



Is ethical approval required?

The University of Waikato (Human Research Ethics Committee) requires the Psychology Research and Ethics Committee to review and approve School staff and student research, that may involve human participants. All projects are subject to the University's *Ethical Conduct in Research Guidelines*, which is consistent with the *Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Psychological Society Inc., Section 6. Research with Humans* (available from the Psychology office). Please ensure you have read the enclosed "Principles" before undertaking or authorising any research involving contact with people. In general, follow these guidelines:

Do not apply for approval

- if your research uses animals. Ethics approval must be obtained from the University's Experimental Animal Ethics Review Committee.
- for a class project if the participants are members of the class involved in the project (e.g., practical) which is conducted exclusively for educational purposes, is not part of any research data collection, and does not involve potentially harmful procedures. However, please give a description of the project/practical to the School of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee to keep on file.

Apply for approval

- if your research uses humans in any way, or
- if your research uses archival data which includes identifiable personal information or there are issues with cultural or intellectual property rights.
- for a class project if the participants are not members of the class or the data will be kept for staff research. Only one application needs to be submitted if all students in that class are doing the same project.

A staff member or student need not seek ethical approval from the Psychology Research and Ethics Committee if they are collaborating with someone from another School whose review committee has already approved the project. However, ethical approval from an ethics review committee outside the University cannot automatically substitute for approval from a University committee. We recommend applying for exemption and including the prior approval.

How does the ethical approval procedure work?

Return the completed ethical approval documents to the Psychology office. Normally, the Research and Ethics Committee should be able to reach a decision within two weeks of receiving the completed application. Occasionally further information will be requested. Upon approval of your project, a signed copy will be returned to you for your records. If you change your method from what has been approved or if there is a delay of more than two years before you can start with your project, you must resubmit this application, noting any changes.

Ethics Principles

The School requires staff and students to pay particular attention to the following nine primary principles when conducting or supervising research projects involving human participants. These principles are in addition to the normal requirements placed on researchers, such as requirements to acknowledge sources of ideas and information, and not to knowingly falsify or distort research findings. The nine principles are based on those outlined in the University's "Handbook on Ethical Conduct in Research 2001" (see <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/uow/research.shtml#internal>).

1. *The value of the research should outweigh any human costs involved.*
2. *Risk should be minimised.*
3. *The informed consent of participants should be obtained, without coercion.*
4. *Privacy and confidentiality should be respected.*
5. *Deception should be minimised.*
6. *Research goals and methods should be socially and culturally responsive.*
7. *Exploitation of researcher-participant relationships should be prevented.*
8. *Property rights should be respected.*
9. *Any conflict of interest should be declared.*

1. Value of Research

Every project should have clear research or teaching goals stated in a form appropriate to the discipline concerned. The researcher should be able to justify to his or her peers the goals and methodology of the research in terms of a weighing of its reasonably anticipated benefits against any foreseeable costs to the participants.

Research involving human participants must be conducted or supervised by appropriately qualified personnel and, as a minimum, must comply with the moral and scientific standards of any relevant professional body (e.g., The New Zealand Psychological Society Inc.)

2. Risk should be minimised

The researcher should endeavour to minimise any risks - physical, psychological, social or cultural - to individuals or collectivities arising from the research project. The researcher should make every attempt to identify and inform participants of potential risk prior to obtaining informed consent.

Risks include pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, exploitation and cultural dissonance. Cultural dissonance can result, for example, from procedures or researcher behaviour that are not culturally responsive. Participants should be consulted to ascertain any risks which they may identify or concerns which they may have. If there might be some risk, say how you will deal with it. Sometimes, for example, it is good to have the names of people that participants could talk to if they were to become upset and not want to talk to you.

Where during the course of the research it becomes apparent to the researchers that the risk of harm is greater than had originally been envisaged, participants should be so informed, and the research should be re-evaluated in terms of the first of these principles.

3. Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent requires that, where practicable, people should not be involved in research without understanding and freely agreeing to such involvement. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to obtain consent in the forms considered standard in psychological or biomedical research. "Standard form" criteria of informed consent may even be inappropriate where research participants have a different philosophical world view and/or legal tradition.

Where the nature of the research is constantly changing and developing, specific prior consent may also be difficult or even impossible to obtain. The researcher, however, should always be able to justify the research on the basis of an explicitly formulated principle of trust. Ideally, this principle should be capable of peer review and scrutiny by an appropriate professional body.

The general rule should be that where research participants are being requested to fill out questionnaires that might identify them, to answer questions in a structured interview, to undergo formal tests, or be subjected to formal observation and recording procedures, the process of obtaining informed consent should be equally formal. Where less formal research methods are involved, informed consent may either be deemed part of a more global consent or arrived at by some alternative means. Please give details in your application.

