic Plan
- *ABA Position Statement on the International Code of Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes and the subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions*
- NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 – Updated 2018

Revision history

Revision	Date	Description of modifications
V1	May 1989	61 7.3(8)– Research Policy A – Use of ABA Members and Resources in Research 61 7.3(9)– Research Policy B – Research into ABA
V2	8 Mar 2014	Significant revision of content and update into website policy template. Approved Board meeting 160.
V3	November 2023	Significant revision of content to consider organisational capacity and strategic alignment; ensure consistency with other Association policies; adjust to reflect organisational restructure.