

## **ADELAIDE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY INC**

### **Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects**

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#### **Preamble**

The maintenance of high ethical standards has always been a critical guideline for research. It is expected that researchers, especially those motivated by the Christian Gospel, will:

- Have as a priority concern for the personal welfare of participants in the research process;
- Ensure that the integrity and rights of the participants are respected and protected;
- Ensure that participants are protected from any potential or actual physical, psychological or spiritual harm that could result from any research intervention.

The Adelaide College of Divinity is a consortium of theological colleges which employs the academic staff that teach in ACD and Flinders University courses. Therefore academic staff of these colleges engaged in their own research are responsible to their colleges and Flinders University in relation to ethical guidelines for their own research. In relation to their supervision of research undertaken by students enrolled in ACD courses these staff members should ensure that students adhere to the ACD Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects.

#### **Legislation/Standards**

Higher Education Support Act 2003

Higher Education Provider Guidelines

South Australian Training and Skills Development Act (2003)

Guidelines for Higher Education Accreditation and Registration

*National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2007

*Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research Practice*, NHMRC, 2007.

Flinders University Ethical Guidelines for Social and Behavioural Research

#### **Delegations**

The ACD Board has delegated to the ACD Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The ACD Executive Officer provides administrative support for the ACD HREC.

#### **Approvals**

This policy was approved by the ACD Board/ACD President on 10 December 2004.

#### **Related Documents**

*ACD Research in Postgraduate Courses*

*ACD Application for Approval Research Involving Human Subjects*

*ACD Consent Form for Interview*

*ACD Letter of Introduction*

*ACD Consent Form for Observation of Professional Activity*

#### **Provisions**

1. The ACD Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) .
  - 1.1 The HREC shall:

- With the approval of the General Board of the Adelaide College of Divinity, establish and promulgate guidelines for research practice for students enrolled with the ACD;
  - Ensure that appropriate guidelines such as the *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* and its *Supplementary Notes* are adhered to where applicable;
  - Receive, examine and either approve, return for amendment or reject, any proposals which involve human subjects as a third party, which involve human remains or other sacred or significant sites, or which involve or impact upon indigenous people in any way;
  - Provide guidance to researchers about the ethical aspects of their proposed research;
  - Maintain the registers that are required of any HREC;
  - Report annually to the ACD General Board.
- 1.2. The ACD HREC shall have seven members appointed by the ACD General Board representing the following categories:
- Three staff members from the ACD member entities;
  - A laywoman not associated with the ACD;
  - A layman not associated with the ACD;
  - A minister of religion;
  - A lawyer;
  - A member from the Board of Management of the FU/ACD Centre for Theology, Science and Culture.
- 1.3 The Chair of the ACD HREC shall be appointed by the ACD Board.
- 1.4 All members shall be appointed for a period of three years and may be reappointed when their terms expire.
- 1.5 The quorum for the committee shall be half of the membership of the committee.
- 1.6 The proposer of any research project has the right to be represented by an advocate when their proposal is discussed. The Chair of the ACD HREC must be given due notice of the attendance of an advocate.
2. Students enrolled with the Adelaide College of Divinity who undertake research involving human participants must be made aware that:
- their research may have social, legal, cultural, psychological and spiritual implications for the participants as well as legal implications for themselves, their college and the ACD;
  - they must abide by procedures and policies set down by the ACD to ensure that their research is carried out in an ethical manner;
  - they must seek the approval of the ACD HREC before commencing any research that involves human subjects.
3. Procedures for Gaining ACD HREC Approval
- 3.1 Before any approach is made to potential participants or the commencement of collection of any data, ACD students intending to undertake any research project involving human subjects must obtain approval from the ACD HREC.
- 3.2 Before seeking approval students and their supervisors should familiarise themselves with the appropriate guidelines listed below. Researchers are responsible for compliance with these guidelines.
- 3.3 Approval must be sought on the appropriate application form.

- 3.4 Applications are available from the ACD Office and must be submitted to the ACD Executive Officer. Applicants should allow up to three months for the approval of their proposal.

**Guidelines for ethical and responsible research**

*National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2007

[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/e72.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/e72.pdf)

*Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, NHMRC, 2007

[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/r39.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/r39.pdf)

Flinders University Ethical Guidelines for Social and Behavioural Research

<http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/info-for-researchers/ethics/committees/social-behavioural.cfm>