Where prior formal informed consent is considered mandatory, prospective participants should be made aware of the nature of the research, provided with all information relevant to their decision to participate, and be invited to take part. This information should be given in plain language appropriate to the participants. The researcher must recognise and respect the individual's right to decline to participate in, or to withdraw at any time from, the study. This includes withdrawal of information they have provided, at any time before completion of data collection.

Where prior formal informed consent is unworkable or inappropriate, alternatives should be considered. Particularly in social science research, it may be desirable instead to submit texts or transcripts of dialogue, interpretations of events or analyses of data, to participants for final approval. In other words, 'informed consent' can sometimes only seriously be obtained after the event.

Participants should be informed of their rights to complain if they feel that their trust has been abused. The information sheet should identify the body to which such complaints can be addressed (Currently Dr Nicola Starkey, phone 07 838 4466 ext. 6472, email: nstarkey@waikato.ac.nz).

Participants should also be informed of their right of access to any data that has been collected from/about them. Research is not ethical if coercion of any sort, or inducement beyond reasonable compensation for participating, is used to gain participation.

Since much social science research involves collectivities, it is important that researchers recognise the complexities of relationships between individuals and collectivities. In some cases, cultural mores may make it appropriate for leaders of a collectivity to agree to participation on behalf of others. If any

individuals wish to decline to participate in the research (in spite of consent given on behalf of the collectivity), their wishes must be respected, and the greatest care must be taken to prevent consequent retribution by the collectivity or others. On the other hand, in some situations the rights of the individual to participate may outweigh a collectivity's decision not to do so. Once again, please give details in your application.

How should the participants be contacted?

If participants are first year Psychology students (PSYC103 or PSYC102) then place a sign-up sheet on the School's Research Board, giving details of the name of researcher and supervisor, a contact phone number or room number, and a description of what is involved, how long the research will take, and how many course credit points will be gained. The sign-up sheet should ask only for the participants' names. If other details (e.g., phone numbers and addresses) are required, a sign-up sheet should be left in a Research binder at the Psychology office. Course credit points cannot be given to students in others years. Contact the course convenors (or Doctoral Assistants) for up to date information about 1st year recruitment policy. If using 1st year Psychology students for a questionnaire or survey that needs returning at a later date, please make suitable arrangements so that the blue credit form is not left attached to the questionnaire thereby compromising anonymity.

If participants are solicited from a noticeboard other than the School's Research Board, use School Letterhead (students need approval from their supervisor) and include the name of the researcher and supervisor, a contact phone number or room number, a description of what is involved, and how long the research will take.

If participants are from an institution or agency, then the initial contact should be from the relevant person in that institution or agency, and not from the researcher. For example, if you are obtaining clients of an agency for your research then the head of that agency should initially write to the participants asking them if they wish to take part in your study. We wish to avoid situations in which the researcher contacts someone else's client out of the blue. E.g. "Hi, I got your name and phone number from the medical files at the Hospital". In this case the relevant Hospital personnel should make the initial contact for you. Industrial/Organizational research often obtains the Manager's permission on behalf of the employers in the initial instance. Please provide full details in your application form if this is the case.

If participants are school children under the age of 16 years, you need to ask the principal and the board of trustees for permission **before** you can approach the parents and the children. If your study involves preschool children or toddlers first approach the relevant Kindergarten/crèche supervisors. Please attach all letters, which give information about your study and ask for permission, to your application. Further details are in the University's policy.

How should consent be obtained?

Consent forms should normally be used including a statement that the participants are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason, and a statement that the participants have had an opportunity to ask about the research. Additionally, the consent form should give the participants the right to voice any concerns and information about whom they would need to direct their concern. You may photocopy and use the attached form.

If initial contact is made during a group setting, participants must sign their consent form on an individual basis (i.e., outside the group setting). This will ensure that participants give their consent without any form of group coercion (*see University's Handbook on Ethical Conduct in Research 2001; 8C Informed Consent*).

Any research in which the use of written consent forms could be problematic (e.g., door-knock, telephone surveys, questionnaires) should include details of how consent will otherwise be given and what participants will be told before giving their consent. For instance, if you send out a questionnaire, you may propose that the participants give their consent by sending back the completed questionnaire. The Research and Ethics Committee can consider such proposals on a case-by-case basis. Give as many details as possible, especially of how the right to withdraw is broached with participants.

If your research involves children then there are stricter guidelines to follow.

