

# HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE



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## 1 ESTABLISHMENT

The Human Research Ethics Committee is a sub-committee of the Research Committee and will provide reports and/or advice to the Research Committee.

## 2 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Committee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) when CQUniversity is conducting research with or about people, or their data or tissue.

This Committee's functions and responsibilities are to:

- 2.1 Approve ethical clearance, and monitor research projects, relevant to the use of humans, or their data or tissue, to ensure conformance to the University's policy documents, National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and other legislative requirements.
- 2.2 Maintain a register of approved research proposals, on an annual basis, and provide written authorisation for the commencement of such projects and activities.
- 2.3 Recommend to the Research Committee policy documents to monitor the use of human subjects in research.
- 2.4 Submit a written report on the Committee's activities at least annually to the Research Committee.

2.5 Provide the following information to the National Health and Medical Research Council, in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research:

- information from its records, as requested, and
- annually report information relevant to its procedures.

### **3 DELEGATED AUTHORITIES**

This Committee has delegated the following authority to the Committee Chair:

- approve ethical clearance, and monitor research projects, for applications deemed as low risk or negligible risk research to be processed through the low risk review process, line with paragraphs 5.1.18 to 5.1.23 of the National Statement
- approve requests for minor modifications to approved projects. Minor modifications may include extensions to the end date, inclusion of additional research team members or minor changes to documentation where there is no material change to the approved project protocols. The Chair may sub-delegate approval to extend the end date of a proposed project to the Secretary, and
- withdraw and restore ethical approval, and make recommendations to the Vice-President (Research) on suspending or terminating a project, for non-compliant projects, or projects with adverse occurrences or unforeseen events. In make this determination, the Chair may consult with other committee members and parties to seek advice and assistance, and will advise the principal researcher/s, supervisor (if applicable), the Vice-President (Research), Secretary, Dean School of Graduate Research and any other formal parties to the project to this effect in writing.

### **4 REFERRAL OF MATTERS**

This Committee may refer any item to the Research Committee for discussion, consideration and/or action, and may refer relevant matters for action or noting to other committees as appropriate.

### **5 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

This Committee shall comprise:

Ex-officio members:

- Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement)

Appointed members:

- a chairperson
- at least two members who are lay people, one man and one woman, who have no affiliation with the University and do not currently engage in medical, scientific, legal or academic work
- at least one member with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people (e.g. a nurse or allied health professional)
- at least one member who performs a pastoral care role in a community such as an Aboriginal elder or a minister of religion
- at least one lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise the University, and
- at least two people with current research experience that is relevant to research proposals to be considered at the meetings they attend. These two members may be selected, according to need, from an established pool of inducted members with relevant expertise.

#### **Terms of office**

Ex-officio members shall serve for the duration of their appointment. Ex-officio members may send a nominee when unable to attend a meeting, or nominate a standing nominee.

Appointed members are approved by the Vice-President (Research), on recommendation from the Chair. Appointed members shall serve for a term of three years. At the end of the term of office, expressions of interest will be called for the position, and incumbent members will be invited to re-apply, should they elect to do so. It is recognised that in some circumstances, the availability of suitably qualified potential members will require some members to serve for longer periods. Where more applications are received than places available, the Chair will conduct interviews to determine appointees.

### **Leave of absence**

Where a member is aware that they will be absent from the University and unable to attend Committee meetings for an extended period, the member may apply to the Chair for leave of absence for the period. For the purpose of calculating membership and quorum, the membership will be reduced by the number of members on approved leave of absence at the time of the meeting.

## **6 RIGHTS OF AUDIENCE AND DEBATE**

This Committee may extend rights of audience and debate on either a standing or ad hoc basis. Rights of audience and debate may participate in meetings, but have no voting rights.

Employees and external stakeholders may request the opportunity to address the Committee. The Chair will consider and determine these requests.

## **7 OBSERVERS**

Observers, including researchers and supervisors, are welcome with the Chair's prior permission and provided they advise the Secretary in advance.

Observers are entitled to see and hear the proceedings of the meeting but have no voting rights and no right to speak at meetings, unless invited to do so by the Chair. Observers must leave the meeting when requested by the Chair, or if any matters are to be considered in closed session.

