

**UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**  
**HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**Policy on ethics review of research proposals involving human participants**

**1. DEFINITIONS**

**UAHPEC** – The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

**Research** - any original investigative activity that includes, but is not restricted to, experimental research, clinical trials not involving clients of any District Health Board, questionnaires, interviews, audits, demonstrations, course-based exercises, and evaluations (with the exception of course and teaching evaluations); investigations of any bodily materials of any person; and preliminary or pilot investigations that may be quantitative or qualitative in nature.

**Human participants** - the importance of ensuring human dignity means that research with 'human participants' is broadly defined. A human participant is a person with whom there is some intervention or interaction that would not be occurring, or would be occurring in some other fashion, but for the research, or as a result of the research.

There are special requirements for ethical approval where the participants are involved in the research because of their membership of a particular community that is the focus of the research. This includes participants in New Zealand or overseas, of any age, sex, or possessing any other characteristic or experience that is of relevance to the researcher, including being members of the general public.

To avoid doubt, research involving human participants includes anonymous questionnaires, research within teaching sessions, and research carried out as part of coursework. This policy covers research involving human participants conducted within and outside the University.

**2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all research involving human participants conducted by staff and students of The University of Auckland conforms to the highest appropriate ethical standards.

### **3. POLICY**

No project involving human participants can be carried out by staff or students of The University of Auckland without the approval of The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, except for those activities classified as 'exempt proposals' in The UAHPEC's *Guiding principles for conducting research with human participants*; this is subject to the proviso that for health and disability research that falls within the scope of Health and Disability Ethics Committee (HDEC) Review, a Ministry of Health accredited HDEC must approve the research.

All staff or student projects, and research within teaching sessions (laboratories) that involve human participants, must receive approval by the appropriate route prior to commencement of research.

The University of Auckland Charter recognises "that all members of its community are encompassed by the Treaty of Waitangi with mutual rights and obligations". Therefore, researchers must respect the principles of partnership and sharing implicit in the Treaty. The researcher has a duty of care to approach research pertaining to Māori in a culturally sensitive way. If the research involves drawing comparisons between Māori and non-Māori, or if the research is such that there are clear implications of direct interest to Māori, the researcher is required to show that appropriate consultation has taken place.

### **4. AUDIENCE**

Staff and students of the University of Auckland.

### **5. RELEVANT LEGISLATION/UNIVERSITY STATUTE OR REGULATION**

- Education Amendment Act 1989
- New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Privacy Act 1993
- New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000.
- Human Tissue Act 2008

### **6. LEGAL COMPLIANCE**

Health Research Council Act 1990 for accreditation purposes.

### **7. RELATED PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS**

University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (2010). *Guiding principles for conducting research with human participants*, approved by Council on 19 April 2010.

Health and Disability Ethics Committees (2012). *Standard Operating Procedures for Health and Disability Ethics Committees* (May 2012).

## **8. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL**

**Prepared by:** The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

**Owned by:** Director of Research Management.

**Date approved:** N October 2012.

**Review Date:** 36 monthly.

### **ADDENDUM**

As an interim arrangement, UAHPEC has been operating since July with a two-tier structure, comprising an over-arching committee (UAHPEC) and two sub-committees (HPEC-A and HPEC-B), each serving a similar function and having the same roles and responsibilities. Membership of each sub-committee is based on the current HRC requirements for reaccreditation and consists of a balance of representatives from within the University of Auckland and lay members.

The division of UAHPEC into these two sub-committees has been established as a trial and will be reviewed in December, 2012.