External researchers requesting support from NZNO – 2013

Introduction

NZNO is now receiving a significant number of requests from external researchers, frequently Masters’ students, wanting access to NZNO members to recruit participants for their research studies. The numbers will increase with the August 2013 Nursing Council of New Zealand decision that they will no longer support researcher access to their database for participant recruitment. The volume of requests potentially jeopardises NZNO’s own research programme through member survey fatigue.

Also, there are resourcing implications, including review of the research and ethics (principal researcher), checking with a college or section chair if access to their members is requested (professional services manager), and administering the email communication to members.

A policy ensuring the integrity of NZNO’s future research programme, to recoup costs, and to ensure a consistent approach to researchers was introduced in 2012.

NZNO research and member surveys

NZNO has developed a robust research programme since the first researcher was employed in 2008. It has moved NZNO toward an evidence-based approach to its work and has increased NZNO’s credibility and authority. The research programme to further our members’ aspirations has been extended by collaborating with external researchers in joint research projects. Examples of this are the Māori nurse smoking cessation research project and the collaborative research initiatives of the Safe Staffing, Healthy Workplaces Unit.

Many of NZNO’s colleges and sections have also initiated research projects to advance their specialty with the support of our researchers. Additional to research activity, survey monkey software licences purchased during 2012 now enables numerous short member surveys to be conducted to inform the work of organisers and other staff.

External researchers

A number of factors have contributed to the rapid rise in requests from external researchers for access to NZNO’s membership database to recruit research participants. They include:

> growing awareness of NZNO’s research capability;
> growing awareness that NZNO’s database is extensive and has potential for researchers;
> an increasing number of nurses undertaking masters or doctoral research;
> the cost of access to the Nursing Council's database until they reached the decision to no longer support researcher access; and
> the relatively low cost (waived if the research was deemed to meet NZNO’s key priority goals) for access to NZNO’s database.

**Risks for NZNO**

If NZNO does not implement a policy to control the number of times its database is used for 'requests to participate', then there are risks for the organisation and the integrity of our future research programme. These risks include:

> Member survey fatigue and reluctance to participate. Many of the requests are for access to large numbers of members, in particular, primary health care nurses. Currently, NZNO has commitment to participate, however there is a potential backlash from members who receive a large number of participation invitations. This would jeopardise our ability to recruit representative cohorts into NZNO research programmes and short surveys.
> Significant resourcing in terms of staff time is spent facilitating external research requests.
> Failure to recoup costs for helping others undertake research.

**Policy principles**

1. NZNO’s research programme, including membership research and staff short surveys have priority over all external research.
2. Any external research requests are considered and prioritised against the following factors:
   > the research advances NZNO’s agenda;
   > the research involves an NZNO priority;
   > the collaborative arrangements NZNO has with the external researchers;
   > the research is likely to contribute significantly to New Zealand nursing, nursing workforce development, nursing models of care, or information on conditions of employment in particular sectors;
   > the research is likely to be published and have a national or international impact;
   > NZNO is engaged in the research project through participating in an advisory group or similar;
   > association with the research will enhance NZNO’s reputation;
   > the methodology is robust and ethics approval has been received; and
   > there is potential to extend NZNO’s research agenda through collaboration with the research team.

*Note:* Undergraduate and Master research projects shall not be considered (see 5).
3. The timing of any request for information distribution and invitation to participate will not conflict with any aspects of NZNO’s research programme.
4. Researchers will have to pay to use NZNO’s membership database for recruitment purposes (see section below).
5. Researcher requests that are declined are offered the opportunity to write a letter to the co-editors of *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand* or to the appropriate college and
Process

1. The researcher must submit a written request for assistance to NZNO’s professional services manager (PSM) Susanne Trim. The request must include:
   > the study protocol or proposal;
   > the participant information sheet (if available);
   > ethics committee approval;
   > the membership category they are requesting access to;
   > the proposed plan to access potential participants and any NZNO support requested;
   > the dates for distribution of material;
   > the principal researcher’s contact details; and
   > the preferred method of payment for costs incurred.

2. The PSM shall review the request with NZNO’s principal researcher - applying the principles stipulated above. Other relevant NZNO membership officers shall be consulted, if the request is for access to a college or section, Te Runanga, regional council or national student unit membership lists.

3. The PSM shall notify the researcher in writing of the decision. This will be within 15 working days of receipt of the completed application.

4. The PSM will consult the management team to decide the outcome, if the decision is not clear cut.

5. The decision shall be final.

6. The PSM will raise an invoice and forward it to the researcher. Payment must be received before the information is distributed to members.

Costs

No costs will apply to applications that have been reviewed and declined. An administration fee for approved projects is to be paid on invoice prior to proceeding.

Access to fewer than 1,000 members

The standard fee, $250.00, includes application review, database preparation, website links and administrative support. Any subsequent email reminder to participants will incur an additional cost of $75.

Access to more than 1,000 members

The standard fee, $250.00 will apply with an additional cost of $150.00 for each thousand members contacted. Any subsequent email reminder to participants will incur an additional cost of $150.00.

Definition

This policy applies to all external researchers. External researchers are from external research units, academics and post graduate students completing research projects as part of their course of study.