

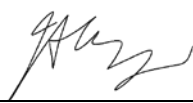
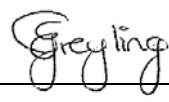
Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC)

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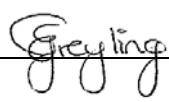
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR THE SELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE REC

Acknowledgment is given to documentation from the Education, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMHS-REC) and Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) as used in the compilation of this SOP.

1. COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

Action	Designated person	Signature	Date
Compiled by	Prof. JAK Olivier (EduREC chairperson)		2018/07/19
Checked by	Mrs Erna Greyling (committee administrator)		2018/07/19
	EduREC		2018/07/26
	Faculty of Education Research and Innovation Committee		2018/08/02

2. DISTRIBUTION

Department/Unit	Name	Signature	Date
Chairperson on behalf of EduREC	Prof. JAK Olivier		2018/08/03
Deputy Dean: Research and Innovation	Prof. Washington Dudu		2018/08/03
Faculty of Education	Mrs Erna Greyling		2018/08/03

3. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version 1: 12 March 2018 – based on existing operating documentation as compiled by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC) and provided to members of the Faculty.

Version 2: 7 June 2018 – revisions made to align the SOP with the revised structure in the Faculty.

4. PURPOSE OF THE SOP

Quality assurance and legal compliance of research ethics within the Faculty of Education are mainly administrated and managed by the Faculty's Ethics Office as well as its support of the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) registered Research Ethics Committees (RECs), which focuses on research on humans Education, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMHS-REC). The number of this committee could increase should the workload for a specific REC increase and it is no longer able to handle the work. The RECs report to both the Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC) of the North-West University (NWU) and the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee.

The purpose of this SOP is to provide a framework for the selection, appointment and functioning of members of the EduREC that provide operational management of the research ethics processes at Faculty level.

5. PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC) is a sub-committee of the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee. The REC provides operational management of the research ethics process at faculty level within its field of research expertise.

This Committee is a standing committee reporting to the Research and Innovation Committee of the Faculty of Education (hereafter the "Research and Innovation Committee"). It is empowered to consider low/no risk project applications whether these are staff or student related projects. It is mandated to recommend to the Research and Innovation Committee for approval those low/no risk projects. It is mandated to advise on how to profile and develop awareness of ethics in research in the Faculty. It is mandated to advise on corrections to be made to protect the ethical integrity of the Faculty's research. It is mandated to select those projects for further recommendation to the Education, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMHS-REC) those non-health medium to high risk projects which require approval at another level. It is mandated to bring to the attention of the Research and Innovation Committee as to which projects have been thus referred to the EMHS-REC and which may not need to be approved at Research and Innovation Committee.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

This committee is a standing committee reporting to the Research and Innovation Committee and is mandated to:

- i. The REC will function within a strict code of conduct as appropriate for the specific research field and approved by the Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC), and will ensure confidentiality of all information revealed to it;
- ii. Ensure that researchers have a proper understanding of research ethics as applicable to the specific research field of expertise by providing subject-specific training;
- iii. Ensure that all researchers working within its research field of expertise sign the NWU research ethics code of conduct;
- iv. Formulate and seek approval from the RERC for a set of operational rules for ethics applications within the specific research field of expertise;
- v. Formulate and seek approval for a set of research field-specific examples of Risk Level Descriptors, in line with the RERC guidelines, to make a suitable classification of research ethics proposals.
- vi. Provide feedback on specific ethics matters as requested by the RERC;

- vii. Receive applications for research ethics approval from researchers via the provided research management system;
- viii. Consider these applications at its regular meetings, and communicate and minute the RECs decision regarding applications to the applicants;
- ix. Approve the issuing of research ethics certificates for approved projects;
- x. In cases where the REC cannot come to a conclusion, or some other conflict arises within the REC, follow the general NWU rules for conflict resolution;
- xi. Consider and act appropriately on the annual reports of approved projects;
- xii. Consider applications to change any of the details of the research/project project as specified in the original proposal;
- xiii. Consider and act appropriately in cases of ethical misconduct by researchers
- xiv. Report via the approved Faculty structures to the relevant Deputy Dean;
- xv. Report to the RERC on an annual basis, using the prescribed reporting template.

