

GUIDANCE Western Sydney Undergraduate Coursework Masters students collecting and using human participant data as part of their learning activities

Overview

Many undergraduate, Bachelor Honours and coursework Masters students at Western are required to complete a “research” component in their degree and some of these projects involve human participants. In some cases, these activities are conducted only for the purposes of assessment and do not require ethical review because they are not usually considered to meet the definition of research.

When isn't ethical review of activities involving human participants needed?

Ethical review is not required if:

- the activity is **not research** as per the definition in the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) 2007 updated 2018, including if:
 - the activity is being conducted only for the purposes of teaching and learning (ie assessment) and because of this the outcomes of the project **will not** be disseminated outside of the University, eg in a paper, at a conference or in a report provided to an external organisation partner; or
- the activity is research but is [exempt from human ethics review](#) as per the guidelines in the National Statement and in line with the University decision about exempting research from ethics review.

When is ethical review of student activities required?

Ethics review is required if:

- the activity is research
- the activity has received funding or has been reported as part of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) evaluation and is therefore considered to be research
- the outcomes of the project will be disseminated outside of the university, eg in a paper, at a conference or in a report provided to an external organisation. This includes Honours projects
- the activity is **not** [exempt from human ethics review](#)

When conducting teaching and learning activities involving human participants which is not research

It is important for both the understanding of students and potential participants to differentiate research from non-research activities. Therefore, student activities that will recruit human participants without human ethics review must adhere to the following:

- in the initial discussions with students, and when promoting the activity to potential participants, ensure the language used makes it clear that the activity is not research that requires ethics review. For example, use language that communicates that the activity is part of an undergraduate coursework requirement or group assessment. Do not refer to the student as a ‘researcher’.
- explicitly state to the participants that the outcomes of the activity will be for the students’ learning only and the results will not be reported external to Western Sydney University
- if an internal School review process is undertaken to ensure the quality and appropriateness of the activity, avoid the use of the term ‘ethics approval process’ or similar language. It should not be implied that ethics approval can be granted by a process that is not governed by the guidelines that bind an NHMRC registered ethics committee.

If the student's activities are likely to require ethical review, or, if the activity is research but may be exempt from ethics review, please contact the [Human Research Ethics Officer](#) before the activity commences. The Ethics Officer can help you to understand the appropriate [review pathway and the associated timelines](#).

Resources

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)-Updated May 2015

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72>

Research Ethics Manual Booklet 22 Voluntary and Informed Consent

http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/research_ethics_and_integrity/human_ethics

Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form Templates

<https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/forms>

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Human Research Ethics Resource Manual (SoTL Manual)

<http://www.ahrecs.com/resources/scholarship-teaching-learning-human-research-ethics-resource-manual-sotl-manual>

Human Research Ethics Guidance Documents available from Research Services

- Guidance for Researchers New to Human Ethics Review
- Guidance Human Research Ethics Protocols for Coursework Masters
- Guidance on Choosing the most appropriate PIS and Consent
- Guidance on Completing the Project Description
- Guidance on Creating Research Project Flyers
- Guidance on Data Storage and Retention Questions
- Guidance on Ethics Review Exemption
- Guidance on Issues with Informed Consent in Research
- Guidance on Levels of Risk and the Ethical Review Process
- Guidance on Making an Amendment to an Approved Project
- Guidance on Organisations in Research
- Guidance on Questions Related to Cultural Sensitivities
- Guidance on Questions Related to Restrictions on Publication of Results
- Guidance on Receiving and Responding to Ethics Committee Assessor Comments
- Guidance on Research Projects Seeking to use Western Sydney Staff as Participants
- Guidance on Reimbursements
- Guidance on The use of 'Opt Out' or Passive Consent in Human Research
- Guidance on Writing Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms
- Guidance on Research Involving Young People
- Guidance on Research Projects and DFAT Advice
- Guidance on Using Focus Groups in Research

Human Research Ethics Team Contact: humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au