

Position Description

Human Research Ethics Committee Membership- Professional Care

Classification:	Human Research Ethics Committee Member- Professional Care
Business unit/department:	Discovery &Innovation Unit
Work location:	Austin Hospital ☒ Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital ☐ Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre ☐ Other ☐ (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 expertise in the professional care, counselling, or treatment of people, contributing to the deliberations of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Professional Care member ensures that research proposals are considered from the perspective of patient care, wellbeing, and

the protection of vulnerable participants, bringing practical knowledge of healthcare delivery and participant needs into the ethical review process.

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 each year.
- Review research applications and provide input on ethical acceptability, with particular focus on participant care and wellbeing.
- Assess patient-facing materials to ensure they are clear, respectful, and appropriate for the participant population.



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- Ensure that any comments submitted are consistent with the National Statement and other applicable guidelines.
- Act as secondary reviewer, as requested, to provide an expert review of selected projects.
- Be available, on occasion, to review HREC matters outside the regular meeting schedule.
- From time to time, participate in Austin Health's Community of Practice sessions, providing feedback to researchers prior to formal submission.
- Maintain confidentiality of committee discussions and documents.
- 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:

- Knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling, or treatment of people (e.g. nursing, allied health, psychology, or similar).
- Ability to evaluate research from the perspective of patient care, support, and wellbeing.
- Understanding of psychosocial and cultural considerations in participant care."
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Commitment to the ethical values of respect, merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence.
- Commitment to attending and contributing to committee meetings.

Desirable but not essential:

- Experience in nursing or another clinical role with direct patient contact.
- Familiarity with research or governance committees.
- Interest in healthcare ethics and patient advocacy.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

- Current registration with a relevant professional body (e.g. AHPRA) where applicable.

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.



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Other conditions – all roles

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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