

## ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

### Membership:

The Human Research Ethics Committee, to be appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), shall comprise at least seven members:

- a) A chairperson, with suitable experience whose other responsibilities will not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the National Statement.
- b) 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 or legal work or academic work;
- c) One member with knowledge of and current experience in the professional care, counselling or treatment of people (e.g., medical practitioner, clinical psychologist, social worker, nurse).
- d) At least one person who performs a pastoral care role in a community, for example, an Aboriginal elder, a minister of religion;
- e) At least one lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise the institution.
- f) At least two members 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.
- g) A deputy chair

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) may appoint additional members, ensuring that the membership continues to reflect both the diversity of categories of membership (including gender) and the relative proportion of institutional to non-institutional members.

The term of appointment is normally for two years. Members may be considered for subsequent terms of office.

### Date of Establishment:

The University Research Projects Ethics Committee was established in 1995 approved by Academic Board 28/7/95 and adopted by Senate 12-10-95, at 6.6.

From 1 January 2000, the Committee was re-constituted as the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC). From 6 September 2000, under revised terms of reference approved by the Research Management Committee, it was renamed the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

### Meeting Frequency:

Monthly (except in January)

### Responsible Officer:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)

### Executive Officer:

Director of Research

### Terms of Reference:

The HREC's primary role is to protect the welfare and rights of participants in research. In exercising this role, the HREC is particularly concerned to:

- Ensure that all aspects of the research are conducted with integrity;
- Guarantee that respect for the dignity and well-being of the research participants takes precedence over the expected benefits to knowledge;
- Ascertain that research protocols respect, and show consideration for, particular cultural situations and

sensitivities;

- Verify that the conditions have been met for all research participants to provide free and informed consent;
- Ensure a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of participation in research.

It is then the specific responsibility of the HREC to:

- Consider the ethical and legal implications of all proposed research projects (including student research projects that may be part of taught units) that are conducted in or by the University and involve contact with human participants, and to determine whether or not they met the requirements for the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and whether or not they conform to relevant legal requirements;
- Establish procedures for the evaluation and certification of all proposals for the conduct, by members of the University, of research projects which involve human participants;
- Assist researchers to meet the requirements and standards of legal, professional and grant-awarding bodies;
- Establish and maintain a register of all proposed research projects which involve contact with human participants, so that the following data are readily available:
  - Name of responsible institution or organisation
  - Project identification number(s)
  - Name/s of Principal Investigator/s
  - Title of project
  - Date of ethics approval or non-approval
  - Approval or non-approval of any changes to protocols
  - The terms and conditions, if any, of approval of protocols
  - Whether approval was by expedited review
  - Whether the opinion of another HREC was considered
  - The relevance of Commonwealth and State Privacy Guidelines
  - Dates designated for review of protocols
  - Action taken to monitor the conduct of the research;
- Monitor the progress of research projects so as to ensure that they conform to ethical principles and standards and meet Commonwealth and State legal requirements;
- Provide for a confidential mechanism for receiving complaints or reports on the conduct of research projects;
- Establish and maintain effective communication with other HRECs, and especially with the Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC) of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and to provide, at the request of the AHEC, access to data held in the ACU Ethics Register
- Advise and report to the University's Research Committee (URC) on research ethics policy in the University and to provide an annual report to the URC at the time of the annual report to the AHEC.
- Confirm that appropriate approvals have been obtained for research involving animals, recombinant DNA, and ionizing radiation.

The HREC is further required to establish working procedures concerning the matters listed in Chapter 5.1 Institutional Responsibilities of the National Statement.

## Reviews

The Committee conducts an annual review of its procedures in line with the principles and requirements set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2007). The Committee also reviews its procedures as it deems necessary and recommends accordingly to Academic Board through the URC.