



FACULTY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SCIENCES

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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Reference:

CPUT Faculty of Health and Wellness Sciences. (2019). *Research Ethics Committee: Terms of Reference*. Cape Town: Cape Peninsula University of Technology. www.cput.ac.za/research-technology-and-innovation/ethics.

1. MANDATE

1.1 Name: Faculty of Health and Wellness Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HWS-REC); duly registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC): REC-230408-014.

1.2 The Research Ethics Committee (REC) is a standing committee of the Faculty of Health and Wellness Sciences (HWS) that is aligned to the Terms of Reference of the Senate Research Ethics Committee (SREC) and the Unit of Research Integrity (URI) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). It operates in line with the strategic goals of the faculty and the institution and must operate in a framework of being a self-monitoring committee that is accountable to the SREC, URI and the Faculty Board.

1.3 The HWS-REC will contribute to the protection of human research participants and investigators from harm or exploitation and guard the research participants' rights and dignity. In addition, the HWS-REC will strive towards the protection of the environment (research and natural). The committee will promote a high standard of research and maintain and enhance ethical standards of practice in research performed in the faculty as it is in the societal/public interest to do so.

1.4 All research in HWS, including research not related to further qualifications, must serve at the HWS-REC. The HWS-REC takes responsibility for the ethics review of all research involving human participants and will furthermore advise on all matters pertaining to research ethics in the faculty. In addition, the HWS-REC may review external applications deferred to the HWS-REC by the URI, especially where the research entails human participant research or in any way impact the faculty. The HWS-REC *will not* undertake functions that may conflict with the objectives and roles of the HWS-REC.

1.5 All research studies require ethics approval and may only commence once approval has been obtained. Ethics applications will not be evaluated if the research study has already commenced.

1.6 Furthermore, the HWS-REC will function in compliance to national acts and guidelines as well as international guidelines, which include, but are not limited to:

- The Belmont Report;
- The Declaration of Helsinki;
- The South African Department of Health (2015) *Ethics in health research: Principles, processes and structures*. Department of Health: Pretoria, South Africa;
- The South African Department of Health (2016) *South African clinical trial guidelines: Good practice for clinical trials with human participants*. Department of Health: Pretoria, South Africa; and
- The South African National Health Act, No. 61 of 2003.
- HPCSA guidelines document: entitled: General Ethical Guidelines for Health Researchers (Booklet 6)

General Ethical Guidelines for Biotechnology Research (Booklet 7)

1.7 The HWS-REC must retain registration with the NHREC.

2. COMPOSITION

2.1 Guiding Principles

The principles that determine membership of the HWS-REC are:

- 2.1.1. Members must be people of goodwill, with a high regard for the human personality,

for truthfulness and for the continued advancement of science in the interests of society.

- 2.1.2. The committee must have members that appropriately represent the ethical aspects of research conducted in the faculty and that conforms to guidelines of the NHREC.
- 2.1.3. The HWS-REC must be representative of the research communities it serves and, increasingly, reflect the demographic profile of the population of South Africa.
- 2.1.4. The HWS-REC must include male and female members, and not more than 70% must be either male or female.
- 2.1.5. The committee should have technical competence and judgment to engage in critical review of research proposals, to reconcile the physical and psychological consequences of participation and to consider the welfare of the research participants.
- 2.1.6. The committee members must accommodate respected lay opinion in a manner that provides effective representation of the non-clinical community as well as clinical interests. Lay opinion means opinion from a lawyer, social worker, religious leader, teacher or other person of standing able to contend with pressures from individuals within the health profession.
- 2.1.7. Members will serve on the HWS-REC as autonomous individuals and not as delegates taking instruction from other constituencies/bodies/departments, etc.