If your study involves children aged 16 years or below then parents'/caregivers' consent must be obtained. We also recommend as a courtesy that the children also be asked for their consent, if they are at an appropriate age. In certain circumstances, people acting in loco parentis may be able to give consent. In cases where it is unclear who is the caregiver please give details?

If the participants are teenagers over 16 years of age they should be formally asked for their consent, and given full information about the study. In many cases we also recommend as a courtesy that the parents/caregivers also be asked for their consent or informed of their offspring's participation, unless there are good reasons otherwise.

If the children are young then we recommend that two persons be present at all times during the research, one the same gender as the child if possible. Parents should be given an offer to be present during the research. If the research is conducted at a crèche, preschool, or other school, then teachers should be given an offer to be present during the research. Young children should be given breaks during the research as appropriate, and the length of the research should be minimized.

All studies conducted at crèches or schools of any sort require first approval from their Board of Trustees, Principal, or governing body. Your letter to be sent to them should be included in your ethical review application. The University Ethics regulations set out specific guidelines for research in schools and these should be consulted.

In the case of participants who have other limitations in their ability to provide their own consent (e.g., by virtue of intellectual disability, mental health disability etc.), efforts to obtain informed consent should be made as far as possible prior to and in addition of any consent obtained from a legal guardian.

Can participants be reimbursed?

Koha is ethically acceptable. It is advisable to check with the School Manager or Kaupapa Māori staff before giving a Koha, to ensure you understand the true intention of the traditional meaning.

Gifts are sometimes appropriate to give to participants, but they should only be announced after the research is completed so there is no hint of coercion. They should be given even if the participant withdraws before completing the study. Offering a "lottery" or some similar forms of incentive for external respondents to participate (i.e., fill in and send in questionnaires) is acceptable, in some instances.

Reimbursement of direct costs to participants (taxi fares, transport costs) is ethically acceptable. Refreshments (i.e., biscuits, coffee or tea) during long group meetings in research are ethically acceptable.

Monetary payments to participants (e.g., for their time) are only acceptable ethically if there is no coercion involved. Such payments should only be used when going beyond 4 course credit points/course for first year. Please include all relevant details including justification and amount of reimbursement in your applications. Also note that you need to inform participants before starting regarding the payment they will receive if they pull out before completing the study. Again, the payment must not be seen as coercion for continuing to the end.

Important note for students: please check the School's policy on thesis reimbursement (available from the Psychology office).

4. Privacy and Confidentiality

Rights to privacy and confidentiality must be respected. Researchers must recognise the rights of participants, both individuals and collectivities, to require that information which they provide is kept confidential. The researcher has a duty to invite all participants to exercise this right. Identification of participants or informants in any research should not occur without their informed consent. There are some special cases in which making participants unidentifiable would be considered rude by them. Please say how you will handle this, making sure that they give fully informed consent for their names to be used.

The researcher must take any steps to ensure that identities or information acquired in the process of research are kept secure from interception or appropriation by unauthorised persons, or use for non-research purposes. This will often require coding of data and removal of names from questionnaires and other documents. Researchers are responsible also for the safekeeping and confidentiality of consent forms. The information sheet provided to participants should state that individuals will not be identified in any publication/dissemination of the research findings without their explicit consent.

5. Limitation of Deception

Deception of participants conflicts with the principle of informed consent, but in some areas of research it may be necessary to withhold information with regard to the purposes and/or procedures of the research. If this is the case, the researcher must (a) demonstrate to an Ethics Committee that such deception is necessary, and (b) ensure that participants are provided with a sufficient explanation of the true purposes of the research and reasons for the deception as soon as possible following participation.

Emphasis on the need for informed consent does not mean that covert research can never be approved. However, any research proposal involving covert procedures requires particularly careful consideration and strong justification.

6. Social and Cultural Responsiveness

Responsiveness to Māori

The University and the School of Psychology has an explicit commitment to ensuring that Treaty of Waitangi is acknowledged and responded to as part of the ordinary life and activities of the institution (Goal 1.2 of the University of Waikato Charter). The Treaty of Waitangi has implications for all psychological research. In some instances, the implications may be quite small (eg. ensuring that samples of participants include Māori). At other times, the implications may be major (eg. requiring careful consultation and obtaining informed consent from Māori stakeholders and collectivities, as well as from individuals).

Whatever the research, we are asking you to demonstrate that you have given thought to the Treaty and the implications it may have for conducting research.

