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| Position description |
| Member, Human Research Ethics Committee |
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| Branch/Division | Strategic Policy and Evidence Branch, System Planning Division |
| Work location | Department of Health  50 Lonsdale Street Melbourne |
| Salary range | $383.00 per sitting |
| Employment status | External Sessional Member |
| Position reports to | Chair of the committee |
| Position contact | Timothy Ore, Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee  [research.ethics@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:research.ethics@health.vic.gov.au) or 0498 956 722 |
| Closing date | 25/03/25 |

# Role purpose

The Department of Health’s (DH) Human Research Ethics Committee (the Committee) reviews research proposals against the ethical principles of the National Health and Medical Research Council’s National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Statement). These reviews ensure that the interests of research participants are protected, and that research is conducted to appropriate ethical standards.

The Committee provides robust and independent consideration of research applications submitted to it for ethical review according to its criteria for referral and the ethical standards in the National Statement.

Specifically, the Committee undertakes ethical reviews of research proposals conducted or commissioned by DH or otherwise carried out under its auspices. The Committee also considers proposals in the portfolios of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, including child protection, prevention of family violence, housing, disability, ageing and carers.

The Committee thereby ensures that governmental research is conducted to appropriate ethical standards that protect the interests and vulnerabilities of research participants and fosters transparent and accountable research.

The role of the Committee is to:

* Consider the ethical implications of research proposals submitted to it for review
* Evaluate the ethical conduct of research involving humans according to the National Statement and Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Australian Code, 2018)
* Comply with all guidelines and legislation relevant to research proposals considered
* Provide advice on matters of an ethical nature, as required by the Secretary of the Department of Health (the Secretary)
* Provide a report annually to the Secretary

## Are you:

* Able to work with a diverse range of people with divergent views?
* Comfortable with complexity?
* Able to provide written feedback in a timely manner if required?
* Familiar, or able to become familiar with, the National Statement?
* Interested in aspects of research and its potential significance for society?

## Department of Health

The Department of Health (DH) has been established to advance the government's policy priorities in improving patient outcomes and experience for all Victorians. DH is responsible for the Health and Ambulance Services, Mental Health and Ageing portfolios. We also lead the government’s public health response and recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic. DH will remain at the very heart of Victoria's recovery effort – looking after families and taking care of Victorians’ loved ones.

A priority for DH will be to deliver ever-better quality healthcare through continuous improvement. We will have Victorians and clinicians at the centre of our reforms, continued leadership from our health service executives, and deeper engagement with our academic partners. Our ultimate vision is to achieve the best health and wellbeing for all Victorians. We will do this through the creation of a department committed to leading an integrated and continually improving healthcare system for health, mental health, and aged care. ​

## System Planning Division

The System Planning Division generates new ideas, reviews existing directions, and advises on long-term strategic policies to meet departmental objectives and government policy priorities. Through supporting departmental strategic planning processes, the division supports better decision-making on activities to advance government priorities and make progress towards departmental outcomes.

The division also supports key enablers for long-term reform, including workforce planning and development, information development and reporting, innovative investment approaches and building the department’s capabilities in evaluation and research. The division also leads work for our ministers on intergovernmental relations.

## Strategic Policy and Evidence Branch

The Strategic Policy and Evidence Branch provides essential support to the division’s policy development activities, and to the Department. The Committee and its Secretariat sit within the Evaluation and Insights unit in the Strategic Policy and Evidence Branch. The unit works with partners to provide a clear evidence base for the Department to deliver policy, programs, and services for Victorians.

