

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 2023 (‘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 Scholarly 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 reported responsibly, with the appropriate acknowledgement of all stakeholders.

4.4 Academic staff are able to engage in scientific research.

4.5 Academic staff and external colleagues engaged in scholarly research

embrace the highest ethical, professional and scholarly standards to protect the rights, safety and privacy of individual research subjects and the wider community.

4.6 Students learning about research methodologies and methods as part of their coursework are not required to conduct research. Students required to learn about research in a field of study must be given access to advanced knowledge about ethical principles and practices.

4.7 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.

4.8 The Chair of the Scholarly Practice Committee (SPC) with an AQF Level 10 qualification undertakes the role of Ethics Director and has oversight of all scholarly research to ensure they meet the requirements of the National Statement and the Code.

4.9 The Scholarly Practice Committee and the Chair of the SPC have the capacity to review and approve minimal to low risk research only in accordance with the Ethics Review Process Flowchart (see Attachment A). Greater than low risk projects must be reviewed by an Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in Australia that meets the governance and composition requirements stated in Chapter 5.1 of the National Statement.

4.10 The Scholarly Practice Committee regularly monitors the occurrence of any complaints, protocol deviation and issues related to the conduct of the research so that those issues can be rectified.

4.11 The Scholarly Practice Committee also monitors the compliance of researchers with the approved research protocol and the milestones throughout the duration of the project with mandatory annual reporting.

5. Ethics application process

5.1 If a study involves only secondary data or information that does not contain identifiers or personal information about the participants without consent, it may be eligible for 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 Chair of the Scholarly Practice Committee.

5.2 If ethics approval with an Australian HREC 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

5.6 Only ethics applications with research merit and integrity that involve

minimal to low risk will be submitted to the Scholarly Practice Committee for approval.

5.7 Research that involves greater than low risk must be reviewed by an HREC at an Australian university externally or through a private service provider.

5.8 A modification request is to be submitted to the Ethics Director if revisions are made to an approved research project.

5.9 All approved projects must undergo an annual monitoring process overseen by the Scholarly Practice Committee to ensure compliance and that any complaints or issues occurred are rectified.

5.10 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.

5.11 Complaints about ethical issues by participants, external organisations, students or staff are addressed in the first instance by the Ethics Director. 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).

6. Recordkeeping and legal protection

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

6.2 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 SPC and ethics reviewers.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 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 scholarly research at

the Institution.

7.2 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 scholarly research of academic staff. .

7.3 The Ethics Director is responsible for assessing scholarly research projects involving human participants to ensure they meet national standards for ethical conduct and are undertaken or supervised by academics at the Institution who have the requisite qualifications and experience. Responsibilities of the Ethics Director include:

- provide advice to academic staff on ethical matters;
- evaluate the ethical risks involved in scholarly research proposals by staff;
- keep records of scholarly research undertaken in teams involving external institutions;
- ensure that scholarly research at the Institution conforms with the National Statement and the Code;
- ensure appropriate storage arrangements for research data and information as detailed in the National Statement;
- report and advise on matters of ethics and scholarship to the Scholarly Practice Committee.

7.4 Academic staff who undertake scholarly research are responsible for conforming with the National Statement and the Code, keeping an auditable record of any research undertaken, and disseminating their research both internally and externally.

8. 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_20240705](#)

Approved by Academic Board on 5 July 2024