



RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL — PROCESS FLOW CHART

Human research applications to the LIHE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)

Document ID	LIHE-RES-FRM-002	Version	1.0 — approved (not draft)
Approval authority	Academic Board	Approved (minute ref.)	[AB meeting DD/MM/YYYY, Minute AB/____]
Read with	LIHE-RES-FRM-001 Application for Research Ethics Approval; Research Ethics Framework; Research Ethics Committee Terms of Reference; Higher Degree by Research Framework		

The approval gate

No participant may be approached and no data may be collected, accessed or generated — including for recruitment, pre-testing, instrument piloting, feasibility or proof-of-concept work — until Step 9 of this process is complete and written approval has been issued. For Master of Information Technology (Research) candidates, the application is prepared and lodged within MITR103 and approval must be held before the Confirmation of Candidature at the end of Trimester

Part A — Preparation and lodgement

1	Candidate prepares the ethics application Application form LIHE-RES-FRM-001 completed in full, with the Participant Information Statement, consent and withdrawal forms, recruitment materials, instruments, Data Management Plan, and evidence of completed research integrity training. Prepared as coursework within MITR103.	Responsible Candidate, with the Principal Supervisor Maximum timeframe By week 6 of Trimester 3
2	Supervisory review and sign-off The Principal Supervisor and Associate Supervisor review the design, the risk identification and the ethical analysis, and sign the declarations at Section 8.2 of the application, including the confirmation that no data have been collected.	Responsible Principal Supervisor; Associate Supervisor Maximum timeframe 5 working days
3	Endorsement by the Dean of School The Dean of School (or nominee) endorses the application at Section 8.3, confirming that the project is within the approved scope of the course and that supervisory capacity, facilities and resources are available.	Responsible Dean of School or nominee Maximum timeframe 5 working days
4	Lodgement with the Research Office and completeness check The Research Office registers the application, assigns a file reference and checks that all required attachments and signatures are present. Incomplete applications are returned to the candidate unassessed, with written reasons.	Responsible Research Office Maximum timeframe 3 working days

Lodgement cut-off: 10 working days before a scheduled REC meeting



Part B — Triage and review

5	Risk triage by the Chair of the REC The Chair determines the review pathway under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023). The Chair may reclassify an application to a higher pathway at any time. Conflicts of interest are declared and the member concerned takes no part in the determination.	Responsible Chair, Research Ethics Committee Maximum timeframe 3 working days from lodgement
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The application proceeds down ONE of the three pathways below

PATHWAY 1 — Exempt from review	PATHWAY 2 — Negligible or low risk	PATHWAY 3 — Greater than low risk
Non-identifiable existing data; quality assurance activity (National Statement 2023, s.5.1.22). <i>Determined by the Chair or nominated delegate.</i>	No foreseeable risk of harm and, at most, discomfort that is inconvenience only (National Statement 2023, s.5.1.18–21). <i>Determined by the Chair plus two REC members under delegation.</i>	Any project involving vulnerable participants, deception, sensitive information, risk of distress, dependent relationships, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, or offshore data. <i>Determined by the full REC at a convened meeting with quorum.</i>
10 working days	15 working days	20 working days

Maximum time from lodgement to first written determination. Where the REC cannot determine an application within the maximum timeframe, the Research Office must notify the candidate and the Principal Supervisor in writing, with reasons and a revised date.



6	Determination recorded Full committee determinations are recorded in the minutes of the REC meeting. Delegated and exempt determinations are recorded in the Register of Delegated Ethics Decisions. Both are reported to the next meeting of the REC.	Responsible Chair, REC; Research Office (secretariat) Maximum timeframe At the determination
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Part C — Outcome

7	Outcome of the determination One of: (a) approved; (b) approved subject to conditions; (c) modifications required, resubmission necessary; (d) not approved, with written reasons; or (e) determined to be exempt from ethics review.	Responsible Research Ethics Committee Maximum timeframe —
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If MODIFICATIONS ARE REQUIRED	If NOT APPROVED
The candidate revises the application in consultation with the Principal Supervisor and resubmits through the Research Office. Resubmissions are determined within 5 working days (exempt), 10 working days (low risk) or 15 working days (greater than low risk). The process returns to Step 6.	Written reasons are provided to the candidate, the Principal Supervisor and the Dean of School within 5 working days. The candidate may seek a review of the decision by the Academic Board within 20 working days, under the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy. A review considers process, not the merits of the ethical judgement.



Where the application is approved, or approved subject to conditions



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8	Approval letter issued The Research Office issues the written approval letter, stating the approval reference number, the approval period (maximum 12 months, renewable on satisfactory annual report), and any conditions. Copied to the Principal Supervisor, the Associate Supervisor and the Dean of School.	Responsible Research Office Maximum timeframe 5 working days from determination
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9	Entry in the Research Ethics Register The approval is entered in the LIHE Research Ethics Register maintained by the Research Office, recording the reference number, pathway, approval and expiry dates, conditions, and reporting due dates.	Responsible Research Office Maximum timeframe At issue of the letter
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10	Recruitment and data collection may now commence And not before. Data collected before this point cannot be used, cannot be reported in a thesis or publication, and is treated as a potential breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) under the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure.	Responsible Candidate, under supervision Maximum timeframe —
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Part D — Obligations after approval, and governance reporting

11	Continuing obligations for the duration of the approval Amendments to the protocol, the research team, the instruments or the participant group require written REC approval before implementation. Adverse events, complaints and unforeseen risks are reported to the Chair within 5 working days, and serious adverse events within 24 hours. An annual progress report falls due on the anniversary of approval; approval is suspended where a report is not received. Extensions must be applied for before the approval expires. A final report is due within one month of completion or discontinuation.	Responsible Candidate and Principal Supervisor Maximum timeframe As specified
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12	Confirmation of Candidature Evidence of ethics approval, or of a written determination that approval is not required, is a required item of the Confirmation of Candidature dossier at the end of Trimester 3. Candidature is not confirmed without it, and MITR104 may not commence.	Responsible Confirmation of Candidature panel Maximum timeframe End of Trimester 3
13	Governance reporting The Chair reports all ethics determinations, amendments, adverse events, complaints and non-compliance to each meeting of the Research Committee, which in turn reports to the Academic Board. The Academic Board reviews the operation of the research ethics framework annually.	Responsible Chair, REC → Research Committee → Academic Board Maximum timeframe Each committee cycle; annual review



Indicative end-to-end timeframes

From	Low risk	Greater than low risk
Lodgement with the Research Office to written determination	15 working days	20 working days
Determination to issue of the approval letter	5 working days	5 working days
Total, first submission approved without modification	20 working days	25 working days
Total, allowing for one round of modifications and resubmission	30 working days	40 working days

These timeframes are the reason the application is prepared and lodged by week 6 of Trimester 3. Lodgement at that point allows a full round of modification and resubmission and still leaves clear time before the Confirmation of Candidature at the end of Trimester 3.