LINCOLN INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Human Research — Lincoln Institute of Higher Education Research Ethics Committee (LIHE REC)

Document control

Document ID	LIHE-RES-FRM-001	**Version**	1.0 — approved (not draft)
Approval authority	Academic Board	**Approved (minute ref.)**	[AB meeting DD/MM/YYYY, Minute AB/____]
Effective date	[DD/MM/YYYY]	**Next scheduled review**	[DD/MM/YYYY] (biennial, or earlier on change to the National Statement)
Document owner	Chair, Research Ethics Committee	**Custodian**	Research Office
Governing instruments	Research Ethics Framework; Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure; Higher Degree by Research Framework; Privacy Policy; Information Management and Records Governance Policy and Procedures; Candidate Intellectual Property Deed		
External standards applied	National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, ARC and UA, 2023); Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018); Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (NHMRC, 2018) and the AIATSIS Code of Ethics (2020); Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles; Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021		

Mandatory sequencing requirement — read before completing this form

Written ethics approval must be granted by the LIHE Research Ethics Committee (REC) BEFORE any interaction with participants and BEFORE any data are collected, accessed or generated. This prohibition expressly includes recruitment and advertising, pretesting, instrument piloting, feasibility testing, proof-of-concept trials, and access to existing identifiable or re-identifiable data.

There is no exemption for pilot or feasibility work. Data collected before written approval cannot be used, cannot be reported in a thesis or publication, and will be treated as a potential breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018).

For candidates in the Master of Information Technology (Research): the ethics application is prepared and lodged within MITR103 and approval (or a written determination that approval is not required) must be held before the Confirmation of Candidature at the end of Trimester 3, and before any work commences in MITR104.

Review pathways and maximum timeframes for determination

Pathway	Determined by	Maximum time to first determination	Maximum time after resubmission
Exempt from review (National Statement 2023, s.5.1.22) — e.g. nonidentifiable existing data, quality	Chair, REC (or nominated delegate)	10 working days	5 working days
Pathway	**Determined by**	**Maximum time to first determination**	**Maximum time after resubmission**

assurance activity			
Negligible or low risk (National Statement 2023, s.5.1.18–21)	Chair plus two REC members under delegation	15 working days	10 working days
Greater than low risk	Full REC at a convened meeting (quorum as per REC Terms of Reference)	20 working days	15 working days

The REC meets monthly. Applications must be lodged with the Research Office not later than ten (10) working days before a scheduled meeting to be considered at that meeting. Applicants are notified in writing of the outcome. Where an application cannot be determined within the maximum timeframe, the Research Office must notify the applicant and the Principal Supervisor in writing, with reasons and a revised date.

Section 1 — Applicant and project identification

Name of researcher / candidate	
Student or staff ID	
Email address	
Contact telephone	
School	
Course	
Subject code in which the application is prepared	e.g. MITR103
Title of project	
Proposed commencement date for recruitment / data collection	
Expected date of thesis or report submission	
Funding source, sponsor or in-kind support (state "Nil" if none)	
Principal Supervisor	
Associate Supervisor	
External collaborators, partner organisations or research sites (state "Nil" if none)	

Type of research

☐ Undergraduate project

☐ Coursework Master's project

☐ Master of Information Technology (Research) — thesis

☐ Doctoral thesis

☐ Staff or academic research (not for award)

Applicant's proposed review pathway

Select the pathway you believe applies. The REC makes the final determination and may reclassify the application.

☐ Exempt from review

☐ Negligible or low risk

☐ Greater than low risk

Section 2 — Description of the project

Complete every item. Attach additional sheets where the space provided is insufficient.

2.1 Title of the project

2.2 Purpose of the study — aims, research questions or hypotheses, and significance to the discipline

2.3 Participants — sampling method, sample size and justification, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, and how participants will be identified, approached and recruited

2.4 Methods and instruments for data collection — identify each instrument and state whether it is (a) previously published and validated (cite it; separate approval is not required), or (b) newly developed or previously used but unpublished (attach the instrument for approval)

2.5 Data collection procedures and data analysis — what participants will be asked to do, where, for how long, and how the data will be analysed

2.6 Variables to be studied and the relationships between them

2.7 Benefits to participants and to the wider community arising from this research (state clearly if there is no direct benefit to participants)

2.8 Ethical issues raised by the proposed research, and the specific measures adopted to address each of them

2.9 Use of artificial intelligence or automated tools — state any generative AI, machine learning or automated decision tool used in recruitment, data collection, data processing or analysis, what data will be passed to it, and where that data is processed and stored

