EIT Code of Research Ethics – Guideline AG210-2

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ BEFORE CARRYING OUT ANY RESEARCH AT EIT

This document outlines the ethical standards to be upheld when carrying out research at EIT. For any procedure or application information, please refer to the related procedures on the QMS.

1. Role of the EIT Research Ethics Approvals Committee

The EIT Research Ethics Approvals Committee (REAC) was established to ensure that EIT research and creative work is conducted within appropriate ethical guidelines.

The role of the committee is to:

- Develop and oversee EIT's research ethics and approval policy framework
- Organise training in ethical review for committee members as necessary
- Review and coordinate all applications sent to external approval bodies by EIT researchers
- Maintain a register of ethics approvals granted to EIT researchers by external committees
- Review and approve (or not) all EIT research ethics applications except those sent to a Ministry of Health HDEC (or equivalent)
- Oversee training and support, as necessary, to ensure that staff understand and conform to the Institute's research ethics approval requirements
- Maintain records of all research ethics applications reviewed by REAC
- Report on EIT research ethics review and approvals annually.

2. Human Research Defined

Human research is conducted with or about people, or their data, or tissue. Therefore, human participation in research should be understood broadly to include the involvement of human beings through:

- taking part in surveys, interviews, or focus groups
- undergoing psychological, physiological, or medical testing or treatment
- being observed by researchers
- researchers having access to their personal documents or other materials
- the collection and use of their body organs, tissues, or fluids (skin, blood, urine, saliva, hair, bones, tumours and biopsy specimens) or their exhaled breath
- Access to their information (in individually identifiable, re-identifiable or non-identifiable form) as part of an existing published, or unpublished, source or database.

3. **Indemnity**

EIT wishes to ensure that all research and creative activity meets accepted ethical standards in order to comply with indemnity insurance requirements. In a situation where the researcher has not gained approval from the EIT Research Ethics Approvals Committee, they may not be covered by the institution's indemnity insurance in the event of a complaint or legal suit by a research participant.

4. **Jurisdiction**

We note that some research undertaken by EIT staff and graduate students may fall outside the jurisdiction of the EIT Committee. If you are doing research which involves Health Authority patients, the health records of those patients, or any health providers employed by the Health Authority, you should apply to the appropriate Health and Disability Ethics Committee of New Zealand. Note that these committees are independent of EIT and will have their own application templates and administration processes.

More information can be found here Health and Disabilities Ethics Committee

Research involving other institutions may also require ethical approval from those institutions. For example, the Te Whatu Ora, Kāinga Ora and Plunket all have an ethical approval process which you may have to complete.

It is the responsibility of the Dean of each Faculty to ensure all teaching and research by undergraduate students is carried out in accordance with the EIT Principles of Ethical Research. Deans may also refer undergraduate research ethics applications to REAC for review. This may be most appropriate for teaching or research involving invasive procedures or activities which may induce moderate to high levels of stress. Deans will prepare a report on all undergraduate research for REAC in December of each year for inclusion in the Committee's annual report.

5. **Principles of Ethical Research**

All research at EIT must be carried out in accordance with accepted principles of ethical research. These principles are:

Informed and voluntary consent	The researcher must ensure the participants understand what will be required of them by participating, have had all of their questions answered satisfactorily, and are aware of the planned use of the data and results. The participation of children or young persons requires additional care and consideration.
Minimisation of harm	The researcher is obliged to evaluate the potential for harm and take all practicable steps to minimise risk. They must also ensure participants have been made aware of possible risks in the Participant Information Sheet and of the resources available to them should harm occur. Researchers must also be mindful of their own safety and wellbeing during the research.
Respect for the privacy rights of participants	Participants must be informed and satisfied with the provisions to ensure the privacy of their participation in the research. This includes data collection, storage and subsequent dissemination of the research results.

Research merit	The research must be designed in such a way as to provide a high likelihood of being able to answer the research question in order to justify the involvement of the participants.
Social and cultural sensitivity	The researcher has an obligation to treat all participants with dignity and respect. This includes appropriate means of engaging with people who identify with different (cultural or social groups as well as responsibility for ensuring feedback and protection of information and intellectual property.
Acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi	EIT strives for effective and efficient research with and for Māori that respects equally the intellectual traditions of both Māori and the Academy. The research referred to is that which employs academically sound methodology and contributes constructively to the intellectual, cultural, political, and economic capital of all participants. Underpinning all EIT research with Māori are the principles of Partnership and Protection. The EIT policy paper on research with Māori which is available on the Intranet Research page) should be read in conjunction with any research ethics application. Researchers may also find it useful to refer to *Te Ara Tika: Maori Research Guidelines* from the Health Research Council https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/te-ara-tika-guidelines-maori-research-ethics-0 and https://www.hrc.govt.nz/pacific-health for research with Pacific peoples.
Transparency and avoidance of conflicts of interest	It is the researcher's responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest. Funding sources should be declared in the PIS. Deception in research is generally not approved unless the reasons for it are well justified and the researcher provides a debriefing of the participants after the research.

