

**Information for Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) Applicants**

**General Information**

The role of a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is to protect the welfare and the rights of participants in research. The primary responsibility of each member on such a committee is to decide whether, in his or her opinion, the rights and welfare of the participants will be protected during the conduct of each research proposal submitted to the HREC. The Swinburne committee covers a broad range of research areas including psychology, sociology, arts, education, law and business.

**Regulating Documents**

There are two main documents regulating issues regarding ethical conduct in research:

**National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (*updated 2018*)** <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e72syn.htm>

Developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (*updated 2018*)

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>

Developed jointly by the NHMRC, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia

**Legislation**

**Legislation regarding the privacy of Commonwealth and private institutions also influences ethical conduct in research:**

* **Victorian Privacy Act 2014**
* **Sections 95 and 95A of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) - Australian Privacy Principles**
* **Health Records Act 2001**

**Composition of Human Research Ethics Committees**

The Swinburne HREC is established according to the guidelines set out in the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2018)*.

The minimum membership of an HREC is eight. As far as possible:

(i) there should be equal numbers of men and women;

(ii) at least one third of the members should be from outside the institution for which the HREC is reviewing research; and

This minimum membership of an HREC consists of the following:

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;
2. at least two lay people, one man and one woman, who have no affiliation with the institution and do not currently engage in medical, scientific, legal or academic work;
3. at least one person with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people (for example, a nurse or allied health professional);
4. at least one person who performs a pastoral care role in a community (for example an Aboriginal elder, a minister of religion);
5. at least one lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise the institution; and
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 expertise.

**Current Vacancies**

**The Swinburne Human Research Ethics Committee is currently seeking expressions of interest from suitable applicants in categories (b)-(f).**

**Please note:**

* **These are voluntary positions;**
* **The appointed persons will be members in their own right, and will not represent any group or organisation;**
* **All members must have email and internet access for the purposes of the administration of the committees;**
* **Committee documents and discussions are strictly confidential;**
* **Members can be retired, semi-retired or working.**

**Time Commitment and Venue**

**The Swinburne HREC meets approximately every 5-6 weeks at the Hawthorn Campus of Swinburne on a Friday morning. In addition to the meeting times, preparation for each meeting requires reading time equivalent to one full day a month. On rare occasions, an extra meeting is called to deal with excess applications. Annual training opportunities are offered to members.**

**More information, including meeting dates, can be found at:** <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/research/ethics/integrity-ethics/human-research-ethics/>

**Expectations**

**Members are expected to:**

* Comply with the attached ‘SUHREC Duties of Membership’ on page 3 of this form;
* Prepare for and attend monthly meetings of the review body from January to December;
* Accept and review electronic copies of the agendas for each meeting. Agendas are circulated electronically approximately 10 days prior to each meeting;
* Attend any required training & development forums.

**Where members cannot attend meetings, adequate notice is appreciated and if at all possible, members are expected to give comments on agendas to be considered at the monthly committee meeting.**

Applications or further enquiries should be directed to the following address. Email applications are acceptable:

**Dr Astrid Nordmann**

Research Ethics Coordinator [resethics@swin.edu.au](mailto:resethics@swin.edu.au)

Research Office **Tel: +61 (0)3 9214 3845**

Swinburne University of Technology

Hawthorn VIC 3122

**SUHREC - Duties of Membership**

* *Each member of an ethical review body is responsible for deciding whether, in his or her own judgement, a proposal submitted …meets the requirements of (the) National Statement and is ethically acceptable*. (5.2.2 of *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007. Updated 2014 and 2018.*)

* To maintain familiarity with and/or seek advice as to:
* SUHREC Terms of Reference, Composition & Terms of Reference
* Relevant Swinburne policies and procedures
* *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007. Updated 2014 and 2018.)*
* Regulations or guidelines issued under various legislation
* To participate in the deliberation of SUHREC and its subcommittees. In this regard (and based on standards previously set for Swinburne Council members), members are expected to:
* act honestly in good faith and with integrity
* exercise due care, skill and diligence in undertaking their duties
* not misuse the position or information provided and act at all times in the interests of the University as a whole and SUHREC
* attend meetings on a regular basis (or as appropriate for an alternate member)
* seek information and understanding about the role and function of SUHREC and its subcommittees
* make an informed assessment of proposals submitted to SUHREC or SHESC as part of due deliberation
* contribute to the advancement of ethically sound research proceeding under Swinburne auspices
* disclose, in accordance with Swinburne procedure, related interests where those interests could potentially lead to a conflict of interest and, where a potential conflict may arise, abstain from deliberation on the matter concerned
* maintain confidentiality