2.2 Committee Membership:

The following members will constitute the Committee:

Dean or Deputy Dean of the Faculty (as ex-officio)

Chairperson of the Faculty Research Committee

Faculty Research Coordinator

At least one member nominated from each of the academic departments

At least one member who is legally trained

At least one member who has a religious affiliation

At least one member with experience in qualitative research

At least one member with experience in quantitative research

At least one member with experience in statistical analysis

At least one member from outside the institution who will serve the interests of the broader community

NOTE:

Any one member can meet more than one expertise, but the committee will not be less than a total of nine (9) members. Given that valuable expertise exists in research units outside the faculty, membership may include members of staff nominated from such units, and whose participation in the HWS-REC falls within the research interests of the faculty. In the event of a dispute, the Dean or Deputy Dean who serves on the HWS-REC will be recused from the deliberation and decision-making around the dispute in the interest of good governance. The HWS-REC Exco is constituted by the Chair, Deputy Chair, Ex-officio member and Faculty Research Coordinator with the option of coopting one other member.

2.3 The HWS-REC must have powers to co-opt any person whose knowledge and expertise is needed to expedite special assignments or functions.

2.4 The Chairperson of the HWS-REC will be appointed by the Faculty Management and noted

by the Faculty Board. The Deputy Chairperson will be elected by the HWS-REC at the first meeting of the year and must be appointed by the Faculty Board.

- 2.5 The term of office of nominated members will be three (3) years and ex-officio must serve as long as they occupy their substantive positions.
- 2.6 Disengagement (with respect to resignation or termination of membership) from the HWS-REC can be initiated by the Chairperson or any other member of the HWS-REC and must be submitted in writing to the HWS-REC.

3. FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The HWS-REC must at all times perceive research as having a potential benefit to individuals and society. The committee should therefore take care not to impede good research and should assist investigators wherever possible to facilitate ethical research standards. In order to fulfil these aspirations, the functions of the HWS-REC are to:

- 3.1 Advise the Faculty Management and Faculty Board on matters related to the ethics of research involving and affecting humans and the environment.
- 3.2 Liaise with external organisations and institutions to strengthen Health Science research ethics at the CPUT and become part of the national and international Health Science research ethics community.
- 3.3 Review ethics applications for all postgraduate research in HWS, after the research proposal is approved by the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) and before submission to the Institutional Higher Degrees Committee (HDC). The HWS-REC will notify the supervisor in writing regarding their decision.
- 3.4 Assist with the review of external applications, e.g. CPUT staff registered at other universities, but using CPUT as a study site, or researchers external to CPUT. The HWS-REC will only assist with reviews of research involving humans/the faculty, which is considered to be 'high risk' and would therefore require the expertise of the HWS-REC members.
- 3.5 Conduct an ethics review of all research by staff in the faculty after the research proposal is approved by the FRC. The REC will notify researchers in writing regarding their decision.

4. QUORUM

- 4.1 Thirty-three (33) percent of the membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum¹.
- 4.2 Individuals in attendance by invitation at the Committee meetings may participate in the discussions but do not vote or contribute to the quorum of the Committee meetings.
- 4.3 Exco quorum will be deemed to have been constituted at 50%.

5. GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 HWS-REC members must abide by the CPUT Ethics Committee Member Code of Conduct.
- 5.2 The Faculty Office will service the committee through the duly appointed Postgraduate Administrator.
- 5.3 Meetings are scheduled on at least a quarterly basis and must be communicated in reasonable time to allow rigorous reviews and feedback to/from applicants.
- 5.4 The HWS-REC membership will value inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, responsiveness, accountability and promotion of research integrity through ethics oversight.

¹ DoH, 2015: par 4.4.1.3

- 5.5 HWS-REC members are under obligation to declare any form of conflict of interest related to research projects under discussion, and if conflicted, must refrain from influencing the discussions of the application or related matters, unless specific information is requested from the HWS-REC Chairperson.
- 5.6 HWS-REC members have a duty to protect confidentiality in relation to the HWS-REC business.
- 5.7 Financial compensation (in terms of a stipend, travel expenses, etc.) for non-affiliated members is possible and is processed on a *per claim* basis.

End