

Human Research Ethics Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of the *Human Research Ethics Policy* (“policy”) is to ensure that the Institution complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025 (‘the National Statement’) and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 (‘the Code’) so that ethical practices and processes are in place for scholarly research to support the Institution’s aims for excellence in scholarship. As a higher education institution, all academic staff have access to advanced knowledge and support in scholarly research. This policy is informed by the Institution’s Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework.

2. Scope

2.1 All current and prospective academic staff at the Institution, including sessional staff, casuals and contractors.

2.2 All scholarly research that involves human participants, their data or information.

3. Definitions

See *Glossary of Terms*.

4. Policy statements

4.1 The Institution is committed to complying with the National Statement and the Code.

4.2 Research is underpinned by the principles and values including merit, integrity, justice, beneficence and respect.

4.3 Research should deliver accurate, replicable and unbiased results and be reported responsibly. Research must appropriately acknowledge collaborators and partner organisations and fully disclose any conflicts of interest and sources of funding.

4.4 Academic staff can engage in research involving human participants or their

data, where such research is conducted ethically and has received appropriate ethics approval.

4.5 Academic staff and external colleagues engaged in research adhere to the highest ethical, professional and scholarly standards to protect the rights, safety and privacy of individual research participants as well as others who can be impacted by the conduct or outcomes of the research.

4.6 Students learning about research methods as part of their coursework are not required to collect primary data or information from human participants. Students required to learn about human research using secondary data or information in a field of study must be given access to advanced knowledge about ethical principles and practices.

4.7 Work integrated learning projects with third party organisations that may require using primary or secondary human data or information must obtain appropriate ethics approval or exemption prior to the commencement of the study period.

4.8 The Institution puts in place a strong scholarly culture which strives to ensure the benefits of scholarly research are disseminated and shared with other academic staff, researchers, professional practitioners and the wider community.

4.9 The Institution has a Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel (HREAP), constituted by the suitably qualified and trained members of the Scholarly Practice Committee and overseen by its Chair. The HREAP has the capacity to review and approve minimal to low risk research only in accordance with the [Ethics Review Process Flowchart](#). Greater than low risk projects must be reviewed by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) registered in Australia, in alignment with the requirements of the National Statement.

4.10 The Chair of the Scholarly Practice Committee with an AQF Level 10 qualification undertakes the role of the Chair of the HREAP who has oversight of all research at the Institution to ensure they meet the requirements of the National Statement and the Code. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair elected from the Scholarly Practice Committee oversees the HREAP.

4.11 The ethics review process is coordinated by the Ethics Director, who is an elected member of the Scholarly Practice Committee with an AQF Level 10

qualification.

5. Ethics application process

5.1 Ethics applications for human research projects are submitted to the Ethics Director. Ethics application forms and information regarding the review and approval process are available on the Scholarly Practice Hub, accessible through the Institution's Learning Management System (LMS).

5.2 A chief-investigator on an ethics application can only be a full-time, part-time or sessional academic staff member due to annual reporting requirements.

5.3 Low risk research goes through a peer-review process coordinated by the Ethics Director before it is reviewed by the HREAP. Minimal risk research can be eligible for an expedited review by the Chair of HREAP.

5.4 Certain lower risk research may be eligible for an exemption from ethics review under paragraphs 5.1.15 - 17 in the National Statement. Researchers involved in this type of research can apply for an exemption by submitting a Human Research Ethics Review Exemption Form for review and approval by the HREAP.

5.5 If ethics approval by a HREC registered in Australia has been established for a research project, additional ethics approval from the Institution is not required. However, researchers are required to submit a Human Research Ethics Declaration Form to the Ethics Director for recordkeeping.

5.6 Researchers who are not employed by the Institution conducting research on a campus of the Institution or where recruitment involves staff or students, researchers must register the external approval with the Ethics Director along with a letter of support from the President and Managing Director (President) confirming their agreement for the research to proceed. Recruitment of participants from the Institution or on-site data collection must not start until the President agrees in writing.

5.7 If ethics approval with an overseas international review board/ethics committee has been established, additional ethics approval from the Institution is not required if:

(a) Participants within Australia will not be recruited;

(b) the Institution will not be responsible for the conduct of the research at an Australian site; and

(c) a researcher from the Institution will not be responsible for fieldwork, recruitment or data collection overseas.

However, investigators from the Institution are required to register the external approval with the Ethics Director for recordkeeping.

5.8 The Ethics Director has the right to desk-reject an ethics application if:

(a) it is incomplete and/or supporting documents are missing;

(b) it does not sufficiently address reviewer feedback and/or lacks research merit and integrity; and

(c) the project involves greater than low risk.

