



**RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE
POLICY**

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Related Documents	Research Ethics Clearance Procedure		

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Purpose

1. This Policy establishes the principles, governance arrangements and responsibilities that govern the ethical conduct of research undertaken at or on behalf of the Adelaide Institute of Higher Education (AIHE).
2. The Policy ensures that research involving human participants or human data is conducted in a manner that is ethical, responsible, and compliant with:
 - the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2025* (the *National Statement*)
 - applicable Australian legislation, and
 - recognised best practice in higher education research ethics.
3. The Policy adopts a proportionate, risk-based approach to ethics review, consistent with the *National Statement* and establishes referral pathways to external Human Research Ethics Committees where required.

Scope

4. This Policy applies to:
 - all research projects involving human participants or human data undertaken by AIHE staff, students, affiliates, or contractors, and

- research conducted at, by, or on behalf of AIHE, including research using identifiable or reasonably re-identifiable human data.
5. Activities involving human participants or human data that do not constitute research under the *National Statement* (such as internal quality assurance or teaching evaluation) are governed through separate institutional processes.

Policy Principles

6. The principles underpinning this Policy are as follows:
- 6.1 Ethics review under this Policy will be conducted in a manner that is proportionate to the level of risk posed by the research, in accordance with the National Statement.
 - 6.2 All research undertaken at or on behalf of AIHE will be conducted ethically and responsibly. Research will be designed and conducted in accordance with the core values of ethical human research: research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect.
 - 6.3 Researchers will respect the cultural heritage, values and traditions of research participants and communities. Research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will comply with the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.
 - 6.4 All research involving human participants or human data that is identifiable or reasonably re-identifiable will undergo formal ethics review and receive approval prior to commencement.
 - 6.5 Researchers are responsible for identifying, assessing and managing the risks associated with their research, and for providing assurance to the ethics review body regarding appropriate risk mitigation strategies.
 - 6.6 Research classified as negligible or low risk will be reviewed by the AIHE Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP).
 - 6.7 Research assessed as higher than low risk, or research involving participants under 18 years of age, will be reviewed and approved by an appropriately constituted external Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), established in accordance with the National Statement, and recognised by AIHE.
 - 6.8 No research involving human participants may commence until ethics approval has been granted by the relevant ethics review body (RERP or HREC).
 - 6.9 Participation in research will be voluntary and based on informed consent. Participants will be provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision and will be able to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty or adverse consequence.
 - 6.10 The independence of research will be maintained. Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest will be declared and appropriately managed.
 - 6.11 Approved research projects will be monitored in accordance with reporting requirements determined by the relevant ethics review body (RERP or HREC). Adverse events, complaints, protocol deviations, or allegations of misconduct will be reported promptly and managed in accordance with institutional procedures.
 - 6.12 Research conducted under this Policy will comply with applicable legislation, including privacy, data protection, record-keeping and confidentiality obligations.

Human Research Ethics Review Panel

7. The AIHE Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) is established as a sub-committee of

the Academic Board. Its *Terms of Reference* are set out in paragraph 11 below.

8. The RERP will comprise a minimum of five members and will collectively include:

- a Chair with experience in human research
- at least one member with current research experience (who is not the Chair)
- a person with knowledge of ethics
- a person with legal expertise, and
- a lay person with no current affiliation with AIHE.

Membership will reflect diversity of gender and background.

9. A quorum will consist of the Chair (or nominee) and at least two other members, drawn from different membership categories.

10. Members must declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to matters under consideration and must not participate in discussion or decision-making where such conflicts exist.

11. The RERP will:

- Review applications for ethics approval for research classified as negligible or low risk.
- Ensure research proposals are assessed against ethical standards, institutional policy and relevant legislation.
- Approve, request modification of, or decline research proposals within its remit.
- Monitor approved research projects through progress and final reporting requirements, including the reporting of adverse events.
- Maintain accurate records of applications, decisions and correspondence in accordance with institutional and legislative requirements.
- Refer research outside its scope to an external HREC where appropriate.
- Provide an annual report to the Academic Board on its activities, approvals, compliance matters and any recommendations for policy or procedural improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

12. The Academic Board is responsible for:

- approving and periodically reviewing this Policy, and
- receiving annual reports from the RERP to ensure appropriate oversight of research ethics activities.

13. The RERP is responsible for:

- reviewing ethics applications in accordance with this Policy and the Ethics Clearance Procedure, and
- ensuring proportionate, timely and well-documented ethics review processes.

14. The Head of School will:

- ensure staff and students are aware of this Policy and associated procedures
- ensure the Research Ethics Clearance Procedure remains current and recommend updates as required, and
- facilitate appropriate training in research ethics for staff and students.

15. AIHE staff and students undertaking research involving human participants or human data are responsible for:

- obtaining ethics approval prior to commencement
- conducting research in accordance with the approved protocol, and
- complying with reporting and monitoring requirements.

Definitions

16. See the AIHE Glossary of Terms for definitions.

Document Control		
Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	24/02/2026	Approved by Academic Board
1.0a	19/06/2026	Updated to the New Template

** Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.*