

CARINMILLAR INSTITUTE

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

HRECToR



Policy Name	Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
Policy number	HRECToR
Date approved	24 April 2024
Approving body	Council
Responsible officer	Chief Executive Officer
Implementation officer	Secretary HREC
Next review date	April 2027
Related policies	• RP003 Human Research Ethics Policy
Related forms and documents	• HREC Application Form • HREC Guidelines and Procedures

1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The function of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is to oversee all ethical matters related to human research at the Cairnmillar Institute (the Institute). The HREC ensures that any human research conducted by the Institute staff, students, or honorary associates is designed and conducted in accordance with the [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\) Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#); and is ethically reviewed and monitored in accordance with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#)

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The HREC is appointed by the Council and operates under the following terms of reference:

- 2.1. To consider the ethical implications of proposed research projects involving human participants.
- 2.2. To ensure that any human research is conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2025) or any successor statement.
- 2.3. To ensure ethical standards are maintained in human research projects in order to protect the interests of the research participants, the investigator/s, the Institute, and the general community.
- 2.4. To ensure the security, storage and disposal of confidential data collected during the conduct of research involving human participants.
- 2.5. To promote understanding within the Institute and the broader community of the ethical issues raised by research, teaching and related academic activities.
- 2.6. To provide annual reports to the Council and NHMRC.
- 2.7. To establish, implement and review procedures for evaluating, certifying and monitoring the acceptable ethical conduct and progress of human research conducted by:
 - a) Staff and/or students of the Institute on the campus, using the Institute's premises, equipment, name or resources (human and physical);
 - b) Staff and/or students of the Institute outside the campus using Institute equipment, name or resources (human and physical);
 - c) Other persons, who are not staff and/or students of the Institute, using Institute premises, equipment, name or resources (human and physical)

- 2.8. To maintain a record of all research protocols received and reviewed.
- 2.9. To ensure that the conduct of research approved by the HREC is appropriately monitored.
- 2.10. Other than as specified in these Terms of Reference or in the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the HREC may determine its own procedures and establish its own working parties as necessary.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1. The membership of the HREC Committee will consist of at least eight members appointed by the Council in accordance with NHMRC Minimum Requirements for Membership including:
 - a) A chairperson, with suitable experience, whose other responsibilities do not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the National Statement;
 - b) At least two members who bring a broader community or consumer perspective and who have no paid affiliation with the Institute;
 - c) At least two members with knowledge of, and current experience in, the areas of research that are regularly considered by the HREC;
 - d) At least one member with knowledge of, and current experience in the professional care, counselling or treatment of people;
 - e) At least one member who performs a pastoral care role in a community including, but not limited to, a minister of religion, an Aboriginal elder or community leader; and
 - f) At least one member who is a qualified lawyer, who may or may not be currently practicing, and where possible is not engaged to advise the Institution.
 - g) Additional Members may include:
 - 1. Members of academic staff; and
 - 2. A student of the Institute
 - 3. Experienced and/or Honorary external academics with knowledge of, and current experience in, the areas of research and HREC considerations

- 3.2. No member may be appointed in more than one of the categories listed in section 3.1. The HREC must ensure the maintenance of a suitable pool of inducted members, who may attend meetings as needed, in the event of the inability of particular members to consider particular projects, or in the event of a potential conflict of interest. The appointment of additional members must be endorsed by the Council.
- 3.3. Members of the HREC are appointed for a period of three years by invitation from the Chair and are eligible for reappointment. The HREC Chair is appointed by Council.
- 3.4. Each member must ensure any conflict of interest that exists or may arise during their appointment to the HREC must be declared.
- 3.5. **HREC Executive**
The HREC Executive includes the Chair, Deputy Chair(s), as well as the Chief Executive Officer or nominee, and experienced members of HREC, such as the Dean and the Associate Dean (Research)
- 3.6. **Lower risk review subcommittee**
The lower-risk review subcommittee consists of at least 4 members of HREC who are appointed by the HREC Executive.

4. MEETINGS

- 4.1. **Frequency and location of meetings**
The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) meets from 5pm on the last Monday of each month between and including February and November each year, or as otherwise advised by the Chair.
- 4.2. **Voting and decisions**
Decisions are made by general consensus or where consensus cannot be reached each member has 1 vote. In the instance of less than full attendance of minimum membership, the Chair must be satisfied, before a decision is reached, that the views of those absent who belong to the minimum membership have been received and considered. Decisions may be conducted by circulation (e.g. by email). Unanimity is not required. The final decision resting with the Chair.
- 4.3. **Minutes**
Minutes will be taken by the Secretary HREC and must be confirmed and signed by the Chair.
- 4.4. **Confidentiality**
The contents of research protocols and HREC proceedings are to be kept confidential.



5. QUORUM

All those who belong to the minimum membership must participate in the meeting either by being present or providing their decision about whether a research proposal meets the requirements of the National Statement to the Chair.