7. THE ETHICS APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All ethics applications (ethics checklist, relevant application forms and supporting documents) can be done manually by means of an electronic application forms or online managed on the research management system, where after all decisions regarding applications are captured on this system.

The ethics application procedure shall include at least the following steps:

- A completed research proposal or project proposal must be submitted for review.
- A scientific committee decides (based on the information in the research proposal and checklist) whether ethics clearance is required and refers the application to the relevant REC if necessary.
- The REC will handle each application for ethics clearance according to the rules and operating procedures of the involved REC.
- Application is made by submission of the ethics application form, research/project proposal, checklist as well as any additional required documentation noted in the application form (such as proof of ethical training by the supervisor/promotor, project leader's short CV, permission letters, informed consent forms as well as any research instruments or guides).
- If deemed necessary or if required a REC may refer an application to a suitable registered committee.

8. AUTHORITY

The REC functions as a sub-committee of the Research and Innovation Committee and in close collaboration with the scientific committees. The Faculty of Education REC functions specifically within the educational research field of expertise and handles research that is deemed being low or no risk.

Ethical clearance for research that is considered as being medium or high risk or where minors (e.g. individuals younger than 18) and other vulnerable persons are involved will be referred to registered ethics committees Education, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMHS-REC) or the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

The REC derives its authority from the governance rules formulated by the RERC. As such, the establishment of an REC must also be approved by the RERC. If an REC is dissolved by its faculty, this must be reported to the RERC.

9. MEMBERSHIP

9.1 Composition

9.1.1 Members of the REC are recommended to, and approved by the relevant Research and Innovation Committee for a period of five years, in accordance with the governance rules of the RERC. Members are recommended based on their expertise within the specific research field, as well as their general research ethics expertise. Upon appointment, a formal Letter of Appointment will be issued by the RERC. This appointment must reflect in the annual task agreement of the staff member.

9.1.2 Standing members:

	Standing members	Term
(1)	Chairperson and deputy chairperson as elected by the Research and Innovation Committee	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee
(2)	Chairpersons of Research Committee and Higher Degrees Committee.	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee
(3)	One member who is not a staff member of the North-West University (lay person).	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee
(4)	One member should be an expert in the field of statistics (representative from the NWU Statistical Consultation Services) if applicable to the application	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee
(5)	Representatives from research entities/schools and sites.	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee
(6)	Research Professor(s) as elected by Research and Innovation Committee.	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee
(7)	Two representatives from each school (10x)	In accordance with selection by School Director

9.1.3 Members in attendance:

	Representing members	
(8)	Administrator: minute keeper	In accordance with appointment by Research and Innovation Committee

9.2. Appointment of members

Members are appointed for a period of 5 years by contract, by selection of school directors, per term and per task agreement, in consultation with the Executive Dean and changes will be made as necessary.

9.3 Appointment of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

The chairperson and deputy chairperson is elected by the Research and Innovation Committee. In the absence of the chairperson the deputy chairperson will act on his/her behalf.

9.4 Co-opted members, observers and visitors

In accordance with the NWU Policy and Rules for Research Ethics independent special expertise may be requested in certain cases as required (on an ad-hoc basis). In such cases the Committee must ensure that adequate research ethics training has been completed by the individual and that the relevant confidentiality agreement has been signed.

9.5 Voting rights of members

All standing members have voting rights. Co-opted members, observers and visitors will not have voting rights.

10. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

The following meeting arrangements apply:

Frequency	Meetings are scheduled monthly if possible.
Extraordinary meetings	If and when necessary.
Quorum	The quorum of the meeting will be half (50%) plus one of all the members, excluding vacant positions. Where the number of committee members is more than 15, the quorum may be 33%.
Notice of the meeting	At least 30 days before the meeting date, the secretariat electronically notifies of the time and place where the meeting is to be held. The minutes of the previous meeting will be enclosed and members are requested to provide the secretariat with input by the closing date for the agenda.
Agenda	At least 7 days prior to the meeting, the secretariat provides the complete agenda pack electronically to all members.
Attendance register	An attendance register will be circulated by the secretariat at the beginning of each meeting. Every member present must sign the attendance register. The attendance register is proof of attendance for purposes of the minutes.
Confirmation of Minutes	An ordinary meeting, after being constituted and opened, commences with confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting(s). Any objection to the minutes is raised and disposed of before the minutes are confirmed. The committee secretary has to make the corrections for the chairperson to sign after the meeting. The minutes may be regarded as read, if a copy of the draft minutes was provided to members prior to the meeting. Minutes will be a true reflection of the previous meeting, and will

	<p>contain all views expressed under the heading 'noted'. .Decisions made by the committee will reflect under the heading 'resolved'.</p>
Decision-making process	<p>Matters are resolved by means of general consensus. The chairperson might however decide when a decision should be taken by means of a voting procedure.</p> <p>The evaluation of ethics applications are generally done by two critical readers with the addition of a statistical consultant in the case of quantitative studies.</p> <p>The chairperson may decide that voting must be by secret ballot, provided that voting for persons must always be by secret ballot.</p> <p>The chairperson has an ordinary vote, but must in addition exercise a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes on any matter.</p> <p>The number of votes in favour of or against any proposal is not recorded in the minutes, unless the chairperson so decides.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>A member may not take part in the discussion of or vote on any matter in which the member has a direct financial or other interest, unless the member first discloses the nature and extent of the interest and obtains the leave of the meeting to take part in the discussion or to vote.</p> <p>All committee members must indicate any conflict of interest at the agenda point allocated for that, and must also indicate a conflict of interest on the attendance register by indicating the agenda item where the conflict arises in writing next to his/her name.</p>
Point of Order	<p>A point of order, clarification or information may be raised against any member.</p> <p>Should the above point of order, clarification or information be immediately challenged by a member, the ruling is put to the meeting for determination – without it being discussed, and the decision of the meeting is final.</p> <p>The ruling of the chairperson is binding and cannot be challenged</p>
Disrespectful / Disorderly conduct	<p>Anyone attending a meeting who, after having been requested to refrain from disrespectful or disorderly conduct, continues to disobey a ruling from the chairperson, must be requested to leave the meeting.</p> <p>If that person does not leave the meeting immediately, such a person could be removed from the meeting with the assistance of Protection Services.</p> <p>All members of the Committee must adhere to the Code of Conduct set for the Committee.</p>
Apology	<p>An apology will be noted when a member electronically submits it to the secretariat and/or the chairperson, at least one day prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Members absent from the meeting without the above-mentioned apology are noted as "without apology".</p> <p>The views of a member who is unable to attend a meeting may be submitted in writing but may not count as a vote of such member.</p>

Recording of meeting	<p>At the opening of the meeting, the chairperson indicates that a recording will be made for minute purposes.</p> <p>The audio file is deleted after signed confirmation of the minutes at the next meeting.</p>
Round Robin Process	<p>The chairperson may submit urgent matters electronically in between scheduled meetings. The secretariat will assist in this process.</p> <p>At least two thirds of the members have to confirm their involvement in the process electronically by giving feedback, approval or non-approval. When a majority of members reaches agreement, it is taken as a resolution. Such resolution is equivalent to a resolution of the committee and must be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.</p>
Resources and Budget	Not applicable.
Records management	<p>All records of the committee (terms of reference, membership list, agendas, minutes, attendance register, correspondence, etc.) will be kept electronically (on <i>Share</i>) and in hard copy, and the hard copy will be sent to the Archives and Museum Services for permanent preservation.</p> <p>Committee members have automatic access to all records of the committee. All other interested parties must complete a request form in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, which will be assessed in terms of the prescriptions contained in the Act.</p>

11. Reporting

After each meeting of the committee the chairperson shall submit a report to the next ordinary meeting of the Research and Innovation Committee.