



Human Research Ethics Committee Constitution

Commencement Date: 01 January 2018

1.0 Institutional responsibilities

1.1 Curtin University is responsible for:

- 1.1.1 Establishing the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* (National Statement), or its replacement
- 1.1.2 Ensuring the Curtin University HREC operates in accordance with the National Statement, or its replacement
- 1.1.3 Ensuring the Curtin University HREC is adequately resourced and maintained
- 1.1.4 Setting out and publishing the HREC's terms of reference
- 1.1.5 Ensuring the Curtin University HREC establishes, implements and documents working procedures that promote good ethical review
- 1.1.6 Referring research proposals with more than a low level of risk to the HREC, including proposals from non-affiliated researchers
- 1.1.7 Establishing alternative (non-HREC) processes for ethical review of exempt and low-risk research proposals, including proposals from non-affiliated researchers

2.0 Functions

- 2.1 The Curtin University HREC is an advisory committee to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR). The DVCR reports HREC activities to the Academic Board via the University Research Development Committee.
- 2.2 The HREC assesses the ethical acceptability of research proposals referred to it by the Institution.
- 2.3 The HREC will be guided in its review of proposed research by the National Statement and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, or their replacements.
- 2.4 The HREC may seek advice from external advisors for assistance in considering research proposals.
- 2.5 Upon completing review of research proposals, the HREC may:
 - 2.5.1. Approve proposals that meet the requirements of the National Statement, or its replacement
 - 2.5.2. Request amendments to research proposals, giving reasons for the requested amendments
 - 2.5.3. Reject research proposals, providing reasons linked to the National Statement, or its replacement, for the rejection

3.0 Membership

- 3.1 The minimum membership of the HREC is eight. As far as possible:
 - 3.1.1. There should be equal numbers of men and women, and
 - 3.1.2. At least one third of the members should be from outside the institution for which the HREC is reviewing research

3.2 The minimum membership is:

- 3.2.1. A Chairperson, with suitable experience, whose other responsibilities will not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the National Statement, or its replacement
- 3.2.2. At least two lay people, one man and one woman, who have no affiliation with the institution and who do not currently engage in medical, scientific, legal or academic work
- 3.2.3. At least one person with current knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people, for example, a nurse or allied health professional
- 3.2.4. At least one person who performs a pastoral care role in a community, for example, an Aboriginal elder or a minister of religion
- 3.2.5. At least one lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise the institution
- 3.2.6. At least two people with current research experience that is relevant to research proposals to be considered at the meetings they attend. These two members may be selected, according to need, from an established pool of inducted members with relevant experience.
- 3.2.7. A HDR Student nominated by the Postgraduate Student Committee (Curtin Requirement)

3.3 No member of the HREC, including external advisors, shall adjudicate on any research in which that member has any conflict of interest, including any personal involvement or participation in the research, any financial interests in the outcome, or any involvement in competing research. Conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with Curtin University's Conflict of Interest procedures.

3.4 Appointments

- 3.4.1. The Chair will be a Curtin University employee appointed by the DVCR
- 3.4.2. The Deputy Chair will be a Curtin University employee and a current member of the HREC
- 3.4.3. Members of the HREC will be appointed by the DVCR
- 3.4.4. Members of the HREC, including the Chair, will be appointed for a term of three years
- 3.4.5. Members may resign their position at any time
- 3.4.6. Members may be re-appointed to serve consecutive terms to a maximum 3 terms
- 3.4.7. Lay members and external members will be offered remuneration, as set out by Curtin University

3.5 Training

- 3.5.1. Newly appointment members will be provided with induction training
- 3.5.2. During their tenure, members will be given the opportunity to attend training that is relevant to the work and responsibilities of the HREC

3.6 Terms of membership

- 3.6.1. The content of applications, discussions and decisions of the HREC meeting will be kept confidential unless such a disclosure is authorised by the Institution or is required by law
- 3.6.2. External advisors are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as HREC members
- 3.6.3. A casual vacancy occurs where a member is absent without approved leave for 3 consecutive HREC meetings
- 3.6.4. In circumstances where an HREC member incurs loss or damage caused by an employee of Curtin University, Curtin will indemnify the HREC member where it is lawfully entitled to do so, in the following circumstances:

- i) Where an HREC member's act or omission was expressly authorised by Curtin University
- ii) Where an HREC member's act or omission was done in the course of their role as an HREC member with Curtin University
- iii) Where an HREC member's actions were done in the best interests of Curtin University and were reasonably incidental to their role as an HREC member at Curtin

3.6.4. Curtin University will not indemnify HREC members for their unlawful acts or omissions unconnected with their role as an HREC member at the university.

4.0 Meetings

- 4.1 The HREC will meet at least nine times a year, and as required by the Institution and agreed to by the Chair and a majority of the members.
- 4.2 Where there is less than full attendance of the minimum membership (described in section 3.2) at a meeting, the Chair or Deputy Chair should be satisfied, before a decision is reached, that the views of those absent who belong to the minimum membership have been received and considered.
- 4.3 The DVCR will appoint an HREC Secretary to provide administrative support for the HREC meetings.
- 4.4 All official communications will be made through the Human Research Ethics Office.

5.0 Complaints

- 5.1 Complaints concerning the HREC will be managed in accordance with Curtin University's Complaints procedures.

6.0 Revision history

Version	Approved/ Approved/ Rescinded	Date	Committee / Board / Executive Manager	Approval / Resolution Number
1	Approved Terms of Reference		Academic Board	51/98
1	Rescinded Terms of Reference		Academic Board	7/07
2	Approved Constitution		Academic Board	7/07
2	Rescinded Constitution		Academic Board	258/17
3	Approved Constitution		Academic Board	258/17

7.0 Review date

Three years from approval, or as required due to changes in the regulations pertaining to this constitution.