The following guidelines have been developed to assist with the completion of the Application for Approval of Project Involving Human Participants in Victoria University form. All documents and information pertaining to the application form are electronically available at [http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php](http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php), or may be obtained on request from the Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Available on the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Website is an application kit, which includes this document, Applications Process flow chart, the Application Form and a sample Consent Form for Subjects Involved in Research.

It is essential that applicants forward 1) Ten (10) **hard copy applications** (one original application and nine duplicate copies)* with any accompanying documentation to your Faculty Ethics Officer and 2) an **electronic application** to your Faculty Ethics Officer and a copy to VUHREC Secretary (researchethics@vu.edu.au). Applications deemed as Non Minimum Risk may be directly forwarded to the Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee.

* Applications to be considered at the Faculty of Business & Law need submit one original hard copy application and electronic copy.

---

**Human Research Ethics Applications**

All questions in the application form must be completed. In general, the most important issues which each application must answer for a University Human Research Ethics Committee to give its approval relate to:

- What evidence is presented to demonstrate that the researcher has fully considered the effects of participation in the research upon the participant/s?

- What risk and inconvenience is posed to participants in this research? **Risks may involve physical, psychological, social or legal aspects. Most proposals need to consider the risk of loss of confidentiality of information provided by participants.**

- How are risks and inconvenience to be minimised? **The Committee is likely to require further information if there is no clear argument made regarding what degree of risk is constituted by the proposed project and as to how that risk can be managed.**

- How are the participants’ privacy and confidentiality to be protected? What provision is there for safe storage of data for 5 years after completion?

- Will participants be fully aware of what participation involves before they agree to take part in the research? **Generally, consent forms are required to document that informed consent has been received from participants. The consent form needs to indicate in plain language the nature of the participants’ involvement, the nature of the project and its aims, and to give contact details to enable participants to reach the researcher. The researcher and the participant each require a copy of the consent form.**

- Will participants be clear that their involvement is entirely voluntary, so that they are able to withdraw at any stage of the research?

- Bearing in mind that there may be risks, is the research worth doing?

- Have all investigators, the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty read and signed the form?

It is the principal investigator’s responsibility to ensure that these questions have been answered fully in the application form. Argument and evidence will always assist an applicant’s case.
Special Groups:

- If you are seeking to involve participants whose language is other than English, appropriate arrangements for accurate translations of information to participants (e.g. approved by a NAATI-accredited person or by a native speaker of the language) need to be made and the Committee advised.

- If you are seeking to involve government school students, the State Department of Education advises us that separate additional approval needs to be sought from the Directorate of School Education.

- Parental consent also needs to be sought for any participant aged under 18.

- Applications seeking to involve Victoria University students must develop procedures to ensure voluntary and preferably anonymous involvement of students, in such a manner that students can be assured that their non-participation will not occasion them any disadvantage.

- Applications seeking to involve hospital staff or patients must also obtain approval from the corresponding ethics committee of the institution concerned.

Which projects require approval by a University Human Research Ethics Committee?

Victoria University's Code of Conduct of Research, Section 3.1 notes:

All research is to be conducted in a manner that preserves the rights and liberties of others, and pays particular attention to the safety, rights and dignity of the participants of research.

In particular, Section 3.1.b notes:

Where research could expose participants to procedures which could infringe the safety, rights or dignity of those participants it must be submitted for the prior approval of the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee is constituted in conformance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's Statement on Human Experimentation.

Anyone studying or working at Victoria University and engaged in research involving human participants must apply for approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) before they approach human participants.

For the purposes of Human Research Ethics Committee approval, an application for approval to conduct a research project should:

- demonstrate knowledge of the relevant literature and builds on prior research to contribute to the field of knowledge;

- plan to involve human participants in providing information which is not already made public (i.e. not a literature review, which is information already in the public domain); and

- be conducted by one or more members of Victoria University staff or by postgraduate students under their supervision, or by external researchers seeking to make use of Victoria University students or other University resources.
Important

To avoid unnecessary delays, please ensure the following:

- All questions in your application are appropriately answered
- An electronic application is submitted to Faculty HREC and Secretary, VUHREC
- 10 hardcopy applications (one original and nine duplicates) authorised by appropriate staff and submitted
- Applications will not be processed without the appropriate authorisation.

YOU ARE REMINDED THAT PROJECTS MUST NOT COMMENCE WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM THE APPROPRIATE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE.

If you require additional information or assistance in completing any aspect of the application, please refer to the Victoria University Human Research Ethics website:


Or direct your queries to:

researchethics@vu.edu.au