

Guidance: Joining a Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University.

Context

From time-to-time vacancies arise on the human research ethics committees at Western Sydney.

This document explains the role of a committee member, the workload involved and how to apply for membership.

What does membership involve?

[Low & Negligible Risk Committee \(LNR\)](#)

[Human Research Ethics Committee \(HREC\)](#)

[HREC Executive Committee \(Exec\)](#)

[Community Membership of HREC](#)

Need more information?

The [Terms of Reference](#) for the relevant committee will provide you with detailed information about the remit of each committee and the membership requirements.

You can also reach out to either the [Ethics Officer](#) or the Chair of the relevant committee:

Low & Negligible Risk Committee: [Mark Antoniou](#)

Human Research Ethics Committee: [Kristy Coxon](#)

Low & Negligible Risk Committee (LNR):

The LNR Committee reviews minimal and low risk applications, responses to feedback, amendment applications and exemption applications. Members of the LNR Committee must be tenured academic staff at WSU.

A meeting is scheduled for every Tuesday, but this committee does not usually meet face-to-face. Instead, meetings are conducted asynchronously. An agenda is distributed to the members on the Thursday before the scheduled meeting date. Each member is assigned a number of items to review that week. The number of items per member varies each week, but ranges from 2 to 8, although 8 would be a rarity. Typically, a member can expect to review approximately 2 new applications, a response or two and some amendments each week.

Members must read the items assigned to them and consider whether the proposed research raises any ethical concerns (as per the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research). Decisions and any feedback are recorded on a template called the "Review Sheet", which should be returned to the Secretariat within 48 hours of the scheduled meeting date. As there is no formal face-to-face

meeting of this committee, any queries can be directed to the Ethics Officer, who can either provide advice or arrange a meeting with other committee members or the Chair.

LNR Committee members are also required to attend up to 4 mandatory professional development sessions per year. These are usually run in a hybrid mode (Zoom or face-to-face at Kingswood).

Membership carries a 5% workload allocation and appointments are usually for 3 years.

How to apply:

- Discuss your membership with your Dean or Institute Director before applying.
- Submit the [Expression of Interest Form](#) to humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au
- Applications are accepted year-round.

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

The HREC reviews greater than low, and high-risk applications, responses to feedback and amendment applications. Members of the HREC must be tenured academic staff at WSU, preferably at Academic Level C, D or E.

The HREC meets via Zoom on the 3rd Monday of each month, starting at 4pm. An agenda is distributed to the members approximately 2 weeks prior to the meeting date. Each academic member is assigned a number of items to review, and the number varies from month-to-month. At the moment, a member can expect to review up to 10 applications per meeting. However, the workload will decrease as we recruit more members.

Members must read the items assigned to them and consider whether the proposed research raises any ethical concerns (as per the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research). Decisions and any feedback are recorded on a template called the “Review Sheet”, which should be returned to the Secretariat no later than midday on the scheduled meeting date.

Each application is assigned to a “lead reviewer” and two other reviewers (total of 3 for each application). At the meeting, the lead reviewer is called upon to provide a brief summary of the project, discuss any ethical issues, and note their decision. Other designated reviewers are then called upon to provide their input before the floor is opened to the committee.

Attendance at a majority of meetings is crucial to ensure that each meeting is quorate. Business cannot be conducted if a meeting is inquorate, which can cause significant delays for researchers.

HREC members are also required to attend up to 4 mandatory professional development sessions per year. These are usually run in a hybrid mode (Zoom or face-to-face at Kingswood).

Membership carries a 5% workload allocation and appointments are usually for 3 years.

How to apply:

- Discuss your membership with your Dean or Institute Director before applying.
- Submit the [Expression of Interest Form](#) to humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au
- Applications are accepted year-round.

HREC Executive Committee (Exec)

The Executive is a sub-committee of the HREC and reviews resubmissions (ie responses to feedback); amendments; exemption applications; applications for joint approval; sub-project applications; adverse events; breaches and complaints. Most adverse events, breaches and complaints are reviewed by the Chair, but other Exec members may be asked to provide input from time to time.

Executive Committee members are also full members of the HREC and combined workload allocation is 10%.

A meeting is scheduled for every Monday, except for public holidays, and the day the HREC meets. On average the Exec meets 3 times per month, but there are no meetings between the December shutdown and February.

This committee does not usually meet face-to-face. Instead, meetings are conducted asynchronously. An agenda is distributed to the members on the Thursday before the scheduled meeting date. Each member is assigned a number of items to review that week. The number of items per member varies each week, but ranges from 2 to 8. Typically, a member can expect to review some responses to HREC feedback, some amendments and perhaps an exemption application each week. In most cases the responses and amendments will relate to applications that a member reviewed previously as part of their HREC duties.

Members must read the items assigned to them and consider whether the proposed research/amendments raise any ethical concerns (as per the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research). Decisions and any feedback are recorded on a template called the “Review Sheet”, which should be returned to the Secretariat within 48 hours of the scheduled meeting date.

How to apply:

- Applicants must also agree to membership on the HREC
- Discuss your membership with your Dean or Institute Director before applying.
- Submit the [Expression of Interest Form](#) to humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au
- Applications are accepted year-round.

Community Members of the HREC

The Human Research Ethics Committee also includes members from the community including:

- **Community Members:** people who bring a broader community or consumer perspective and who have no paid affiliation with the University.
- **Pastoral Members:** any person who performs a pastoral care role in a community. For example, an Aboriginal Elder, a minister of religion, a community group leader.
- **Lawyers:** current or previously practising lawyers.
- **Professional Carers:** people with current experience in the professional care, counselling or treatment of people; for example, a nurse or allied health professional.

Our community members are very important as they bring a broader community or consumer perspective.

Community members are not assigned any particular applications to review, instead they can select items of interest from the agenda, and either complete the Review Sheet or raise any issues at the meeting.

An honorarium of \$200 per meeting is available to reimburse you for your time and travel costs.

Eligibility:

- Access to a computer, internet and able to use Zoom
- Able to attend a meeting on the 3rd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 4pm and continue until all business is conducted (sometimes 9pm, but not often!)

How to apply:

- Submit an [Expression of Interest Form](#) to humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au
- Applications are accepted year-round.