

Human Research Ethics Protocol¹

The ethics protocol is in four sections:

- Section 1: a statement of policy on research and teaching activities that involve human participants.
- Section 2: an application coversheet which records your contact details, the details of your supervisor or head of department (as relevant) and the title of your project or teaching activity.
- Section 3: a checklist of yes/no responses which identifies key issues.
- Section 4: the proforma which provides the Ethics Committee with more detail about your project and particularly your interaction with research participants.

Section 1: Statement of Principles and Policies on Human Research Ethics

All staff and students of the Laidlaw-Carey Graduate School undertaking research or teaching that involves human participants are required to ensure that their research and teaching comply with the highest ethical standards. To this end approval of any teaching or research that involves human participants must be submitted to the Ethics Committee of LCGS for approval. Ethics Committee approval must be granted before any research or teaching involving human participants commences. Any prior approval by the relevant committee within LCGS of projects involving such research or teaching will be conditional on Ethics Committee approval.

Applicants for Ethics Committee approval for research or teaching involving the participation of human participants should complete the forms in each of the following three sections, and submit them to the chair of the Ethics Committee. Final approval of any proposal is subject to an Ethics Committee recommendation.

¹ With reference to the Australian College of Theology Ethics Protocol and the University of Auckland Policy on Ethical Practices in Research Involving Human Participants.

Any teaching and research proposals that require ethical approval must evidence:

- Research or teaching merit;
- Participants' informed consent which is given free from any form of coercion;
- Respect for participants' rights of privacy and confidentiality;
- Minimisation of the risk of harm to participants;
- Special care for vulnerable participants;
- Limitation of, and justification for, any use of methods involving lack of full disclosure such as 'blind' groups, 'double blind' groups, or control groups;
- Appropriately qualified supervision;
- Avoidance of any conflict of interest;
- Respect for societies and cultures of participants;
- Freedom to publish the results of research, while maintaining the anonymity of individuals.
- Compliance with other standards where appropriate.
- Appropriateness of remuneration where applicable.

Towards that end the following material is provided as guidance:

1. Research or teaching merit

Good research design is critical. The Ethics Committee will assume that the issues of research / teaching design and methodology are the concern of the supervisor / head of department and PGC.

2. Informed consent

Participation of humans in research projects or teaching activities must be voluntary and obtained through informed consent. The information provided to gain the consent of the participant must:

- be adequate and appropriate, using language that prospective participants can understand.
- describe any attendant discomforts or material risk.
- explain the purpose of the research and include a description of any benefits that the researcher expects.
- disclose where applicable all financial implications for participants including payment of expenses or fees, and explain all compensation or indemnity arrangements.
- include an offer to answer any questions and the contact details of the person from whom further information can be obtained during the course of the research, and a summary of the results when the project is complete.
- include an offer of assistance in case of distress, and provide contact details.

Consent must be voluntary and therefore obtained without duress, undue influence, or disproportionate financial inducements. There must be a statement to the effect that:

- potential participants who decline to participate will suffer no adverse effect;
- participants are free to withdraw their consent and discontinue participation in the research or teaching activity at any time prior to the completion of the project without disadvantage.

Consent in writing is mandatory, except in minimally intrusive research (e.g. questionnaires eliciting non-personal information) or where the researcher can provide the Ethics Committee with good reason why written consent should not be required.

3. Vulnerable participants

Research involving participants at particular risk requires researchers to take special care. These include minors, prisoners, mentally infirm or unconscious persons. Where the vulnerable participant is not competent to give consent, the researcher must seek a proxy consent from a person legally representing the person's interests. Where the vulnerable participant can understand his or her interests, the researcher must seek the individual's informed consent. In the case of children, however, the researcher or teacher must in any event obtain the consent of the child's legal guardian. Where either the child or the legal guardian declines consent, the child cannot participate in the project. The vulnerable person's decision not to participate has priority over any other valid proxy consent (e.g., by legal guardians or representatives).

4. Privacy

Researchers must protect participants' personal information at all stages of a research project unless the participant has given a prior written consent for disclosure. Researchers must conform to the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993 and any applicable code of practice that the Privacy Commissioner has issued under the Act. In particular, researchers should:

- note that it is preferable to collect personal information directly from the individual concerned;
- take steps to ensure that participants know that the researcher is collecting information, why he or she is collecting it, who will receive the information, and what consequences there are, if any, of not supplying the information;
- ensure participants know of their rights of access to and correction of personal information;
- ensure that they collect only that personal information which is relevant, accurate, up to date, complete, and not misleading;
- keep personal information secure and for only as long as is required, but, if it constitutes original data for the purposes of the research project, for at least five years;
- state how and in what form personal information is to be retained, should there be a variation to the above provision;
- use personal information only for the purpose for which they acquired it, unless they obtain the authorisation of the individuals concerned.

5. Minimisation of harm

The researcher must balance inconvenience and discomfort to participants against the benefit to the participant or to society and the importance of the knowledge to be gained.

