



AAPA Research Department

# Policy Guide on Data Collection, Access and Ownership

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## Table of Contents

Purpose .....	4
Overview of AAPA Research Support.....	4
Partnerships.....	4
AAPA Research Oversight.....	4
Membership Requirements.....	4
AAPA Email Policy .....	5
AAPA Survey Policy.....	5
Inclusion of Questions into Existing AAPA Surveys .....	5
Fielding Independent Surveys .....	5
How to Request Survey Support .....	5
Data Analysis.....	6
AAPA Policy on Accessing Case-Level Research Data.....	6
External Analysis .....	6
Collaborating with AAPA .....	7
Agreements.....	7
Transmission of Data.....	7
How to Request Case-Level Research Data.....	8
Data Security.....	8
Cost Recovery Fee .....	8



## Purpose

The role of AAPA Research is to provide research and data to support the AAPA Strategic Plan and yearly Operating Plans. When aligned with the AAPA Strategic Plan, yearly Operating Plans, and resources are available, AAPA Research will also provide support to members, external researchers, and other stakeholders.

This AAPA Policy Guide on Data Collection, Access and Ownership (“Policy Guide”) provides the general principles for AAPA data collection and accessing AAPA data sets as well as a general framework for how AAPA Research may provide support. The purposes of establishing these principles are to enhance PA data utilization, enforce proper use of PA data, and promote PA research while the interests of AAPA and privacy of individual PAs are fully protected.

## Overview of AAPA Research Support

AAPA Research may provide support to external entities in several ways:

- Inclusion of questions in existing AAPA Surveys
- Partnering to conduct surveys on external entities’ behalf
- Provision of existing AAPA data for secondary analysis
- Partnering to conduct analysis on existing AAPA data

## Partnerships

AAPA Research has an ongoing commitment to work with external researchers in conducting high quality research. Through these partnerships, AAPA will achieve greater visibility in the research community, healthcare community, and in publications.

## AAPA Research Oversight

AAPA has established a Research Oversight Committee (ROC) that is tasked with

- Ensuring that AAPA Research adheres to the policies outlined in the Policy Guide and to
- Provide objective review of all Research Support Service requests

## Membership Requirements

While the public may contact AAPA Research for Research Support, priority will be given to AAPA members when resources limit the requests handled. In addition, when a cost is incurred, members will receive a discount.

## AAPA Email Policy

AAPA Research will not provide emails to external researchers for independent research projects.

## AAPA Survey Policy

### Inclusion of Questions into Existing AAPA Surveys

Researchers may submit questions for inclusion into AAPA Surveys by paying a cost-recovery fee. Questions must be approved by AAPA Research, and will be limited to 5 questions per researcher. Students must submit a letter demonstrating faculty endorsement along with their submitted questions, and researchers must demonstrate they have obtained approval, or are exempt, from their Internal Review Board.

### Fielding Independent Surveys

AAPA may email surveys on behalf of researchers to PAs as approved by the AAPA Research Staff on a limited basis. These surveys will not be considered to be conducted by AAPA, and the data will remain in possession of the external researcher. Researchers will need to demonstrate they have obtained approval, or are exempt, from their Internal Review Board and provide AAPA with the link to their survey, text for an invitation email and reminder emails, as well as the target group of PAs (by specialty, geography, etc.). AAPA will include several seeded emails within the sample. A cost recovery fee may be assessed and will cover sending of the initial invitation as well as no more than one reminder every three weeks to non-respondents. *There is no guarantee of the response rate or number of responses that will be obtained.*

### How to Request Survey Support

The formal request for including questions in AAPA surveys must include the following elements:

1. Objectives of the study;
2. Questions for inclusion;
3. Sample characteristics needed;
4. Proposed analysis;
5. Plan for information dissemination; and
6. IRB approval status.

The formal request for fielding an independent survey with AAPA must include the following elements:

1. Objectives of the study;
2. Questions for inclusion;
3. Sample characteristics needed;
4. Proposed analysis;
5. Plan for information dissemination; and
6. IRB approval status.

The Research Oversight Committee will review all applications on an ongoing basis.

## Data Analysis

AAPA can conduct analysis on AAPA data for individuals, such as basic frequencies, crosstabs, statistical calculations and testing, regression analysis, as well as written executive summaries and full reports. A cost recovery fee may be assessed on a case by case basis based upon organization type, complexity of analysis and AAPA Research staff time required.

AAPA will not perform any analysis on research not conducted by AAPA.

## AAPA Policy on Accessing Case-Level Research Data

There is no restriction on releasing AAPA data at aggregated level.

In order to protect both privacy of PAs whose personal and professional records are stored in AAPA databases and the investment AAPA makes, the following applies to the release of any case-level research data.

## External Analysis

External researchers may access AAPA case-level research data by submitting a formal request for use. Researchers will need to demonstrate they have obtained approval, or are exempt, from their Internal Review Board.

### Please note the following

Case-level research data is not released to any external researcher within the first 12 months from the completion of data collection or data analysis and reporting by AAPA, whichever comes last.

Only a subset of AAPA research data for the approved project can be released to external researchers. The data set shall only be used for the approved project and must be destroyed once the project is done as specified in the signed data user agreement.

AAPA research data sets physically removed from AAPA premises will be de-identified with information such as name, AAPA ID, and address either scrubbed or grouped into a broader category so as to protect individual PA's confidential information.

AAPA research data sets physically removed from AAPA premises remain the property of AAPA and must be destroyed at an agreed upon time.

AAPA research data released to external researchers or other data users must be properly documented so that the research projects and researchers who are working on AAPA data are known so as to avoid AAPA research projects to be duplicated with those conducted externally.

AAPA has the right to review and request revisions to any analysis prior to distribution.

AAPA must be acknowledged in any analyses distributed.

AAPA will receive a final copy of the final results of the project.

## Collaborating with AAPA

For any collaborative work between AAPA staff member(s) and external researcher(s), if the entire PA data set is required, the full data set with all PAs must be kept on AAPA premises physically and AAPA Research will conduct all analyses. Alternatively, the collaborative partner may come, at their own expense, to AAPA headquarters to use the data.

## Agreements

Prior to entering in any agreements with external researchers, with the exception of collaborative research where AAPA Research conducts the research, all contracts must be approved by the AAPA Operations Management Committee.

Any data shared with external researchers must complete a formal AAPA Data Usage Agreement.

## Transmission of Data

Any data shared with external researchers will be sent through secure channels such as an encrypted transfer.

## How to Request Case-Level Research Data

The formal request for accessing and holding AAPA data must include the following elements:

1. Objectives of the study;
2. Sample characteristics needed;
3. Definition of the data set and why specific data fields are needed;
4. Amount of time for which researcher will need to hold data;
5. Agreement of fulfilling obligation to delete data after project completion;
6. Proposed analysis; and
7. Plan for information dissemination.

## Data Security

AAPA will store survey data on a secure network accessible only by AAPA Research staff. De-identified data from questions submitted by external customers will be returned and will belong to them, but AAPA will also retain a copy of the data. AAPA will not publish researcher-requested data without the permission of the owner.

## Cost Recovery Fee

AAPA reserves the right to charge a cost recovery fee for services rendered. The cost recovery fee will be assessed based on the time needed to support the external entities and will be determined once the scope of the project has been determined.

AAPA members will receive a discount on any fees assessed.