Section 3 — Data management, privacy, security and intellectual property

Nature of the data collected	Identifiable ☐ Re-identifiable (coded) ☐ Non-identifiable ☐
Will personal information or sensitive information within the meaning of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) be collected?	Yes ☐ ☐ No

Where will data be stored during the project (named institutional system or repository)?	
Security controls applied (access control, encryption, de-identification, separation of the code key)	
Who will have access to identifiable data?	
Will any data be transferred, stored or processed outside Australia? If yes, state the jurisdiction and the safeguards applied.	
Retention period (minimum five years from the date of publication; longer where required by law, by a funder or by the nature of the data)	
Method and timing of secure disposal	
Is any secondary use, sharing or open publication of the dataset proposed? If yes, state how consent covers this.	
Intellectual property arrangements confirmed in accordance with the Candidate Intellectual Property Deed?	Yes ☐ Not applicable ☐
Data Management Plan attached?	Yes ☐ ☐ No

Section 4 — Consent and participant protections

No.	Statement	YES	NO	N/A
1	Will you describe the main procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☐	☐	☐
2	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☐	☐	☐
3	Will you obtain written (or auditable electronic) consent for participation?	☐	☐	☐
4	Will you explain to participants that a refusal to participate will not affect their treatment, employment, assessment or education?	☐	☐	☐
5	Where the research is observational, will you obtain consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☐
6	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any	☐	☐	☐
No.	**Statement**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
	reason, and explain what happens to their data if they do?			

7	For questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer?	☐	☐	☐
8	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated confidentially and that any publication will not identify them?	☐	☐	☐
9	Will you provide participants with a Participant Information Statement that includes the LIHE complaints contact for research participants?	☐	☐	☐
10	Will you debrief participants at the conclusion of their participation?	☐	☐	☐

If you answered "NO" to any of questions 1–10, identify the question number and provide a full explanation and justification.

Section 5 — Risk screening

No.	Statement	YES	NO	N/A
11	Will participants be paid, reimbursed or otherwise given anything of value?	☐	☐	☐
12	Is electrical, mechanical, biomedical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☐	☐
13	Are there any financial, professional or personal interests of the researchers, the supervisors or the School arising from this study?	☐	☐	☐
14	Does the project involve deliberately misleading participants, or withholding information from them, in any way?	☐	☐	☐
15	Is there any realistic risk of participants experiencing physical or psychological distress, discomfort, embarrassment or disadvantage?	☐	☐	☐
16	Is there any realistic risk of researchers experiencing physical or psychological distress, discomfort or harm (including risk arising from fieldwork or lone working)?	☐	☐	☐
17	Will the project require approval from any ethics committee, institution, employer or site outside LIHE?	☐	☐	☐
18	Will any part of the research be conducted outside Australia, or with participants located outside Australia?	☐	☐	☐
19	Will data be collected online, or from social media, forums, applications or other digital platforms?	☐	☐	☐
20	Does the research involve a pre-existing relationship between the researcher and participants (for example the researcher's own students, staff, clients or colleagues)?	☐	☐	☐
21	Does the research involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, communities, knowledge or data?	☐	☐	☐

Special participant groups

Do participants fall into any of the following groups? Tick all that apply.

☐ Children under 16 years

☐ Young people aged 16 to 18 years

☐ People with a cognitive impairment, or with learning or communication difficulties

☐ People highly dependent on medical care, or patients in a clinical setting

☐ People in an existing dependent or unequal relationship with a researcher

☐ People in custody, or on a custodial or community-based order

☐ People who may disclose illegal activity

☐ People from a culturally or linguistically diverse background who require interpreting or translated materials ☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities

☐ None of the above

If you answered "YES" to any of questions 11–21, or ticked any special participant group, provide full details below, including the specific measures adopted to avoid or minimise harm, the arrangements for consent (including parental or guardian consent and assent where applicable), and any support or referral pathway offered to participants.

Section 6 — Research involving animals

Scope limitation

LIHE does not operate an Animal Ethics Committee and the LIHE REC has no authority to approve research involving animals.

Research involving animals may not be undertaken by candidates in the Master of Information Technology (Research). Where a project in another course would involve animals, it may proceed only where prior approval has been granted by an accredited Animal Ethics Committee of a partner institution under a written agreement, in accordance with the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (8th edition, 2013, updated 2021). Evidence of that approval must be attached to this form and the project may not commence until the REC has sighted it.