6. Lack of full disclosure

Lack of full disclosure to human participants in research projects is justified only where the impact of the lack of disclosure on the participant is minimal, the potential knowledge to be gained is significant, and no other means is reasonably available. Wherever possible, projects involving limited disclosure must incorporate an appropriate debriefing of the participants at the end of the project. The researcher must provide the participants with an explanation of the research goals and procedures. Researchers also have an obligation to be available after participants have participated in the project should any stress, harm or other concerns arise.

7. Appropriately qualified supervision

Appropriately qualified personnel must supervise research or teaching involving human participants.

8. Conflict of interest

Generally, applicants must avoid any project that puts them in a position where their activities as a researcher or teacher might come in conflict with their

interests as a professional or private individual. Applicants must explain to the Ethics Committee the nature of any potential conflict, and what actions if any they propose to take to minimise, avoid or resolve the conflict.

9. Cultural and social sensitivity

Researchers and teachers must ensure that their actions are appropriately sensitive to participants' cultural and social frameworks. Researchers must discuss any issues relating to Maori cultural and ethical values by consultation with the whanau, hapu or iwi concerned and a representative of Te Runanga o Te Wananga Amorangi o Aotearoa (The Maori Council of Laidlaw College).

10. Publication of results

Participants may not attempt to prevent or limit the researcher's right to publish the results of the research. This right of publication is qualified by the need to ensure appropriate preservation of participants' anonymity and to report results accurately. Where possible, researchers must convey findings to participants in a form comprehensible to them.

11. Compliance with other standards

Research and teaching proposals must incorporate, where appropriate, the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi. This means that all parties involved in the research project must respect the principles of partnership and sharing implicit in the Treaty. Research proposals must also conform to any other relevant professional codes relating to research and teaching. Where there is any inconsistency between this policy and a professional code, the researcher must advise the Ethics Committee of the inconsistency, and the Committee shall determine what is to apply.

12. Appropriate remuneration

Reimbursement for participants' out-of pocket expenses, time, and any discomfort or inconvenience is permissible, only to the extent that this constitutes recompense. The following types or circumstances of remuneration are not permitted:

- Remuneration which might operate to induce participation of persons whose circumstances disqualify them from participation in the research.
- Remuneration which, in the circumstances, discriminates improperly between participants and non-participants.
- Remuneration which discriminates improperly between different participants or different classes of participants.

Where a participant withdraws from a project after it has begun, he or she must receive a payment proportional to his or her participation. A participant who withdraws from a research project or teaching activity must in no way suffer any academic disadvantage consequent on withdrawal.



Section 2: Human Research Ethics Application Coversheet

Name _____

Research Supervisor or Head of Department:

Postal address:

Telephone number/s:

Email:

Title of research project or teaching activity:

Plain English title (if different from above) for inclusion on material provided to research participants:

Proposed commencement date:



I certify that the protocol is complete and the research or teaching will be conducted in accordance with the protocol and in an ethical manner.

Signature of researcher or teacher:

I certify that I have read the protocol and consider it to be complete.

Signature of research supervisor or head of department:

Name of supervisor or head of department:

Section 3: Checklist of Responses on Human Research Ethics

Please circle your response to each of the following questions. It is expected that issues arising from the checklist will be addressed in the ethics protocol proforma in Section 4.

Does the research or teaching involve remuneration of participants in any form?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching relate to any other professional codes and/or treaty partnership issues?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching involve participation of people selected as research participants on the basis of their ethnic origins?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching involve any issues relating to Maori cultural and ethical values?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching involve any potential conflict of interest on the part of the researcher or teacher?
YES / NO

Is the research being supervised or reviewed by, or the teaching being undertaken by, an appropriately qualified person?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching involve a lack of full disclosure to participants?
YES / NO

Could the research or teaching place either the research participants or the researcher or teacher in an unusually vulnerable situation?
YES / NO

Is there any potential risk (physical, emotional, social or legal) to individual participants' well being, beyond that normally encountered in everyday life, as a result of their involvement in the research or teaching?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching raise privacy issues?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching involve participants at particular risk?
YES / NO

Does the research or teaching involve a variation on the normal written informed consent process?
YES / NO

What research methodologies will be used (tick those applicable)?

- Anonymous or Internet questionnaires
 - Questionnaires requesting intimate personal, identifying, or sensitive information
 - Face to face interviews which do not request personal or sensitive information
 - Face to face interviews which request personal or sensitive information
 - Observation of participant's usual activities
 - Focus groups
 - Observation of an activity set up for the purposes of the study
 - Action research
 - Use of control group
 - Other (please specify)
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From which groups will the sample of participants be drawn (tick those applicable)?

- General public
 - Children or young people under the age of 18
 - Pastors or church workers
 - Patients of a hospital or clinic
 - People with whom you have an ongoing relationship (e.g. colleagues, family or friends)
 - Members of a church
 - Other (please specify)
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Is approval to access personnel, clients or records required from any organisation?

