

Position Description

Human Research Ethics Committee Membership- Law

Classification:	Human Research Ethics Committee Member- Law
Business unit/department:	Discovery &Innovation Unit
Work location:	Austin Hospital <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify)
Agreement:	Victorian Public Health Sector (Health and Allied Services, Managers and Administrative Officers) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2021-2025 Choose an item. Choose an item.
Employment type:	Choose an item.
Hours per month:	50% of all scheduled HREC meetings Meeting duration 2-3 hours. Meetings fortnightly Monday and Thursday (February – December) + additional time taken to review meeting package
Reports to:	Deputy Director, Strategy and Capability
Direct reports:	None
Financial management:	Budget: none
Date:	September 2025

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Position purpose

To provide legal expertise to the Austin Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), ensuring that research conducted under the institution's auspices complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated 2018), the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and other relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks. The HREC – Law member contributes independent advice on the legal acceptability of projects, helping safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of research participants.

About the DIU and Human Research Ethics Committee at Austin

The Discovery & Innovation Unit (DIU) provides strategic leadership, governance, and operational support for all research conducted at Austin Health. The DIU ensures that research is conducted to the highest standards of ethics, scientific integrity, and regulatory compliance, enabling innovation that benefits patients and the broader community.

The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) plays a central role in safeguarding the welfare, rights, and dignity of participants involved in research. The HREC operates in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated 2018) and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, as well as relevant Commonwealth and State legislation.

The HREC's primary responsibilities are to:

- Review research applications to ensure that proposals are ethically acceptable and legally compliant.
- Assess research projects against the principles of respect, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence.
- Monitor approved projects through annual and progress reports.
- Consider and act on reports of adverse events or non-compliance.
- Provide independent advice to Austin Health on ethical and governance issues in research.

The HREC is comprised of members with diverse expertise and community representation, including clinicians, researchers, lawyers, pastoral carers, allied health professionals, and lay members. This diversity ensures that research proposals are considered from a broad range of perspectives, including ethical, legal, scientific, cultural, and community viewpoints.

The HREC meets twice monthly from February to December. Meetings are held at the Austin Hospital, with members able to attend in person or via Microsoft Teams. Members are expected to review meeting materials in advance and contribute actively to deliberations.

Position responsibilities

- Attend at least half of the scheduled HREC meetings (held twice monthly, February – December).
- Review research applications and provide legal perspectives on ethical acceptability in line with the National Statement.
- Act as secondary reviewer, as requested, to provide an expert review of selected projects.
- Ensure that committee deliberations and recommendations align with relevant



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legislative and regulatory frameworks.

- Contribute to discussions regarding participant consent, privacy, confidentiality, contracts, and intellectual property issues as they arise.
- Assist in monitoring approved projects and advise on legal implications of adverse events or non-compliance.
- Maintain confidentiality of committee proceedings and documentation.
- From time to time, review HREC items outside the normal meeting schedule or participate in community of practice sessions to provide real-time feedback to researchers.
- Disclose and appropriately manage any conflicts of interest in accordance with the National Statement and Austin Health policies.
- Participate in induction and ongoing training as required by the institution to maintain familiarity with ethical guidelines.

Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

- Current engagement in legal practice.
- Demonstrated knowledge of health, privacy, contract, or administrative law (or related areas).
- Ability to critically appraise complex documents and identify legal and ethical issues.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Commitment to attending meetings regularly and contributing constructively to deliberations.

Desirable but not essential:

- Previous experience in a governance, ethics, or research oversight role.
- Familiarity with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.
- Experience working in healthcare, research, or regulatory settings.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

- Current practising certificate as a lawyer in Australia.

Quality, safety and risk – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public by following organisational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines.
- Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself.
- Promote and participate in the evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Comply with the principles of person-centered care.
- Comply with requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.

Other conditions – all roles



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All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Adhere to Austin Health's core values: *our actions show we care, we bring our best, together we achieve, and we shape the future.*
- Comply with the Austin Health's Code of Conduct policy, as well as all other policies and procedures (as amended from time to time).
- Comply with all Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.
- Provide proof of immunity to nominated vaccine preventable diseases in accordance with Austin Health's immunisation screening policy.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.

General information

Cultural safety

Austin Health is committed to cultural safety and health equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise cultural safety as the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, identities, cultures, bodies, and abilities. We welcome and support applications from talented people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, people with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ and people of all ages and cultures.

Austin Health is a child safe environment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. Austin Health has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and commits to protect children. We take allegations of abuse and neglect seriously and will make every effort to mitigate and respond to risk in line with hospital policy and procedures.



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