Research Ethics

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Major changes/additions since the last version was approved are indicated by a vertical line in the left hand margin.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Any research as defined in the *APP803 Research and Knowledge Transfer Policy* conducted at, or under the auspices of Ara Institute of Canterbury[1], follows the Ethical Principles in order to comply with relevant legislation and protect the researcher, the participants and the institution. The policy is supported by the *APP803b Code for Responsible Conduct of Research*.

It outlines the ethical principles that research conducted at Ara must meet and the associated procedures and processes for ethical approval of research and for approval of evaluations. Undertaking and disseminating of research must comply with all aspects of the *APP803b Code for Responsible Conduct of Research*, or any other relevant codes or conditions attached to research projects/programmes.

1.2 Scope and Application

a This policy applies to all research conducted at or under the auspices of Ara, if human or animal subjects/participants are involved.

b Ethics approval is also required for evaluative projects where data is not collected anonymously or if the results are to be published externally.

c All researchers (staff, students, contract/external researchers, supervisors) at Ara are expected to adhere to the ethical principles outlined below during the planning, implementation, analysis and dissemination phases of research.

d Researchers and nominated supervisors are responsible for ensuring ethical principles are met.

e Although the principles of ethical conduct apply to all research and researchers, formal ethics approval via the internal Human Ethics Sub-committee or external Animal Ethics committee is required only for research that involves human subjects/participants, respectively.

[1] From herein referred to as Ara

f Approval to carry out the proposed research/evaluation is not finalised until all ethical implications are identified and resolved, particularly if human or animal subjects/participants are involved.

g Any misconduct associated with research or evaluations is handled swiftly and thoroughly through *APP304 Academic Misconduct*.

1.3 Formal Delegations

Delegations related to research are approved by the Academic Board and attached to the *APP803 Research & Knowledge Transfer Policy*. Current delegations particularly relevant to this policy include:

a Approval of research projects/programmes: to the Board's central Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee (RKTC).

b Consideration of ethical issues within research and recommendation of approval to RKTC: to the RKTC Human Ethics Subcommittee or to an appropriate Animal Ethics Subcommittee.

c Ethics approval for new student generic research assignments: to RKTC Human Ethics Subcommittee.

d Ethics approval for subsequent delivery of approved research assignments: to Board of Studies, which may be delegated to Department RKTC.

e Ethics approval for evaluative projects where anonymity is not provided or if results are to be published: to RKTC Human Ethics Subcommittee.

1.4 Definitions (within context of Ethics Policy)

a **Anonymity:** Management of private data collected during any phase of a research project/programme in such a way that no subject's/participants' identity (including individuals, organisations, and other bodies) can be linked with his/her responses, even by the researcher.

b **Confidentiality:** Management of private data collected during any phase of a research project/programme in such a way that no subject's/participant's identity (including individuals, organisations, other bodies) can be linked to the disseminated research report.

c **Deception:** Non-disclosure or misinformation provided to subjects/participants/ others regarding the purpose of all or any stage of the research project/programme, including the way data will be used or published (note that in some cases 'limited deception' is acceptable as part of the research methodology —*refer Section 3.7*).

d **Privacy:** Freedom of each individual subject/participant to determine the time, extent and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others.

e **Misconduct:** Serious departure from accepted ethical principles, e.g. privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and deception; fabrication of data and/or claiming unsubstantiated results, plagiarism, misleading authorship or other deviations from the code of practice associated with the researcher's relevant discipline or *APP803b Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Related Ara Procedures	Related Ara Policies
• APP803b Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research • APP804a Information Requirements for Proposals • APP804b Model Consent Form for Research with Students • APP804c Model Consent Form for Research Involving Interviews • APP804d Model Statement for Anonymous Questionnaires • APP804e Model Consent Form for Research Involving Focus Groups	• APP304 Academic Misconduct • APP803 Research and Knowledge Transfer • CPP109 Disclosing Personal Information about Students and Staff • CPP110 Legislative compliance* • CPP117 Raising Problems or Complaints • CPP208 Resolving Staff Performance or Conduct Issues
Other Documentation • Research Matters; an information resource for staff [InfoWeb] • Project/programme application form [InfoWeb] • Ethical conduct checklist and risk screening checklist [research approval forms]	**Good Practice Guidelines**
References **Notes *** Checks need to be made on a case by case basis that ethics approvals comply with New Zealand Acts and Regulations. Not all relevant acts are covered under CPP110 Legislative Compliance Policy. *2016 – New branding*	

