

Purpose and Duty Statement

The purpose of the New Zealand Rugby (NZR) Medical & Science Advisory Panel (MSAP) is to:

1. Safeguard the well-being and performance of rugby players who are selected to represent New Zealand teams and/or are employed or contracted by NZR or provincial unions (PUs) to professional teams and are invited to participate in research studies.
 - Duty includes guiding research involving NZR employees and contracted players in a manner that sees studies are not harmful to participants, comply with the terms of the Collective Employment Agreement, and do not breach privacy (or other) laws. The MSAP may exclude players from investigations that could be detrimental to their abilities, violate contractual agreements or overload teams and individuals. The MSAP also require research studies to obtain ethical approval and comply with legal and regulatory obligations, including privacy and data protection.
2. Provide guidance and, if there is potential to benefit the sport, facilitation of research conducted on or with NZR registered community rugby participants. While there is no formal requirement for researchers to notify NZR about such studies, the MSAP may assist by granting access to players, teams, and competitions, contributing to the growth of knowledge in community rugby.

Requirements for Researchers

Researchers conducting studies involving NZR employees, contracted players, or community rugby participants should provide the following information to the MSAP:

- A detailed description of the research project, including objectives and methodology and potential impact and value of the research to NZR or the community rugby domain.
 - MSAP research application.
 - Ethical approval documentation from the relevant ethics body. Please note, that NZR and the MSAP are not an ethics committee.
- Evidence of compliance with relevant legal and regulatory obligations, particularly regarding privacy and data protection.
 - Data collection agreement (DCA).
 - Data usage agreement (DUA).

**The research application, DCA and DUA can be found under "M" here: [A-Z of Documents | NZ Rugby](#)*

NZR will liaise with and obtain consent from the New Zealand Rugby Players Association (NZRPA) for investigations involving NZR employed or contracted players.

Application Process

The MSAP meet monthly to review new applications and follow up on existing applications that are yet to be approved. The MSAP follows an application process comprised of the following stages:

1. **Approval:** The MSAP reviews research proposals and approves studies that are perceived to be of value to NZR or the rugby community. Outside of the professional environment, the MSAP does not seek to restrict research conducted on rugby players or participants based solely on a lack of immediate relevance to the organisational goals of NZR.
2. **Endorsement:** If a proposed research project is expected to yield significant new insights into an aspect of rugby that could benefit the sport, the MSAP may endorse the study and actively seek to facilitate the research.

3. **Request for further information:** In certain cases, the MSAP may require additional information from researchers to make an informed decision about approving or endorsing a study.
4. **Non-approval:** The MSAP reserves the right to reject research proposals that do not meet the necessary ethical, legal, or regulatory requirements or do not align with the objectives of NZR or the community rugby domain.

Role of Super Rugby Organisations and Provincial Unions

Super Rugby organizations and PUs play an essential role in facilitating research based on the scope and level of the study:

For research conducted on rugby participants at an international or national level, NZR may directly contact potential study participants through the NZR Registration Database.

For research conducted at the regional or local level, the MSAP may connect researchers with relevant individuals at the PU level to facilitate the research process.

To assist research facilitation at the regional or local level, please inform MSAP of the name and email address of the best point of contact at your Super Rugby organisation or PU, to whom we can direct researchers to provide information about their projects (e.g., survey links). The point of contact for MSAP to share with researchers (when the research is being conducted, or directed towards, rugby participants at regional or local level) will be provided information about the research project to, if they choose, share with the relevant people. Those people will always have the option not to participate. Likewise, decisions about whether to facilitate research at regional or local level sit with Super Rugby, PU, and community rugby administrators, who have knowledge of the resources available to assist, and constraints that may mean assistance cannot be provided for a given project.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about any of the above or require any more information.

For enquiries contact: MSAP@nzrugby.co.nz