YES / NO

If YES, has approval been received from these organisations?

YES / NO

List the organisations where the research or teaching will be undertaken.

Language of the consent form, information sheet and any other material provided to research participants if other than English.

How do you intend to report your research?

Will research participants have the opportunity to receive a copy of your final report if they wish?
YES / NO

Section 4: Human Research Ethics Protocol Proforma

Please keep your responses as brief as possible while providing enough information for the members of the Ethics Committee to gain a good understanding of what your research will involve. The Statement of Principles and Policies on research involving human participants provides advice on what the Committee requires. Remember that members of the Committee might not have the same background in your area of study that you have. Your responses should be written in plain English for a non-expert audience.

In most cases brief responses are required. Where the answers to the checklist in section 3 have raised particular issues, or the research or teaching has a number of component parts, or there is possible risk to researchers or teachers or participants, a more detailed explanation will be necessary. Please submit your responses as a report with sections numbered to correspond to the categories in the proforma.

For any questions that are not relevant to your study, write N/A.

1 RESEARCH OR TEACHING AIMS

1.1 State the aims of your research or teaching.

1.2 Explain the need for, and value of, your research or teaching.

Place the aims in the context of existing research or practice. Include a list of not more than 20 key references as *appendix 1*.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 List your research questions or hypotheses.

Your protocol should clearly identify the questions which you want your research to answer. Depending on your methodology, these questions may be refined as your study progresses.

2.2 Outline your research design and methodology.

The Ethics Committee must be convinced that your research methods can be expected to produce valid results. Include a copy of your research tools as *appendix 2*.

2.3 Indicate whether your research is the first stage of a larger project.

If it is, briefly explain your intentions for the development of your study to facilitate further ethics approval if you do extend your research project.

3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Who will be approached or recruited to be research participants? How many participants will be involved in your study?

3.2 List the selection and, if appropriate, the exclusion criteria for participants.

3.3 How will you recruit volunteers for your research?

If you will use advertisements, flyers or other recruitment material please provide a copy of these materials as *appendix 3*.

3.4 How will you provide detailed information about your study to potential participants?

Include as *appendix 4* the information sheet/s that you will use.

3.5 How will you obtain consent to participate from those volunteering as participants for your research?

Include as *appendix 5* the consent form or forms that you will use. Please note that consent is not required for anonymous questionnaires. Return of the completed questionnaire indicates consent.

3.6 If your research participants will be drawn from any dependent group (people who have an unequal power relationship with you or with an organisation which is cooperating in the research), how will you ensure that they do not feel under any obligation to assist you with your research as participants?

3.7 How will you preserve participants' confidentiality as you collect and analyse the data and when you report the results?

3.8 If there are any potential risks (physical, emotional, social or legal) to individual participants (beyond those normally encountered in everyday life) as a result of their involvement in the research, what steps will be taken to address these risks?

Note if there is any lack of full disclosure in the research methods used, and any support facilities such as counselling, debriefings or referrals.

3.9 If there is a measure of deception in the course, how do you justify this?

Note any limiting measures such as debriefing or availability to participants in the event of any stress or harm experienced by participants.

3.10 If there are any potential safety implications for the researcher (beyond those normally encountered in everyday life), how will you address these?

3.11 If research participants will receive any payment, reimbursement or other benefit from participation in the research, please detail this and provide a justification for the level of compensation.

4 RECORDING, REPORTING, STORAGE AND ACCESS TO THE RESEARCH DATA AND RESULTS

4.1 How will the research data be recorded?

For example, audiotape, videotape, written notes or other means. Note that explicit consent must be obtained from participants if material is to be audio or videotaped or photographed. Provision for this should be included in the consent form.

4.2 What you will do with the recorded data once it has been analysed, and where will it be stored?

Any information that constitutes original data for the purposes of the research project should be stored securely, normally by the researcher, and kept for at least five years.

4.3 Who apart from yourself (and your supervisors if applicable) will have access to the research data and results?

Detail any conditions to be placed on that access.

5 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Is there a potential conflict of interest in your research or teaching and, if so, how are you planning to minimise the possibility?

5.2 If your research concerns Maori cultural and ethical values, what steps have you taken to ensure that these are appropriately handled?

Detail, where appropriate, any Treaty of Waitangi issues that may apply to the research or teaching.

5.3 Are there any other relevant professional codes relating to your research?

Detail steps taken to ensure that there is no inconsistency between this ethics policy and that of other professional codes. Where there is an unavoidable inconsistency, explain the nature of the inconsistency.

6 OWNERSHIP OF RESEARCH

6.1 Who will own the data and the results of your research?

Student researchers normally own the data that they collect. Ownership may vary in the case of staff researchers.

7 APPENDICES

Please provide the following with your application as appropriate:

- Appendix 1:** Reference list
- Appendix 2:** Research tools
- Appendix 3:** Recruitment material
- Appendix 4:** Information sheet
- Appendix 5:** Consent form
- Appendix 6:** Correspondence