GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS **Standard Operating Procedures**		
Policy Name: Research Guidelines		
Policy Number: 104.75	**Effective Date:** 10/25/17	**Page Number:** 1 of 5
Authority: Commissioner	**Originating Division:** Administration and Finance Division (Human Resources)	**Access Listing:** Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) supports and engages in approved research activities; the agency shall conduct approved research through internal methodologies as well as participation from approved outside professionals and researchers. This policy establishes guidelines that govern voluntary staff and offender participation in non-medical, non-pharmaceutical, and non-cosmetic research. GDC shall review all research methodologies and findings, and ensure dissemination and sharing of information and findings to approved partners and government agencies as needed. Experimental medical research, including pharmaceutical or cosmetic testing, on offenders under the jurisdiction of GDC is prohibited.

II. Authority:

A. O.C.G.A.: § 42-5-36;

B. GDC Board Rules: 125-1-2-.05, 125-1-2-.07, and 125-4-4-.12; and

C. ACA Standards: 2-CO-1F-04, 2-CO-1F-07, 2-CO-1F-09, 2-CO-1F-10, 2-CO-1F-11, 2- CO-1F-12, 2-CO-1F-13, 2-CO-1F-14, 2-CO-1F-15, 4-4108, 4-4110, 4-4112, and 4-4113.

III. Definitions: None

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) shall support and engage in approved research activities related to its operational practices and programs. The Commissioner, or a designee(s) chosen by the Commissioner, along with the executive leadership team, shall review and approve all research proposals and designs prior to their implementation.

1. A detailed research proposal shall be submitted to the Commissioner, or his/her designee, in accordance with Attachment 1, Research Request/Proposal Guideline.

2. Research requests shall be reviewed using the following criteria:

a. Study Justification;

b. Protection of human subjects; security of confidential information;

c. Statutory or legislative authority to conduct the research;

d. Methodological rigor; and

e. Availability of GDC resources.

3. All research proposals will be reviewed by the executive leadership team, or their designee, in consultation with the Commissioner or his/her designee. The Commissioner, or his/her designee, will forward the research proposal and recommendation to the executive leadership team for review. The executive leadership team will return its recommendation to the Commissioner or his/her designee. This review process may take several weeks.

4. The Commissioner, or his/her designee, will notify the requestor of acceptance or denial. If accepted, the Commissioner, or his/her designee, will assign a research liaison of their choosing to the project for the duration of the research study.

5. All individuals conducting research in GDC facilities, or using information obtained from a GDC database, will be informed of and agree, in writing, to conform to applicable policies with particular emphasis on the confidentiality of the information thus obtained. A letter of agreement to conduct research must be signed by the principal investor and the Commissioner, or his/her designee. The letter of agreement sets forth the terms and conditions under which the project may proceed and may include:

   a. Conforming to departmental policies;

   b. Protection of human subjects;

   c. Security of confidential data;

   d. Reporting requirements;

   e. Request for modification to the original approved proposal; and

f. The submission of a draft report prior to release of findings.

6. GDC operations personnel shall assist research personnel in carrying out research and evaluation as required.

B. GDC shall regulate the use and dissemination of research findings. All research projects and subsequent dissemination of research findings shall be reviewed by the Commissioner's designee. This procedure shall apply to outside research requests, internal research projects, conference presentations, professional journal submissions and book proposals concerning GDC operations, services and correctional programs.

C. All surveys requesting any information about GDC and/or information about offenders under GDC jurisdiction shall be routed through the Commissioner's designee. This includes surveys sent by federal agencies, private companies (sometimes on behalf of the agency), colleges and universities, individuals, GDC employees, contractors, volunteers, and non-profit organizations. The Commissioner's designee will have the responsibility for recording and routing the surveys to the proper office for completion and subsequent submission to the requesting entity. GDC shall cooperate with other governmental agencies, where applicable, in the gathering, exchange and standardization of information.

D. Any unit or division within GDC maintains, or wishes to establish, a database with offender information must consult the Commissioner's designee before the creation of this database, or if the database already exists, before information from the database is disseminated for official use, both internal or external. This includes data, statistics, and any information used for research, technical reports, conference presentations, newsletters, media or other publications. Official data must minimally reference the data source, data of extraction and, if any, limitations of the data.

E. Research conducted within any GDC facility/location shall comply with any/all applicable state and federal guidelines for use and dissemination of research findings and with current accepted professional and scientific ethics.

F. Inmates, juveniles and residents are prohibited from participating in any medical or pharmaceutical testing for experimental or research purposes. An individual

offender is not excluded from treatment (even if experimental) based on that offenders need for a specific medical procedure that is not generally available.

G. The following reports are required at each phase of the project. In any report of results, researchers shall not use the names of subjects or describe any offender in such detail that the offender might be identified.

1. Preliminary Findings Report: Immediately following the data collection and analysis phase of the project, a brief summary report on the tentative findings and the conduct of the study must be submitted. This report will be sent to the Commissioner and his/her designee, along with the assigned research liaison.

2. Final Report: When the entire project is completed, and 30 days prior to its release, a copy of the final report must be submitted by the principal researcher to the Commissioner, his/her designee, and the research liaison.

3. Progress Report: At any time during the duration of the project, the Commissioner, or his/her designee, may request for a progress report on the current status of the research project. This report should include a summary of progress made on the data collection and analysis, along with a brief narrative describing the project activities and any problems/obstacles experienced so far.

H. Executive leadership will be responsible for formulating agency goals and establishing policies and strategies based on researching findings, reports and plans (both internal and strategic); The Commissioner, or his/her designee, will be responsible for ensuring research programs and the department's management information system are used effectively in order to evaluate the overall performance of correctional goals as outlined in SOP 509.01General Planning and Strategic Management Section Operations.

1. The Commissioner, or his/her designee, will develop and maintain a system for tracking research findings, reports and plans (both internal and strategic) along with a distribution plan for providing these results and plans to the executive leadership team, including the Commissioner, and any other required shareholders.

2. Electronic files of research findings, reports and plans will be maintained for a period of at least three (3) years.

V. **Attachment:**
Attachment 1, Research Request/Proposal Guideline

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:** Research Request/Proposal Guideline shall be maintained until obsolete or replaced, then shall be destroyed. All submitted requests/proposals shall be maintained for three (3) years and then shall be destroyed.