

Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee Composition and Terms of Reference

The Faculty Human Ethics Committee is a formally constituted sub-committee of the Human Ethics Committee (Academic Board minutes 24.2.1 of AB88/355(M) 23.11.88, 30.11.88). The terms of reference and composition were amended in October 1993 (RGSC minute 24.4.2), April 1997 (RGSC minute 54.4.2) and March 1999 (RGSC minute 65.4.4).

The HEC reports to Council through the University's Research and Graduate Studies Committee.

1. **Composition**

- (a) Chairperson, who is also a Faculty representative on the HEC.
- (b) Postgraduate Co-coordinators, School Educational Studies, School of Education and School of Outdoor Education. (*The FHEC TOR usually postgraduate student*)
- (c) Two representatives from each of the Schools from which applications are received by the Committee.
- (d) Power to co-opt additional members as necessary.

Category A members are appointed for 3 years with the option of re-appointment and are nominated by the Dean and approved by the Research and Graduate Studies Committee. Category B and C members are appointed for 2 years and are eligible for re-appointment. Category D members are appointed for 1 year and are eligible for re-appointment.

At the first meeting each year the Committee will select one of its members to act in the position of Deputy Chair until the first meeting of the following year. The Deputy Chair will assume the responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence for a period of not more than three months, after which time the Secretary of the FHEC shall inform the Secretary of the University Human Ethics Committee of the Chair's prolonged absence and seek the appointment by the HEC of an Acting Chair for the duration of the Chair's absence.

2. **Terms of Reference**

- (i) Assist the University's Human Ethics committee (HEC) in considering the ethical implications of all proposed research involving minimal risks to participants and teaching projects and in determining whether or not they are acceptable on ethical grounds and conform to any legal requirements. Research with potential for physical or psychological harm should generally not be considered for expedited (sub-committee) review. These applications should be reviewed by the University Human Ethics Committee. The FHEC should operate in accordance with the University's *Human Research Ethics Guidelines*

and the *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)*, Section 2, with particular reference to 2.20 & 2.27.

- (ii) Examine and approve formally, written proposals concerning the use of human participants in research and teaching, for their conformity with the *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)*, and in any additional codes of ethics as approved by the HEC.
- (iii) Develop, subject to HEC endorsement, operational guidelines and procedures for the efficient and effective implementation of its Terms of Reference.
- (iv) Provide the HEC in November each year with a report of its activities, and provide a copy of this report to the Faculty Board. In addition to the annual report, the FHEC must maintain a register of applications submitted seeking ethical review and provide the HEC at regular intervals with the details of the applications approved. All decisions of the FHEC must be reported to and ratified by the University Human Ethics Committee. This should be indicated to research applicants via formal correspondence.
- (v) Monitor all approved projects and ensure they conform to approved ethical standards. The FHEC may withdraw approval from any project which it considers as having failed to conform to approved ethical standards. When a FHEC considers that a project's proposal should be withdrawn, the matter must be referred to the HEC for a final decision.
- (vi) Refer to the HEC for consideration any application which has raised ethical issues beyond the jurisdiction of the FHEC (as specified in the University's Human Research Ethics Guidelines), including any other matters of a policy and operational nature as are deemed to warrant interpretation and/or decision of the HEC.
- (vii) Submit to the HEC for consideration any appeals lodged by researchers against decisions not to approve their projects or to withdraw approval from their projects.
- (viii) Submit to the HEC for consideration, any complaints, any unforeseen or adverse events that might affect continued ethical acceptability concerning research projects approved by the FHEC.
- (ix) Provide an advisory service to researchers on ethical and procedural matters relating to their applications.

3. Reporting

- (a) The FHEC shall report to the HEC in November of each year and provide a copy of this report to the Faculty Board. The FHEC shall report annually to the HEC on:

- any suggested alterations to the terms of reference, membership and committee composition,
 - problems encountered in carrying out its duties,
 - quality assurance and reviewing procedures.
- (b) The FHECs shall refer all matters relating to policy and changes to procedures and application/progress forms to the HEC for endorsement before being forwarded to the RGSC for approval.
- (c) The FHEC shall provide copies of its minutes to the HEC within two weeks of each meeting.