## Committee Structure

The Committee consists of a multi-disciplinary membership, led by the Chair and assisted by the Committee secretary (DH staff). Categories of membership are prescribed in the National Statement. The structure of the ethics Committee is:

* Chair
* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community member
* Community member or consumer
* Persons with experience in pastoral care, such as minister of religion or community elder
* Persons with knowledge and experience in the professional care of people (vacant, n=1)
* Philosopher (person with expertise in moral deliberation)
* Researchers familiar with the type of applications routinely considered by the Committee (vacant, n=1)
* Lawyers (vacant, n=2)

The Committee meets eight times a year. For more information, see the Human Research Ethics Committee webpage on the [Department of Health website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/human-research-ethics-committee) < https://www.health.vic.gov.au/human-research-ethics-committee>.

# Key selection criteria

* Be familiar with or able to become familiar with the National Statement and consult other guidelines relevant to the review of specific research proposals;
* Prepare for, and attend a minimum of six of eight Committee meetings a year as well as an annual Committee Professional Development Day;
* Identify the risks and benefits of research proposals and assess how well risks are addressed in any proposed mitigation measures;
* Decide whether the research proposals considered meet the requirements of the National Statement;
* Produce template-reports on new applications;
* Declare any potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, in respect of research proposals put before the Committee; and
* If unable to attend a meeting, where practicable, provide to the secretary to the Committee via email, any opinions on Agenda Items so that these may be tabled at that meeting.

## Knowledge and skills

1. Problem-solving: seeks all relevant information for identifying matters relevant to the ethical evaluation of research proposals; investigates and probes for the facts; draws sound inferences from available information; identifies and proposes workable solutions to problems.
2. Understanding of governance: Demonstrated understanding of governance requirements and deliberative processes would be well regarded.

## Personal qualities

1. Relationship building: enjoys working with others in a common endeavour, welcomes differences in views and opinions and is open to learning from the perspectives and views of others.
2. Committee experience: Experience working on or being part of a committee would be well regarded.

## Specialist expertise

* Lived or professional experience and/or interest specific to the following vacant categories of membership:
  + researcher (preferably expertise in epidemiology, public health)
  + professional care of people, and
  + lawyer.

# Important information

The Committee is classified as a Group C1 entity under the Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines.

# Pre-employment checks

All appointments to the Department of Health are subject to reference checks, pre-employment misconduct screening and national criminal records checks. Some positions may also be subject to a ‘Working with Children Check’. As part of the recruitment and assessment process for this position applicants are subject to satisfactory outcome requirements for the following probity checks:

* A National Police History (Criminal Records) Check
* Insolvency check
* Banned or disqualified persons check
* The contact details of two referees must be provided
* A declaration of Private Interests (DOPI) must be completed to the satisfaction of the relevant Minister.

Applicants who have lived overseas for 12 months or longer in one country in the last 10 years are required to provide an international policy check. Applicants can obtain this from the relevant overseas police agency – further information can be sought from the Department of Home Affairs website ‘character and policy certificate requirements’ page. Alternatively, applicants can obtain a check through an organisation which provides international policy checks via an internet search.

# Mandatory Vaccination Policy

The department is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment which is safe and without risk to the health of its workers and clients.  As it is an essential element of any role within the department that employees be able to attend work onsite and to do so safely, employees are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of their employment.  This requirement applies unless they have a medical condition which means they cannot be vaccinated against COVID -19.  Therefore, the department will ask any prospective employee, who has been identified as the preferred candidate for a role within the department, to provide proof of their COVID-19 vaccination status prior to any offer of employment being made. If a prospective employee has a relevant medical condition which means they cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19, they should contact the department to discuss their individual circumstances.

# Values and behaviours

The Department of Health employees are required to demonstrate commitment to:

**The public sector values and behaviours** – responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership, and human rights.

**Recordkeeping** – The department is committed to good record keeping and requires all staff to routinely create and keep full and accurate records of their work-related activities, transactions, and decisions, using authorised systems.

**Diversity** – The department values an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and strongly encourages applications from Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from the LGBTQI+ community, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

# Further information

For further information visit [About the Department of Health](https://www.vic.gov.au/health/about-us) <https://www.vic.gov.au/health/about-us>

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