

Call for Criminal Cases Review Commission research proposals

18 June 2024

The body that investigates possible miscarriages of justice is inviting proposals for 2024 research projects.

If you have an idea for academic research using CCRC data that would benefit the criminal justice system, the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) would like to hear from you.

Projects can be on any subject or length but must be of benefit to the CCRC and the wider criminal justice system. Any proposal must be at PhD level or above. The CCRC is unable to offer funding but has wide and diverse data sets from 1997 onwards.

A CCRC spokesperson said: “At the CCRC, we support academics to conduct meaningful research that will be of real value to the criminal justice system.

“Past research projects have looked at subjects including the impact of legal aid cuts and the criminalisation of refugees, and current research includes work on witness testimony, young offenders, and the experiences of applicants to the CCRC.

“Though we have some suggestions for areas of research, we welcome any proposal that might fit our criteria.”

The CCRC would be particularly interested in any research proposals which relate to the following subjects:

- Why do many CCRC applicants not exhaust their **appeal rights** either before or after an application to the CCRC?
- The admissibility of **expert scientific and medical evidence** either at trial or on appeal
- Issues of **race and ethnicity** and miscarriages of justice, for example in relation to joint enterprise prosecutions/gang related evidence

- **Historical sexual abuse cases** and the effect of delay on fair trials
- **Delayed justice** and cracked trials – backlog, the criminal justice system and miscarriages of justice
- Access to justice for **vulnerable applicants**
- **Victims of crime** including when to notify victims of applications and when to obtain a victim's sensitive data
- **Summary justice**: the recent rise in applications to the CCRC from those convicted in the Magistrates' Courts and the approach of the CCRC to these cases
- **(Social) Media Campaigns and Applications to the CCRC**: how many applications to the CCRC are / have been the subject of media campaigns? How many CCRC referrals to the appeal courts are / have been cases featuring media campaigns? Have those numbers varied over time? What impact has social media had in this area, if any?

Successful researchers will have access to a unique set of data relating to applications to the CCRC to review convictions and/or sentences.

The CCRC can also provide researchers with contact details for sources of data, support for funding applications, and publication of resulting work on its website and, where appropriate, reference to relevant findings in its annual report.

Any relevant findings from the research will be reported to the appropriate public bodies and agencies as part of its remit to disseminate such information to key stakeholders to improve the criminal justice system and prevent miscarriages of justice.

The deadline for the submission of an initial proposal is close of business on **Monday 30 September 2024**. Successful applicants will then be asked to submit a full proposal.

Please email proposals to: Researchcall@CCRC.gov.uk

Further [details](#) can be found on the CCRC website and an [information leaflet](#) is also available.

Notes to Editors

1. The CCRC is an independent body set up under the Criminal Appeal Act 1995. It is responsible for independently reviewing suspected and alleged miscarriages of criminal justice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is based in Birmingham and is funded by the Ministry of Justice.

2. There are currently 10 Commissioners who bring to the CCRC considerable experience from a wide variety of backgrounds. Commissioners are appointed by the King on the recommendation of the Prime Minister in accordance with the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice. The Chairman, who is also a Commissioner, is not involved in the casework decision-making process.
3. The CCRC usually receives around 1,500 applications for reviews (convictions and/or sentences) each year. Since starting work in 1997, the CCRC has referred around 3% of applications to the appeal courts.
4. The CCRC considers whether, as a result of new information or argument on a point of law, there is a real possibility that the sentence or conviction would not be upheld were a reference to be made. New information or argument on a point of law is argument or information which has not been raised during the trial or on appeal. Applicants should usually have appealed first. A case can be referred in the absence of an earlier appeal only if there are "exceptional circumstances".
5. If a case is referred, it is then for the appeal court to decide whether the conviction is unsafe or the sentence unfair.
6. More details about the role and work of the Criminal Cases Review Commission can be found at www.ccr.gov.uk. The CCRC can be found on Twitter [@ccrcupdate](https://twitter.com/ccrcupdate) and Instagram the_ccrc.