

 ADELAIDE INSTITUTE of HIGHER EDUCATION	Procedure PRA22.1		
	RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE PROCEDURE		

Approving Authority	General Manager	Approval Date of Last Revision	
Approval Date	26 Mar 2026	Effective Date of Last Revision	
Effective Date	26 Mar 2026	Review Date*	26 Mar 2031
Document No	PRA22.1	Version	1.0a
Parent Policy	Research Ethics Clearance Policy		
Policy Category	Academic		
Governing Authority	Head of School		
Reporting Authority	Academic Services Manager		
Responsible Officer	Head of School		
Related Documents	Ethics Clearance Policy		

Contents

Purpose.....	1
Scope	1
Application and Risk Assessment Procedures.....	2
Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) Review Procedures	2
Expedited and Out-of-Session Review	3
Oversight of Approved Research	3
Appeals	3
Record Keeping and Confidentiality.....	3
Reporting.....	4
Definitions	4

Purpose

1. The Research Ethics Clearance Procedure sets out the processes for implementing the AIHE Research Ethics Clearance Policy.
2. The Procedure establishes proportionate, risk-based ethics review processes and referral pathways consistent with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2025* (the *National Statement*).

Scope

3. This Procedure applies to all research projects involving human participants or human data undertaken by AIHE staff, students, affiliates or contractors, or conducted at, by, or on behalf of AIHE.
4. This Procedure applies only to activities that constitute research under the *National Statement*. Activities that do not constitute research (such as internal quality assurance or

teaching evaluation) are governed through separate institutional processes.

Application and Risk Assessment Procedures

5. All research projects requiring ethics approval must receive approval prior to the commencement of any research activity, including participant recruitment or data collection.
6. Researchers must complete the AIHE Research Ethics Application Form and submit it in accordance with this Procedure. Students must obtain written endorsement from their supervisor prior to submission.
7. Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed by the Chair of the AIHE Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP), or nominee, to:
 - assess whether the activity constitutes research under the *National Statement*, and
 - determine the level of risk and the appropriate ethics review pathway.
8. In accordance with the *National Statement*, research projects will be classified by the RERP Chair or nominee as:
 - negligible risk
 - low risk, or
 - higher than low risk.
9. Applications assessed as negligible or low risk and within the remit of the RERP will proceed to internal review.
10. Applications assessed as higher than low risk, or involving participants under 18 years of age, will not be reviewed by the RERP and must 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.
11. In such cases, the researcher is responsible for arranging submission to an external HREC, in accordance with guidance provided by AIHE. Evidence of external ethics approval must be provided to AIHE prior to commencement of the research.
12. Applicants whose projects fall outside the remit of the RERP will be advised of the required referral process and any supporting documentation required by AIHE.

Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) Review Procedures

13. The RERP will meet at least once during each Study Period. Additional meetings may be scheduled as required.
14. Applications must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to a scheduled RERP meeting.
15. The RERP will consider applications classified as negligible or low risk and may:
 - approve the application
 - require amendments, or
 - decline the application.
16. The possible outcomes of an application are:
 - *Approved*. The research may commence in accordance with the approved protocol.
 - *Amendments Required*. The application has not been approved. The applicant must address specified issues and resubmit the application. Resubmitted applications may be reviewed and approved by the RERP Chair on behalf of the Panel where the amendments are minor.

- *Withheld*. The application requires substantial revision and must be reconsidered by the full RERP following resubmission.
- *Declined*. The application has been determined to be ethically unacceptable in its current form. Reasons for the decision will be provided to the applicant.

Expedited and Out-of-Session Review

17. The RERP Chair may approve applications classified as negligible risk between scheduled meetings where there is a demonstrated need for expedited review.
18. The Chair's delegated authority applies only to negligible-risk research.
19. All approvals granted under expedited review arrangements must be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the RERP.
20. The Chair may require that any application submitted for expedited review be referred to the full RERP where:
 - the risk level is unclear or higher than negligible, or
 - the matter is not considered urgent.

Oversight of Approved Research

21. Researchers whose projects are approved must comply with all reporting and monitoring requirements specified by the RERP or external HREC, as applicable.
22. Researchers whose projects are approved must provide a progress report to the RERP at least annually, and more frequently if deemed necessary by the RERP.
23. Applications must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to a scheduled RERP meeting.
24. Any proposed amendments to an approved research protocol that may affect participants, risk level or ethical considerations must be submitted for approval prior to implementation.
25. Researchers must promptly report to the RERP or external HREC, as applicable:
 - adverse events
 - participant complaints
 - protocol deviations
 - allegations of research misconduct.
26. The RERP may suspend or withdraw ethics approval where ethical concerns arise, reporting obligations are not met, or where required by an external HREC decision.

Appeals

27. Students who are dissatisfied with a RERP decision may seek review in accordance with AIHE's Student Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
28. Staff members who are dissatisfied with a RERP decision may appeal to the Chair of the Academic Board.
29. Appeals may only be made on the grounds that the Research Ethics Clearance Policy or Research Ethics Clearance Procedure was not applied correctly. Appeals do not provide a mechanism for reconsideration of academic or ethical judgement.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

30. All records relating to ethics applications, decisions and monitoring will be managed in accordance with AIHE's Records Management Policy and Privacy Policy.

31. Access to ethics records will be restricted to authorised personnel and handled in accordance with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Reporting

32. The RERP will provide an annual report to the Academic Board outlining:

- applications received and decisions made
- use of expedited review processes
- any compliance issues identified, and
- recommendations for policy or procedural improvement.

Definitions

33. 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 New Template

** Unless otherwise indicated, this Procedure will apply beyond the review date until a formal review is completed*