VICTORIA UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Ethics Complaints Management Process

<table>
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<th>Purpose</th>
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<td><strong>Human Research Ethics Complaints Management Process (ECMP)</strong></td>
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<td>Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) recognises the requirement to:</td>
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<td>▪ receive complaints made by participants, researchers, staff of institutions, or others and</td>
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<td>▪ provide a process designed to:</td>
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<td>o establish the ethical nature of the matter</td>
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<td>o investigate the matter</td>
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<td>o handle the matter promptly and sensitively</td>
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<td>o reach a fair and reasonable outcome addressing the ethical implications of the matter.</td>
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Who can lodge a complaint?
Complaints may be lodged by anyone (eg. participants in research, researchers, staff of institutions, or others) who is of the view that there has been an ethical breach related to a VU research project.

How are complaints dealt with?
All complaints are dealt with in a serious and impartial manner.

Who will be informed?

- All complaints are to be received through the Research Ethics Officer. The matter will be logged through of the Ethics Complaints Management Process (ECMP).
- The Chair of the VUHREC will be advised of all complaints and will take a leading role (or nominate a representative) in the investigation and resolution of the matter.
- All parties to the complaint will be informed of the matter.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Research Training will be informed of all complaints deemed as high risk.
- The VUHREC will be informed of all complaints and will be advised of progress towards an outcome.
- All parties will be advised of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.

Can I respond to a complaint?
Yes. Once all parties to the issue have been informed, you will be requested to respond to the complaint regarding the alleged ethical breach. All responses are to be forwarded to the VUHREC Chair or nominated representative managing the Ethics Complaints Management Process.

How long will it take?
The ECMP is designed to expeditiously address complaints. The nature of the complaint, investigation process, response from all parties, resources and appeals process will have a significant bearing on the duration of the ECMP. All parties to the complaint will be informed that a complaint has been lodged within seven (7) working days of the status of the matter.

Parties to the complaint are advised to contact the Research Ethics Officer for an update regarding progress of the matter.
If you are of the view that an ethical breach has occurred, it is important that the issue/s is lodged with the Research Ethics Officer.

Who do I lodge a complaint with?

Complaints are to be lodged with:

Ms Elizabeth Hill
Research Ethics Officer
Telephone: (03) 9919 4781 / (03) 9919 4461
E-Mail: researchethics@vu.edu.au

It is important that your complaint/concern is clearly articulated identifying the specific nature of the complaint.

As the complainant, you will be advised:

- whether the complaint is of an ethical nature*
- to submit the complaint in writing.

* Complaints that do not fall within the description of an ethical nature will be referred to the relevant department/officer (for example, where issues may involve misconduct or where complaints are required to be handled under alternative institutional processes).

Once a complaint of an ethical nature has been established, the Research Ethics Officer will advise the VUHREC Chair of the matter. The complaint will be logged and tracked until the matter is resolved.

Assessing the Complaint

The complaint will be assessed to determine its level of seriousness/risk. High risk complaints will be managed via the Ethics Complaint Management Review Panel.

Low risk complaints will be managed by the VUHREC Chair (or a nominated representative of the VUHREC).

Investigation

All complaints will be thoroughly investigated. During the investigation, a response in writing to the compliant may be required.

Following the investigation, recommendations will be drafted. The PVC Research & Research Training will be informed of high risk complaints.

Recommendations

Once recommendations have been established, they will be implemented in an effort to resolve the matter.

All parties to the complaint will be advised of the recommendations and the outcome of the issue.

Communications

During the Ethics Complaints Management Process, all parties will be kept informed of the steps and progress towards an outcome.

All parties to a complaint will be encouraged to participate in the Ethics Complaint Management process.

You may contact the Research Ethics Officer to seek information regarding the progress of the matter.
Appeal

The right of appeal will be extended to all parties of a complaint.

Your intention to appeal an outcome should be made in writing to the Research Ethics Officer clearly stating the grounds upon which you appeal the decision.

Definitions

Complainant: The person who makes a complaint or formally raises a concern regarding a VU research project involving human participants.