5.9 Only ethics applications with research merit and integrity that involve minimal to low risk will be submitted to the HREAP for approval.

5.10 All research involving greater than low risk must be reviewed and approved by an HREC registered in Australia in accordance with the National Statement.

6. Modifications to approved projects

6.1 Researchers must seek and obtain approval of a modification request from the Chair of HREAP before implementing any change to an approved project, except where a change is required to eliminate an immediate risk to participants.

An immediate risk to participants includes a real and imminent threat to the physical, psychological, or privacy interests of participants requiring urgent action to prevent harm. It does not include changes made for convenience or methodical improvements.

6.2 Where a change is implemented to address immediate risk, the researcher must notify the Chair of HREAP in writing within 72 hours.

6.3 A modification is any change to an approved project that may affect participant risk, consent processes and scientific integrity, including but not limited to changes to:

- (a) participant population or inclusion/exclusion criteria
- (b) data collection methods including tools, instruments or mode (e.g., online or face-to-face)
- (c) recruitment and sampling methods or materials
- (d) consent type or participant information
- (e) risks, burdens or incentives to participants
- (f) data management, storage or privacy arrangements
- (g) research personnel, investigators or research sites

6.4 Where iterative refinement of research instruments is an explicit and approved component of the project design (e.g. pilot testing or participant feedback), minor revisions may be implemented without prior approval, provided that:

- (a) the changes remain within the scope and boundaries approved by the HREAP;
- (b) no new risks, topics, or participant burdens are introduced; and
- (c) all versions are documented and reported.

Changes outside the approved scope of iteration require prior project modification approval.

7. Monitoring and review

7.1 All approved projects are required to submit an annual progress report and a final report upon project completion for monitoring by the Scholarly Practice Committee. This is to ensure compliance with the approved research protocol and conditions of approval and that any complaints or issues occurred have been appropriately addressed and rectified.

7.2 Where an approved project does not meet the conditions of ethics approval, including obtaining prior approval for modifications, the HREAP may impose conditions on the use of data or, where warranted, suspend or withdraw ethics

approval.

7.3 Complaints about ethical issues by participants, external organisations, students or staff are reported to the Ethics Director and resolved under the oversight of the HREAP. If these complaints are still unresolved, they may be addressed via the *Complaints and Appeals Policy* and *Complaints and Appeals Procedures* (students) or the grievance procedure outlined in the *Employee Handbook* (staff).

7.3 Any concerns about a breach in ethical conduct by an academic staff member must be reported by the Ethics Director to the Scholarly Practice Committee.

8. Recordkeeping and legal protection

8.1 All ethics proposals and scholarly records are electronically recorded and maintained in a secure folder in accordance with the Records Management Policy.

8.2 The Institution provides an assurance of legal protection to all those involved in the ethical review of research for liabilities that may arise in the course of the bona fide conduct of their duties as advised in the National Statement (Chapter 5.1). Protection is afforded to the Chair, members of the Scholarly Practice Committee and ethics reviewers.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) monitors the effectiveness of the policy and is responsible for ensuring appropriate support and resources for students and academic staff undertaking research at the Institution.

9.2 The Chair of the Scholarly Practice Committee is responsible for ensuring the Institution:

- is compliant with the National Statement and the Code;
- has the resources and capacity to carry out lower risk research competently and professionally; and
- has effective systems and processes in place for reviewing, evaluating and monitoring research of academic staff.

9.3 The Chair of the HREAP is responsible for:

- providing advice to academic staff on ethical matters to ensure that research at the Institution conforms with the National Statement and the Code;
- overseeing the review, evaluation and approval of lower risk research proposals by staff in compliance with the National Statement and the Code; and
- reporting and advising on matters of ethics to the Scholarly Practice Committee.

9.4 The Ethics Director is responsible for:

- evaluating the suitability of ethics applications submitted for approval by the HREAP;
- coordinating the lower risk ethics peer-review process;
- record keeping of ethics applications, outcomes and annual reports;
- record keeping of declarations of research undertaken at the Institution with ethics approval obtained from a registered HREC;
- ensuring appropriate storage arrangements for research data and information in accordance with the National Statement; and
- reporting and advising on ethical issues in research projects to the Chair of HREAP.

9.5 Staff who undertake human research are responsible for complying with the National Statement and the Code, keeping auditable records of their research activities, and disseminating research outputs responsibly and appropriately.

10. Related documents

Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Policy

Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Procedures

Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework

Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) Framework

Records Management Policy

[*Ethics Review Process Flowchart_approved AB_20250718*](#)

Approved by Academic Board on 22 May 2026