2 Principles

Researchers participate only in projects/programmes conforming to accepted ethical standards, including standards for the protection and safety of human/animal subjects and participants, in which they are competent or adequately supervised. Researchers are committed to the highest standards of professional conduct in undertaking and supervising research.

Key principles are:

2.1 Informed Consent

Potential research subjects/participants are made fully aware of the nature and purpose of the research before their formal consent is sought.

2.2 Cultural and Social Responsibility

a The three principles of Participation, Protection and Partnership are incorporated into how the research is conducted and shared.

b Where Māori ethnic and cultural values are the focus of a research project/programme, the principles are interpreted according to those implicit in the Treaty of Waitangi.

2.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

The 12 Privacy Principles as set out in Privacy Act 1993 apply to all research conducted at Ara (*refer CPP109 Disclosing Personal Information about Students and Staff)*.

2.4 Beneficence

The research process and knowledge gained from it would be of benefit to participants and wider community.

2.5 Non-maleficence

No harm occurs in undertaking or disseminating the research.

2.6 Accountability and responsibility

That research is undertaken by competent practitioners is open to scrutiny, peer, technical and ethical review. The researcher is responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met.

2.7 Honesty and transparency

To act in a way that is honest at all times. Within the framework of the project/programme, ensure that information is accessible and processes are transparent. All participants and stakeholders are treated fairly and with respect.

2.8 Justice

Non-discrimination in selection of participants and having no repercussions for participants in work or study, or in portrayal in dissemination. There is equality in the distribution of the results and benefits of the research to the participants and collaborators.

3 Associated Procedures for Ara Academic Policy on: Research Ethics

The following procedures apply to research projects/programmes and to evaluative projects which do not meet the definition of research, but which do not provide anonymity or are to be externally published.

Contents:

3.1 Approvals

a The principles are reflected in the research approval criteria and that they are addressed in the research/evaluation proposal before approval to proceed is given.

b Ethics clearance is obtained from the Ara Ethics Sub-committee before commencing any research involving human/animal subjects or participants or evaluation which requires ethics approval.

c For research, each project/programme must have a technical review on the research design, methodology and analysis to ensure that it is technically sound. The completed technical review check list is attached to the proposal for consideration during approval. If there is insufficient information in the technical review to adequately cover the ethical issues, then the Ethics Subcommittee may request and assess further information.

d The technical reviewer(s) have demonstrated competency in the field of research and methodologies.

e Any research project/programme that requires ethics approval from ethics committee/s other than that operating at Ara (e.g. Canterbury District Health Board, another tertiary institution) must be declared at the time the project/programme is submitted to the Ara Human Ethics subcommittee or an appropriate external Animal Ethics committee. No research project/programme subject to multiple ethics approval can commence without approval of all such committees.

f For evaluative projects sufficient information provided to the Human Ethics Subcommittee about the design, methodology, analysis and publication of findings for the ethical implications to be identified and assessed.

3.2 Documentation

a The ethics screening checklist is part of the project/programme application. If no risk factors are identified the proposal, technical review, and ethics conduct check list can be submitted to the Chair of the Ethics Committee who may sign the original project/programme application form. The checklist can be used for evaluations.

b *APP804a Information Requirements for Proposals* are available to assist researchers/evaluators when preparing an application for approval. Assistance is also available from any member of the Ethics Subcommittee or the Research and Knowledge Transfer Manager. Assistance related to identifying an Animal Ethics Subcommittee is available through the Department of Applied Science and Allied Health.

c Researchers/evaluators are aware of and disclose any real or potential conflict of interest including situations in which a staff member's own students are involved as subjects/participants.