☐ This project does not involve animals.

☐ This project involves animals; external Animal Ethics Committee approval is attached (reference number: _____).

Section 7 — Attachments checklist

Applications lodged without the applicable attachments will be returned unassessed.

☐ Participant Information Statement

☐ Consent form (and assent form, where participants are minors)

☐ Withdrawal of consent form

☐ Recruitment materials — advertisement, email, flyer, social media post or verbal script

☐ Questionnaire, survey instrument, interview or focus group schedule, or task protocol

☐ Data Management Plan

☐ Written permission from each external site, organisation or data custodian

☐ Approval from any external ethics committee

☐ Translated materials and translator or interpreter details, where applicable

☐ Certificate of completion of the LIHE research integrity training program

☐ Risk assessment for fieldwork, where applicable

Section 8 — Declarations

8.1 Declaration by the candidate or researcher

I declare that:

- the information provided in this application is complete and accurate;
- I am familiar with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023), the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018), and the LIHE Research Ethics Framework, and I have discussed them with my Principal Supervisor and with all other researchers involved in this project;
- I have completed the LIHE research integrity training program;
- I have not collected, accessed or generated any research data for this project, and I have not approached, recruited or pre-tested with any participant, including for any pilot or feasibility purpose, and I will not do so until written ethics approval has been granted;

- I will conduct the research strictly in accordance with the approved protocol and any conditions imposed by the REC;
- I will seek written approval from the REC before implementing any amendment to the approved protocol, the research team, the instruments or the participant group;
- I will report to the REC any adverse event, complaint or unforeseen risk affecting participants within five (5) working days, and any serious adverse event within twenty-four (24) hours;
- I will submit an annual progress report for the duration of the approval, and a final report on completion or discontinuation of the project;
- I will store, retain and dispose of data as set out in Section 3 of this application; and
- I understand that ethics approval lapses on the approval end date and that any continuation requires a written extension granted before that date.

Candidate / Researcher	Name	Signature	Date

8.2 Declaration by the Principal Supervisor

I declare that:

- I have read this application and I am satisfied that the design is sound, that the risks have been properly identified and mitigated, and that the ethical issues have been adequately addressed;
- the candidate has the competence, training and resources required to conduct this research;
- no data have been collected and no participant has been approached in connection with this project to date; and
- I accept responsibility for supervising the conduct of this research in accordance with the approved protocol.

Principal Supervisor	Name	Signature	Date
Associate Supervisor	**Name**	**Signature**	**Date**

8.3 Endorsement by the Dean of School or Head of Department (or nominee)

I endorse this application and confirm that the project is within the approved scope of the course and that the necessary supervisory capacity, facilities and resources are available.

Dean / Head of Department	Name	Signature	Date

Section 9 — Statement of ethical approval (Research Ethics Committee use only)

Applicant	
School	
Course	
Title of project	
Date application received by the Research Office	
Review pathway determined by the REC	Exempt ☐ Negligible / low risk ☐ Greater than low risk ☐
Reviewers / meeting date	
Conflict of interest declared and managed	Yes ☐ ☐ No
Approval reference number	
Approval period	From _____ to _____ (maximum 12 months; renewable on satisfactory annual report)

9.1 Determination

☐ Approved

☐ Approved subject to the conditions set out below

☐ Modifications required — resubmission necessary before a determination can be made

☐ Not approved (reasons provided in writing to the applicant and the Principal Supervisor)

☐ Determined to be exempt from ethics review

Conditions, modifications required, or reasons for the determination

Chair, Research Ethics Committee	**Name**	**Signature**	**Date**

Approvals are recorded in the LIHE Research Ethics Register maintained by the Research Office. The Chair reports all determinations to the Research Committee, which reports to the Academic Board.

9.2 Continuing obligations after approval

Amendment to the approved protocol	Written REC approval required before the amendment is implemented.
Adverse event or complaint	Reported to the Chair within five (5) working days; a serious adverse event within twentyfour (24) hours.
Annual progress report	Due on the anniversary of approval. Approval is suspended where a report is not received.
Extension of approval	Applied for in writing before the approval end date. Data collected after expiry is unapproved.
Final report	Due within one month of completion or discontinuation of the project.
Complaints by participants	Directed to the Research Office at the address on the Participant Information Statement, and handled under the LIHE Student Complaints and Appeals Policy or the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure as applicable.