## **8 CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR**

The Chair shall be as appointed by the Vice-President (Research). The Deputy Chair will be a nominee from the Committee members, invited by the Chair.

The Chair must:

- ensure that the Committee operates in accordance with the principles and requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, relevant policy documents of the University, and agreed Committee procedures
- ensure that proposals are considered by the Committee and the outcomes conveyed to researchers in a timely manner
- advise University management regarding the level of resourcing required by the Committee
- represent the Committee in any negotiations with management, and
- ensure Committee records are maintained and made available for review by the University and authorised external reviewers.

This Committee has delegated authorities to the Chair. Refer to the [Delegated Authorities](#) section for further information.

The Chair shall nominate an alternate Chair if the Chair and Deputy Chair are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

## **9 SECRETARY**

The Vice-President (Research) shall nominate the Secretary.

## 10 CASUAL VACANCY

A casual vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the original appointment requirements.

## 11 REMOVAL OF A MEMBER FROM OFFICE

This Committee may terminate a person's membership for misconduct by a vote of two-thirds of those present at a committee meeting called in accordance with these terms of reference, and for which due notice of the motion to terminate the person's membership has been given.

Where a member or their nominee does not attend three consecutive meetings without adequate cause, that person's membership may be terminated. A person whose membership has been terminated may apply to the Committee to have their membership reinstated.

## 12 QUORUM

Where there is less than full attendance at a meeting, the Chair must be satisfied, before a decision is reached, that all members have received all papers and have had an opportunity to contribute their views and that these have been recorded and considered.

## 13 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members are required to declare to the Chair any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest they may have with any item on the agenda.

If the Chair or Committee deems a member to have a conflict of interest in a matter before this Committee, the member will be excused from committee discussions and deliberations on that matter.

Further details on identifying and dealing with a conflict of interest are provided in the [Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure](#).

## 14 MEETINGS

Committee meetings may be held face-to face, by telephone, videoconference, or other electronic means. Committee meetings shall be held at least monthly.

Where practicable, meetings of this Committee will be scheduled to enable timely consideration of research applications in relation to closing dates for applications for research grants from the:

- Australian Research Council
- National Health and Medical Research Council, and
- following the award of any Internal Research Grant which is subject to ethical approval.

Committee decisions may be made at a duly called and constituted meeting, or by a resolution in writing (flying minute) to all members and electronically approved by at least all members.

Committee members are required to fully prepare for each meeting, read the documentation in advance, and make every reasonable effort to attend each meeting.

## 15 ACCESS TO RESOURCES

To assist external members in maintaining their knowledge on ethical issues, access to the CQUniversity library facilities is available on request. Attendance at training and other professional development opportunities is encouraged and supported by the University. CQUniversity also indemnifies external members for their committee activities.

External committee members will be provided with access to any resources they reasonably require to fulfil their duties as a committee member.

## 16 AGENDAS AND MINUTES

The Secretary is responsible for final preparation, distribution and record-keeping of all reports and agenda papers.

Agenda papers will be distributed at least five working days before the meeting, to an address nominated by each member. Agenda documents will primarily be available for download from a secured website, with paper copies available to members with limited computer access.

Members may request, through the Chair or Secretary, that an item be placed on the agenda for any meeting. Only with the Chair's permission will late papers or the tabling of papers be accepted. All papers must be submitted to the Secretary by the specified submission deadline.

Committee records are subject to the Queensland [Public Records Act 2002](#) and must be retained by the Secretary in accordance with the University's [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#).

Minutes of meetings will be drafted within two working days of the meeting. The Chair will confirm draft minutes within two working days of receipt, after which the Secretary will circulate the documents to all members and include them in the agenda papers for the next meeting.

## 17 EVALUATION AND REVIEW

To ensure the Committee is fulfilling its duties, it will undertake an annual self-assessment of its performance against these terms of reference and provide that information to the Research Committee, along with any information the Research Committee may request to facilitate its review of the Committee's performance and its membership.

## 18 RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Human Research Ethics Approvals Procedure](#)

[Human Research Ethics Committee Grievance Procedure](#)

[National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#)

## 19 FEEDBACK

Feedback about this document can be emailed to [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 20 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Delegated Approval Authority	Research Committee
Advisory Committee	Human Research Ethics Committee
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Administrator	Vice-President (Research)
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