Actual or potential implications for or impacts upon Māori

When focused on a particular line of inquiry researchers sometimes omit to give consideration to the wider implication and impacts of their work. While research which is intentionally Māori-focused will have obvious implications for Māori, some psychological research which is not meant to be Māori-focused may still result in outcomes that will affect Māori, and these should be given careful consideration. For example, the validation of a psychological test which will be used to select students or employees in Aotearoa/New Zealand is likely to influence the future use of that test in practice. Without a breakdown of test norms and validity coefficients for Māori and non-Māori, such a study may possibly lead to the use of a test in practice which adversely impacts Māori being selected for such positions. While it is not always possible, in practice, to include necessary sub-group analyses in such situations, researchers must be cognisant of these issues and take whatever steps are possible to address them in the design of their research.

Consultation

Consultation is a process that allows the researcher to make an informed decision about: whether the research should proceed, the research methodology and procedures, and how to avoid negative outcomes resulting for participants or for Māori collectivities. With respect to being responsive to Māori, the researcher needs to first determine the extent to which Māori will have a stake in the research and the consequences of the research impacts upon them. This in turn will determine how comprehensive your consultation process with Māori and other stakeholders needs to be.

Research relationships

Some research may well require ongoing involvement, advice and guidance from Māori or researchers experienced in conducting Māori focused research especially when the research has major implications or impacts upon Māori. In such research, the researcher should seek to establish ongoing research relationships with Māori stakeholders, advisers or experienced researchers. Care must be taken to avoid placing unreasonable demands on their time. Principles of respect, reciprocity and mutual benefit should guide these relationships. Where appropriate, compensation for their expert contribution to the research should be made.

Māori cultural and intellectual property rights

Many Māori individuals and communities have felt that their cultural, intellectual, physical and community knowledge and property have been exploited by researchers who have operated according to value positions different to those of Māori. Researchers should recognise that Māori are the guardians of their customary knowledge and cultural property. They have the right to protect and control dissemination of that knowledge or access to such cultural property. The research endeavour is not an individual pursuit, rather, it is a negotiated collaborative process that is reliant upon the goodwill and cooperation of participants and collectivities. Ownership and authorship of research products should be carefully negotiated in an informed manner ensuring that the research participants and collectivities are the first beneficiaries of the research.

Dissemination of information

Most research libraries and academic publishing forums are inaccessible to Māori participants. Yet they should be the first to be notified of the research outcomes, particularly if the participants are known to the researcher. Where they are not known to the researcher (eg. anonymous questionnaires), the results of the research should be more broadly disseminated through media and channels that increase the exposure of the research results to participants. In all cases, the language, media and forums used to report the research findings to participants should be consistent with their capacity to understand the research you have conducted.

Helpful references:

- Durie, M. H. (1998). *Whaiora: Māori health development* (2nd ed.). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Te Puni Kokiri, *A guide for departments on consultation with iwi*. Wellington, Te Puni Kokiri, 1993.
- Tuhiwai-Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press.

7. Exploitation of Relationships

Researcher must not exploit the relationship between researcher and participants. Exploitation includes seeking or obtaining goods services, information or personal relationships that have no direct bearing on the stated research aims or data gathering. A researcher is responsible for preventing or terminating such exploitation.

Where students are the participants of a research project or teaching activities that involve students as participants, they may choose whether or not to participate, and that choice must not have any adverse consequences on their academic progress. Researchers should ensure that the students are not disadvantaged, academically or otherwise, in any way if the research is unsuccessful, and should be certain that the research is in the best interests of the student(s). Payments or other rewards to research participants are not generally acceptable.

8. Respect for Property Rights

Processes of research and publication must not violate or infringe legal or culturally determined property rights. These may cover such things as land and goods, works of art and craft, spiritual treasures, information, and works of the intellect. Researchers should make every effort to ensure that their use of information does not exploit the people whom it concerns, and that participants experience a degree of reciprocity both during and after the research.

The researcher's actions with regard to respect for property rights should flow on from the recommendations suggested earlier for informed consent. In the process of obtaining such consent, by whatever means deemed appropriate, the researcher should endeavour to explain what published form the information may take.

In the case of survey-based, observational or experimental data, and especially where individual behaviour or responses will be aggregated, this clarification should be possible at the time of first obtaining "standard" informed consent. In the case of qualitative research, especially where analyses and interpretations are emergent and individuals more easily identified, it may be necessary to show drafts of manuscripts and rough cuts of films or videos to the participants involved in order to gain their further permission and to sort out any difficulties in acknowledging ownership of knowledge.

9. Declaration of Conflict of Interests

Any sponsorship of a project must not compromise its research merit or ethical acceptability. Where the research is commissioned or sponsored, the nature of the commission or sponsorship should be declared both to participants and in any published findings. In general, University staff should not undertake research, the findings of which are excluded from the public domain.