



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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Approval authority	Academic Board	Approved (minute ref.)	[AB meeting DD/MM/YYYY, Minute AB/_____]
Effective date	[_/_/_/_]	Next scheduled review	[DD/MM/YYYY] — biennial
Committee status	Standing subcommittee of the Academic Board	Reports to	Research Committee, then Academic Board
Owner	Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee	Secretariat	Research Office
Governing standards	National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, ARC and UA, 2023), in particular Chapter 5.1; Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018); Privacy Act 1988 (Cth); Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021		

Naming convention: this committee is named the Human Research Ethics Committee, abbreviated HREC. This name is used in every LIHE document without variation. The titles “Ethics Committee”, “Research Ethics Committee” and “Research and Higher Degrees Committee” are not used to describe this body, and existing documents using those titles are amended accordingly.

1. Establishment, purpose and authority

- 1.1 The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is established by the Academic Board of Lincoln Institute of Higher Education (LIHE) as a standing subcommittee of the Academic Board.
- 1.2 The purpose of the HREC is to ensure that all human research conducted by or on behalf of LIHE is ethically defensible, is conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023), and protects the welfare, rights, dignity, privacy and safety of participants.
- 1.3 The HREC exercises independent judgement. It is not subject to direction by management, by the Corporate Governance Board, or by any person with a financial or reputational interest in the outcome of a research project, in respect of any individual ethics determination.
- 1.4 LIHE is registered in the provider category Institute of Higher Education. Nothing in these Terms of Reference is to be read as describing LIHE as a university.

2. Scope

- All research involving human participants conducted by LIHE staff, higher degree by research candidates, coursework students, and honorary, adjunct or visiting appointees.
- All research conducted using LIHE name, premises, systems, data, funding or resources, including research conducted off campus or outside Australia.
- Research conducted with, or on the data of, LIHE students and staff.
- Research involving existing human data or human tissue, including identifiable and re-identifiable datasets.



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- Research involving animals is outside the jurisdiction of the HREC. LIHE does not operate an Animal Ethics Committee and cannot approve animal research. Such research is not permitted in the Master of Information Technology (Research).

3. Functions

- Review and determine applications for human research ethics approval under the three review pathways set out in clause 8.
- Determine whether a proposed activity is research requiring review, or is exempt from review under the National Statement (2023) section 5.1.22.
- Monitor approved research, including through annual progress reports, adverse event reports and audit.
- Suspend or withdraw approval where a project is not conducted in accordance with the approved protocol or with the National Statement.
- Receive and act on complaints from research participants.
- Maintain the LIHE Research Ethics Register through the Research Office.
- Advise the Research Committee and the Academic Board on research ethics policy, and review the Research Ethics Framework at least every two years.
- Refer suspected breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) to the Research Integrity Officer under the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure.
- Provide education and guidance to candidates, supervisors and staff on research ethics.
- Report annually to the Academic Board on the operation of the ethics review system.

4. Membership and composition

4.1 The HREC comprises a minimum of eight members, constituted in accordance with section 5.1.30 of the National Statement (2023). A minimum of one third of members must be from outside LIHE.

Position	Number	Specification	Voting
Chairperson	1	A senior academic with substantial higher degree by research supervision and research experience, appointed by the Academic Board. The Chair must not be the Dean (Research) or the Research Integrity Officer, so that ethics review remains independent of research management and of misconduct investigation.	Yes
Deputy Chairperson	1	Appointed from among the members; acts in the absence of the Chair.	Yes
Laypersons not affiliated with LIHE	2	One man and one woman, having no affiliation with LIHE and not currently engaged in medical, scientific, legal or academic work.	Yes
Member with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people	1	For example a registered psychologist, counsellor, social worker or registered nurse.	Yes
Member performing a pastoral care role in a community	1	For example a minister of religion, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander elder, or an equivalent community leader.	Yes
Members with current research experience relevant to research likely to be reviewed	2	At least one must have current research experience in information technology or a cognate discipline, so that the committee is competent to review research arising from the Master of Information Technology (Research).	Yes



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Higher degree by research candidate member	1	A currently enrolled research candidate, nominated through the student body, appointed for a one-year renewable term. Gives effect to student participation in academic governance under Standard 6.3.3.	Yes
Executive Officer	1	A nominee of the Research Office. Provides secretariat, maintains the register, and does not vote.	No

4.2 A person may satisfy more than one membership category only where the committee still meets the minimum of eight members and retains at least two members from outside LIHE.

4.3 Members are appointed by the Academic Board for a term of three years, renewable once. The candidate member is appointed for one year. Appointments and resignations are recorded in the Academic Board minutes.

4.4 All members complete an induction covering the National Statement (2023), the Australian Code (2018), privacy obligations, and these Terms of Reference, before participating in a determination.

4.5 Members are indemnified by LIHE in respect of decisions made in good faith in the performance of their duties.

5. Independence and conflict of interest

- A standing conflict of interest declaration is made by each member on appointment and updated annually.
- Conflicts are declared as the first item of business at every meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- A member with a conflict in relation to an application takes no part in the discussion or the determination, withdraws from the meeting for that item, and this is minuted.
- No member may participate in the determination of an application in which they are an applicant, a supervisor, a line manager of the applicant, or a named investigator.
- The Chair does not determine an application arising from a project the Chair supervises; such applications are determined by the Deputy Chair or the full committee.
- No member may be directed as to the outcome of a determination by any officer of LIHE.