3.3 Informed Consent

a Potential research subjects/participants are made fully aware of the nature and purpose of the research before their formal consent is sought.

b In most situations, information about the research/evaluation is given in writing and consent is obtained in writing (*APP804b-e Sample consent forms).* When the model interview/survey form is not practical or appropriate (e.g. telephone interviews, anonymous questionnaires and in cultural contexts where oral consent may be more appropriate), other forms of providing information and recording consent are acceptable, e.g. recording via some form of audio media or the researcher noting in writing that all steps have been completed. Note also that consent given on-line, as for an electronic survey, is acceptable.

c Subjects'/participants' consent is sought without undue pressure or persuasion (e.g. the use of inducements beyond reasonable compensation or threats/implied threats of the consequences of not participating).

d Subjects/participants are made aware of their right to decline to participate in the research project/programme and to withdraw from it at any time (including withdrawal of information they have provided, if the timing makes this possible), without providing a reason for their withdrawal.

e When an institution, organisation or other group is used to access potential subjects or participants, written support for the project/programme is obtained from the authorised person/s.

f When potential participants are unable to or would find it difficult to give formal consent, proxy consent is obtained from the person/s authorised to do so (e.g. parent, teacher, caregiver). In such cases, reasonable attempts to obtain the subjects'/participants' consent are made before accepting proxy consent. In no situation is anyone required to be involved against their will. Examples where proxy consent may be acceptable include:

i Children under 16 years of age

ii Mentally incapacitated persons

iii Unconscious patients.

3.4 Cultural and Social Responsibility

a Projects/programmes and evaluations are designed so that the methodology is appropriate to the subjects and the participants involved, and are carried out in an informed manner that respects the social and cultural sensitivity of the particular population as a whole.

b The following, based on the Health Research Council's Guidelines for Researchers, is provided as a starting point for researchers/evaluators to identify relevant cultural and social issues that may arise. Further information is accessible at http://hrc.govt.nz/news-and-publications/publications/ethics-and-regulatory.

i Consideration is given to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi when planning appropriate consultation and procedures.

ii The purpose of consultation is to ensure that the procedures are appropriate and acceptable to the particular population. It should therefore begin as early as possible and continue throughout the research/evaluation.

iii Where a research project/programme or evaluation involves persons from a culture or language group other than the researcher/s'/evaluator/s', consideration is given to the preferences of the potential participants as to consultation, the language used, documentation (including any necessary translations), analysis and reporting.

iv Procedures are designed so they are appropriate to the participants. Researchers are responsible for informing themselves of and taking the necessary steps to respect the social/cultural/language sensitivities of all participants.

v Researchers/evaluators also are responsible for identifying the potential implications or interests of other cultures or groups in relation to the research process or outcomes.

3.5 Privacy and Confidentiality

a Subjects or participants (including individuals, organisations or other bodies) in any research project/programme or evaluation are not identified and data/information related to them cannot be linked to them unless they have given specific consent (*refer Definitions in Section 1.4*).

b Each researcher/evaluator is responsible for the safe keeping and subsequent confidential destruction of consent forms and data within the standard period; student project data may be kept for less time (*APP803b Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*). The process for data management must be specified and monitored.

