

# 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

The Committee's functions, as determined under Chapter 5.1 of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007](#), are to:

- 2.1 Examine written proposals relevant to the use of humans in research and approve only those investigations which conform to the University's 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

This Committee is responsible for:

- 2.3 Ensuring the Commonwealth and State legislation and the codes of practice adopted by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and other relevant authorities are complied with.
- 2.4 Monitoring the progress of approved research projects in order to determine that research protocols are preserved in the form in which they were approved.
- 2.5 Ensuring that all persons involved in research involving human participants are informed of the University's policy and procedures in relation to the ethical conduct of such research.
- 2.6 Monitoring approved projects by way of review of annual and final reports.

- 2.7 Recommending to the Research Committee, policy and procedures to monitor the use of human subjects in research.
- 2.8 Submitting a written report on the Committee's activities at least annually to the Research Committee.
- 2.9 In accordance with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007](#):
  - providing information from its records to the NHMRC on request, and
  - annually reporting to the NHMRC information relevant to its procedures.

### **3 REFERRAL OF MATTERS**

The 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.

### **4 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

The Committee shall comprise:

Ex-officio members:

- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement)

Appointed members:

- a chairperson at least two members who are lay people, one man and one woman, who have no affiliation with CQUniversity 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 CQUniversity, 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.

Ex-officio members may send a nominee when unable to attend a meeting, or nominate a standing nominee.

Appointed members are approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), on recommendation from the Chair. Appointed members shall be 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 of the Committee will conduct interviews to determine appointees.

### **5 RIGHTS OF AUDIENCE AND DEBATE**

This Committee may extend rights of audience and debate on either a standing or ad hoc basis.

### **6 CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR**

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

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](#) hereafter the Statement; the relevant policies of the University, and the 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 institution and authorised external reviewers.

The Committee has delegated to the Chair the authority to:

- approve requests for modifications to approved projects such as extension to end date, inclusion of additional research team members, minor changes to documentation where there is no material change to the approved project protocols
- consult with any other members of the Committee and any other parties to seek advice and assistance in addressing matters arising from any report of adverse occurrence or unforeseen event; suspend approval for a research/teaching project and advise the Principal Researcher/s, supervisor (if applicable), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Dean, School of Graduate Research and any other formal parties to the project to this effect in writing, and
- restore approval for a research/teaching project and advise the Principal Researcher/s, supervisor (if applicable), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Dean, School of Graduate Research and any other formal parties to the project to this effect in writing, if satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to ensure no further adverse occurrence or event of similar kind.

Where the Chair of the committee knows in advance that he/she will not be able to attend a meeting, he/she will approach the Deputy Chair another member to deputise as Chair. Where the absence is unplanned, and the Deputy Chair is not available, the members present will elect one of their number as chair of that meeting.

## **7 SECRETARY**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall nominate the Secretary.

## **8 CASUAL VACANCY**

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

## **9 REMOVAL OF A MEMBER FROM OFFICE**

The 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.

## **10 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.

## **11 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

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

## 12 MEETINGS

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

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

## 13 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.

## 14 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.

## 15 AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Agendas and associated documentation 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.

Only with the Chair's permission will late 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 are to be prepared for each meeting. The Chair will review the draft minutes and action sheet of each meeting, after which the Secretary will circulate the documents to all committee members and include them in the agenda papers for the next meeting.

## 16 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.

The Administrator shall review these terms of reference every two years, in conjunction with the Committee, and provide a report, including any recommendations, to the Research Committee.

## 17 FEEDBACK

University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 18 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
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Administrator	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
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Notes	