6. Quorum

6.1 A quorum is six members present, and must include all of the following:

- the Chair or the Deputy Chair;
- at least one layperson not affiliated with LIHE; • at least one member with current research experience;
- at least one member from outside LIHE.

6.2 Business may not be transacted, and no determination on a greater than low risk application may be made, without a quorum. Members may attend by video conference and count towards quorum. Proxy attendance and proxy voting are not permitted.

7. Decision making

- The HREC seeks to reach decisions by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, a decision is made by a simple majority of members present and eligible to vote.
- The Chair does not hold a casting vote. Where a vote is tied, the application is deferred to the next meeting and, if the tie persists, is referred to the Academic Board for direction on process only, never on the ethical merits.
- A dissenting view is recorded in the minutes at the request of the dissenting member.
- Determinations are: approved; approved subject to conditions; modifications required with resubmission; not approved; or exempt from review.
- Every determination is provided to the applicant in writing with reasons.

8. Delegated authority and review pathways



Pathway	Delegate	Maximum time to first determination	Maximum time after resubmission
Exempt from review (National Statement 2023, s.5.1.22)	Chair or nominated delegate	10 working days	5 working days
Negligible or low risk (National Statement 2023, s.5.1.18–21)	Chair plus two members under delegation	15 working days	10 working days
Greater than low risk	Full HREC at a convened quorate meeting — not delegable	20 working days	15 working days

- The Chair may reclassify any application to a higher pathway, and must do so where any doubt exists.
- The Chair may not approve, under delegation, any application classified as greater than low risk.
- All delegated and exempt determinations are recorded in the Register of Delegated Ethics Decisions and reported to the next meeting of the HREC for noting.
- Where a determination cannot be made within the maximum timeframe, the Research Office notifies the applicant and the Principal Supervisor in writing, with reasons and a revised date.

9. Meetings and business

- The HREC meets monthly, and at least ten times each year.
- Applications must be lodged with the Research Office not later than ten working days before a scheduled meeting to be considered at that meeting.
- The agenda and papers are circulated at least five working days before the meeting.
- Draft minutes are circulated within ten working days and confirmed at the following meeting.
- Out-of-session determination by circulation is permitted only for exempt and low risk applications, and is reported to the next meeting.
- Meetings are closed. Applicants may be invited to attend for a specific item but withdraw before the determination.

10. Monitoring, suspension and withdrawal of approval

- Approval is granted for a maximum of twelve months and is renewable on receipt of a satisfactory annual progress report.
- Approval is suspended automatically where an annual progress report is not received within one month of its due date.
- Adverse events, complaints and unforeseen risks are reported to the Chair within five working days; serious adverse events within twenty-four hours.
- The HREC audits a sample of at least ten per cent of approved projects each year, and may audit any project at any time.
- The HREC may suspend or withdraw approval where a project departs from the approved protocol, where conditions are not met, or where participant welfare is at risk. Suspension takes effect immediately on written notice.
- Data collected without approval, outside the approved protocol, or after expiry of approval may not be used, and the matter is referred to the Research Integrity Officer.

11. Complaints and review of decisions

- Complaints by research participants are directed to the Research Office at the contact point published on the Participant Information Statement, and are reported to the HREC at its next meeting.
- An applicant may seek a review of an HREC determination by the Academic Board within twenty working days. A review considers whether the correct process was followed; it does not substitute a different ethical judgement for that of the HREC.



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- Allegations of research misconduct are not dealt with by the HREC and are referred to the Research Integrity Officer under the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

12. Records, confidentiality and privacy

- The Research Office maintains the LIHE Research Ethics Register, recording every application, pathway, determination, approval and expiry date, conditions, amendments, adverse events and reports.
- Records are retained for a minimum of seven years after completion of the project, or longer where required by law.
- Members treat all application material as confidential and sign a confidentiality undertaking on appointment.
- Personal information is handled in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), the Australian Privacy Principles and the LIHE Privacy Policy.

13. Reporting to the Academic Board

- The Chair reports to each meeting of the Research Committee, which reports to the Academic Board, on determinations made, delegated decisions, amendments, adverse events, complaints and instances of non-compliance.
- The Chair provides an annual report to the Academic Board covering: the number of applications by pathway; determinations by outcome; median and maximum determination times against the standards in clause 8; adverse events and complaints; audit outcomes; suspensions and withdrawals; membership and attendance; training undertaken; and any recommended amendment to the Research Ethics Framework.
- The Academic Board reviews the effectiveness of the ethics review system annually and records that review in its minutes.

14. Related documents

Research Ethics Framework; LIHE-RES-FRM-001 Application for Research Ethics Approval; LIHE-RES-FRM-002 Research Ethics Approval Process Flow Chart; Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure; Higher Degree by Research Framework; Privacy Policy; Information Management and Records Governance Policy and Procedures; Student Complaints and Appeals Policy; Candidate Intellectual Property Deed.

Schedule 1 — Membership register

To be completed and maintained by the Research Office, and reported to the Academic Board on each change. TEQSA has recorded that no evidence of committee membership was previously provided; this schedule must be populated before submission.

Membership category	Name	Qualifications and relevant experience	Internal or external	Term (from – to)
Chairperson				
Deputy Chairperson				
Layperson (external)				
Layperson (external)				



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Professional care, counselling or treatment				
Pastoral care role				
Research experience — information technology				
Research experience — second member				
Higher degree by research candidate member				
Executive Officer (non-voting)				

Schedule 2 — Attendance and quorum record

Meeting date	Members present	Quorum satisfied (Y/N)	Conflicts declared	Determinations made