

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure provides guidance on how complaints regarding the use of humans in research are managed at CQUniversity.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to CQUniversity employees and students who conduct research with or about people, or their data or tissue.

3 PROCEDURE

Overview

- 3.1 Chapter 5.6 of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) requires that to handle complaints about researchers or the conduct of research, institutions should:
- identity a person accessible to participants, to receive these complaints
 - establish procedures for receiving, handling and seeking to resolve such complaints (clause 5.6.1), and
 - establish procedures for receiving, handling and seeking to resolve complaints about the conduct of review bodies in reviewing research proposals' (clause 5.6.4).
- 3.2 Complaints will be treated confidentially by CQUniversity unless CQUniversity is under an obligation to disclose the complaint. In such cases, the complainant will be advised if the University is to disclose the enquiry or complaint. No student or employee shall have their academic progress or employment jeopardised by raising a concern.
- 3.3 Investigations of a complaint may include:

- interviews with the complainant, the subject of the complaint, or witnesses
- unannounced inspection of research sites, data and signed consent forms and or/ interview with the prior consent of research participants
- seeking expert advice on technical matters from outside the institution.

3.4 In general, complaints will be attempted to be resolved by counselling and advice.

3.5 Where a breach of conduct may have occurred, the Human Research Ethics Committee Chair will inform either the Dean, School of Graduate Research (where the project is a research higher degree candidate project), or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for all other projects, to initiate procedures under the [Student Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#) or the [Code of Conduct for Research](#) respectively.

3.6 The Human Research Ethics Committee, hereafter the Committee, decisions are not open to amendment if due process has been followed.

General public complaints

3.7 All complaints about CQUniversity's human research activities received from the general public will be referred to the Committee for investigation.

3.8 Where these complaints have been advised through the Queensland Government, the Committee will report to the Vice-Chancellor and President, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) in writing within 10 working days of receipt of such advice.

3.9 Where serious problems arise which cannot be resolved by the Committee the matter will be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Student complaints

3.10 Where a student is dissatisfied with the involvement of humans in a particular research project or teaching exercise, they will make a written submission in plain English of no more than four A4 pages, detailing the reasons for dissatisfaction will be submitted to the Committee within 10 working days of the project or teaching exercise.

3.11 The Committee must consider the matters raised in the submission and respond to those matters. The Committee may confirm or alter any decision previously made in relation to the relevant research or teaching proposal.

3.12 Within 10 working days of the meeting at which the submission is considered, the Committee will provide a decision via written statement addressing each of the matters raised and advise of any confirmation of, or change of decision or procedure.

3.13 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Committee's decision, they may advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) within 10 working days of the Committee's response that they have an irreconcilable difference with the Committee. This must be done in writing and a copy of both the submission forwarded to the Committee and the written response from the Committee attached.

Employee complaints

3.14 Where a researcher, supervisor, employee or research candidate is dissatisfied with either the Committee's procedures or any decision regarding the involvement of humans in a particular research project or teaching activity, they will provide a written submission in plain English of no more than four A4 pages, detailing the reasons for dissatisfaction within 10 working days after receipt of advice of the Committee's decision.

3.15 If a written grievance is received more than 15 working days before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, the grievance must be considered at that next scheduled meeting. If a written grievance is received within 15 working days or fewer of the next scheduled meeting it will be held over and must be considered at the following meeting.

- 3.16 The Committee must consider the matters raised in the submission and respond to those matters. The Committee may confirm or alter any decision previously made in relation to the relevant research or teaching proposal.
- 3.17 Within 10 working days of the meeting at which the submission is considered, the Committee will provide a decision via written statement addressing each of the matters raised and advise of any confirmation of, or change of decision or procedure.
- 3.18 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Committee's decision, they may advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) within 10 working days of the Committee's response that they have an irreconcilable difference with the Committee. This must be done in writing and a copy of both the submission forwarded to the Committee and the written response from the Committee attached.
- 3.19 In reviewing the matter referred, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may invite the participation of an ethicist or member of an ethics committee external to the University or any other persons to assist it in its deliberations.
- 3.20 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will provide written advice to both the Human Research Ethics Committee and the complainant regarding its review of the matter. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may endorse the Committee's decision or require the Committee to reconsider its decision or procedures.
- 3.21 In the event that the Committee is required to reconsider its decision or procedures, the Committee must consider any advice given to it by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 3.22 Any advice by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the matter referred will be deemed to be the final advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the matter.

Committee member complaints

- 3.23 Where an individual committee member is dissatisfied with either the Committee's procedures or any decision regarding research or teaching involving humans, they will provide a written submission in plain English of no more than four A4 pages, detailing the reasons for dissatisfaction to the Committee Chair within 15 working days after receipt of advice of the Committee's decision.
- 3.24 Where a committee member has a complaint relating to the Committee Chair, they will provide a written submission in plain English or no more than four A4 pages, detailing the reasons for dissatisfaction to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) within 15 working days after receipt of advice of the Committee's decision.
- 3.25 The Committee Chair must consider the matters raised in the submission and respond to those matters.
- 3.26 Within 15 working days of the receipt of the submission, the Committee Chair will provide a decision via a written statement addressing each of the matters raised and advise of any confirmation of, or change of decision or procedure.
- 3.27 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Committee's decision, they may advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) within 10 working days of the Committee's response that they have an irreconcilable difference with the Committee. This must be done in writing and a copy of both the submission forwarded to the Committee and the written response from the Committee attached.
- 3.28 In reviewing the matter referred, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may invite the participation of an ethicist or member of an ethics committee external to the University or any other persons to assist it in its deliberations.
- 3.29 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will provide written advice to both the Committee and the aggrieved Committee member regarding its review of the matter. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may require the Committee to reconsider its decision or procedures in the light of its advice or may endorse the decision or procedures of the Committee.
- 3.30 In the event that the Committee is required to reconsider its decision or procedures, the Committee must consider any advice given to it by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

- 3.31 Any advice by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the matter referred will be deemed to be the final advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the matter.
- 3.32 Having considered any advice given to it by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) the Committee concerned has ultimate authority for making a final decision on the matter referred.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Ethics Coordinator in the Research Division are responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this procedure.

Reporting

- 4.2 Grievances or complaints, including their resolutions, will be included in the Human Research Ethics Committee Annual Reports to the Research Committee and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Records management

- 4.3 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 4.4 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule on the [Queensland State Archives website](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must sought through the Records Management Office (email records@cqu.edu.au).

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Code of Conduct for Research](#)

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

[Student Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#)

7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

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