3.6 Risk or Conflict of Interest

a For the protection of the researcher and subjects/participants, each researcher/evaluator is responsible for identifying real or potential risks associated with the research project/programme or evaluation and including this in the information submitted to RKTC (or directly to the Ethics Subcommittee), e.g.:

i Risks to the subjects/participant such as pain, stress, moral or cultural offence, conflict of interest

ii Risks to Ara, other institution/group and/or wider community through the findings of the research/evaluation.

b When a research project/programme or evaluation is submitted for approval, the proposed methodology (including the data analysis method) is evaluated to identify any flaws or limitations that may expose participants, consumers, the researcher/evaluator or Ara to potential risk or unnecessary inconvenience.

c Staff do not usually involve students as subjects/participants in their research project/programme or evaluation if they are currently (or likely to be) teaching or assessing those students as well. An exception is when the standard methodologies associated with 'action research' are used, and all students are aware of the purpose of the research, are full participants and have input into the conclusions drawn. In other situations where student participation is unavoidable, the following safeguards are taken:

i The informed consent is obtained by another person on behalf of the staff member/s, making it clear that students are able to decline without any consequences.

ii Anonymous questionnaires are used, distributed and collected by someone other than the teaching team, e.g. staff member from another Department.

iii Approval for student involvement is obtained from the Ara Human Ethics Sub-committee at the initial planning stage of the research project/programme or evaluation.

iv The above steps are required even if ethics approval has been obtained from another body (such as when the staff member is completing the project/programme as part of enrolment in a higher qualification at another institution). The implications of involving one's own students are often overlooked.

v Researchers/evaluators are aware of and disclose any real or potential conflict of interest, including situations in which a staff member's own students are involved as subjects/participants.

3.7 Deception

a Temporary deception or non-disclosure of the true/full purpose of the research is permitted only when absolutely necessary for the validity of the research outcome (*refer Definitions, Section 1.4*). Prior approval from the RKTC Human Ethics Subcommittee for any deception, however limited, is required, as it will not be covered by generic ethics approval e.g. for student projects. Researchers are therefore advised to contact the Subcommittee at the initial planning stage.

b If deception or non-disclosure unknowingly occurred, the researcher is responsible for contacting all those involved immediately, informing them of the situation and fully disclosing all relevant information about the project/programme. Subjects/participants are given the opportunity to withdraw any data/information they have supplied and/or any further involvement in the project/programme.

c The RKTC is informed immediately as well and will ensure that others are informed as required (e.g. Chief Executive, Council, insurance company).

d Failure to follow the above steps is considered 'misconduct' (*refer Section 3.8*).

e Deception is not used in evaluation.

3.8 Misconduct in Research or Evaluation

a Misconduct related to any stage of research or evaluation is taken seriously and Ara is committed to handling any such instances as swiftly and thoroughly as possible. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

i Significant departure from ethical principles, especially related to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, deception or the code of conduct related to the researcher's particular discipline/s (e.g. treatment of human or animal subjects or participants)

ii Fabricating or falsifying data and/or claiming unsubstantiated results

iii Plagiarism, including direct copying of resource materials, using other people's data without acknowledgement or deliberately using published or unpublished ideas from others without sufficient acknowledgement or consent

iv Misleading authorship, including listing contributors without their permission, not correctly acknowledging others' contributions or attributing work to people who have not made a significant contribution to the research

v Failing to comply with the institute's stated policies and procedures related to research.

b If an allegation of research/evaluation misconduct is made against a staff member, student or contracted researcher, Ara follows the procedures set out in either the *CPP208 Resolving Staff Performance* or Conduct Issues or *CPP117 Raising Problems or Complaints* policy, although additional provisions apply:

i An external person with relevant research expertise may be asked to work with the manager and/or investigation committee even at the initial stage.

ii If human or animal subjects/participants are involved or if for any other reason safety of others could be an issue; some preliminary steps to reduce or contain any real or potential danger may be taken immediately.

iii Ara is obligated to ensure the safety of all interested parties, which may include publishers of allegedly fraudulent research, funding bodies contributing to the research, human subjects/other participants in the research or, in some cases, the general public. This may require some disclosure of the allegation before the investigation is completed.

iv Any investigation or follow up actions may proceed to their conclusion even if the researcher/s resign from or no longer have any connection with Ara. If the safety of others could be an issue, Ara is obligated to complete the entire process.