6. **Applying for Ethical Approval for Research**

The process for applying for research approval may be found in PA214-1. The applicant(s) completes the REAC Research Risk Guideline and Questionnaire (AG210-10) then, as indicated by the Risk Questionnaire, complete either a Low Risk Ethics Application (AG210-20) or a Full Ethics Application (AG210-21). The application is submitted to REACapprovals@eit.ac.nz where they are checked for completeness. Low Risk Ethics Applications may be submitted at any time and are reviewed by two members of the committee on behalf of REAC. Full Ethics Applications must be submitted 2 weeks in advance of the monthly REAC meeting and are reviewed by the membership at that meeting. Researchers are invited to attend, present their ethics application and respond to feedback and questions from REAC members. A decision is made and communicated to the applicant. Research approval is normally granted for two years.

Research approval must be gained before any data are collected in a project. The REAC does not grant retrospective approval. Failure to obtain approval when required may result in institutional sanctions.

In general, ethical approval from an external body will initiate delegated approval from the REAC after completion and submission of the Notification of External Ethics Approval form.

7. **Intellectual Property**

See AG210-8

8. **Storage of data**

It is the researcher's responsibility to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the data throughout the project and the required term of data storage. A clear explanation must be provided to the REAC of the storage and retention of data, including consent forms, raw data as well as any generated data.

Rule 9 of the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 states: "The Health (Retention of Health Information) Regulations require health records to be retained by all health agencies for a minimum of 10 years". Non-health-related data should be securely stored for a minimum of 5 years after the project has finished.

9. **Misconduct in research**

See PA211

10. **Reporting of Serious Adverse Events**

Research approved by any Ministry of Health ethics committee requires formal notification of any serious adverse events occurring during or as a result of the research. Similarly, the REAC requires researchers to report any unanticipated risks or adverse events for projects approved through them.

11. **Re-use of data**

The re-use of data for a new research project is not permitted without regaining participants' informed consent. If there is a possibility that the data could be useful for a subsequent project, consider including a statement such as "I agree to allow my data to be used in future research projects providing anonymity and confidentiality are maintained" in the Participant Consent Form.

Other information: see

https://ethics.health.govt.nz/

There are ethical guidelines that govern all research involving student subjects. EIT policy governs the use of students in research. These guidelines are intended to assist researchers in understanding and applying this policy.

12. Guidelines for student participants in research

When EIT students and/or employees are recruited as potential subjects, researchers must ensure that there are additional safeguards for these subjects. The voluntary nature of their participation must be paramount and without undue influence on their decision. Researchers must stress to

subjects that neither their academic status nor grades, nor their employment, will be affected by their decision to participate or their decision not to participate. All research at EIT is subject to the approval of the Research Ethics Approvals Committee and applications involving students must demonstrate that recruitment is not conducted in ways that students may reasonably perceive to be coercive.

Staff have inherent power over students (e.g. through their responsibility for assigning grades). Because of this power relationship, it is likely that some students will feel pressure to comply with requests made by their lecturers. For example, when lecturers ask students to take part in research projects, some students may worry that not participating could influence the lecturer's attitude towards them or that their grades may be affected. Students' perceptions that such negative consequences could happen are sufficient to make them feel pressured to take part.

Guidelines for Researchers recruiting students across EIT

To minimise coercion researchers should:

- Recruit students through means such as bulletin board notices, flyers, and advertisements in newspapers and announcements in classes other than their own
- When entering a classroom to conduct research, such as administering a questionnaire, researchers must do so at the end of the class period to allow non-participating students the option of leaving the classroom, thereby alleviating pressure to participate.

Guidelines for Researchers recruiting students from their own courses for teaching and learning research purposes

To minimise coercion researchers should:

- Use a research collaborator to run the study and keep any identifying information from the course lecturer
- BEFORE being asked to participate, potential students should be informed that the course lecturer will not know who did and who did not participate
- The research should be designed so that the course lecturer cannot infer who participated through indirect means e.g. by seeing who stays in the classroom to complete a questionnaire.

Guidelines for Protecting Students and Their Work

The following recommendations may be useful when preparing the Research Ethics Approval Application Form:

- Students must be asked for `informed consent' and allowed to withdraw from the study at any time
- Informed consent forms should be collected by someone other than the course lecturer (e.g. School Secretary) and put into a sealed envelope that is not opened until after semester grades have been filed. In this way, the lecturer does not know who has (or has not) consented to participate until after the class is completed

- Staff should exclude all identifiers on student surveys or questionnaires, or other collected evidence
- Student papers or assignments that are assessed for research purposes should not be analysed until after final grades have been posted and are rendered confidential by removing all identifiers before analysis, or having someone other than the course lecturer conduct the analysis
- If data are collected in an on-line class chat room or discussion board, get informed consent forms from the students, and then indicate to the students when they first sign on that all interactions in the chat room/discussion board will be used for research. Make it clear that participating implies consent. If a student does not consent to having his/her chat room comments included in the research project, make it possible for the student to complete the assignment in another way.
- Additionally, you might ask students to choose an anonymous username when participating in a chat room or discussion board where interaction data is being collected.

Drawn from:

Meyers, R.A. (2007). *Guidelines for Human Research Participants in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research.* University of Western Sydney.

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (2009). *Guidelines for Research with Student Participants.*

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