SCHOOL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEEERING
SCHOOL ETHICS COMMITTEE

GUIDELINES

School Level Ethical Review

UQ encourages schools to establish their own ethical review mechanism to review research protocols for student projects. Applications for ethical clearance are able to be reviewed within the school where:
   a) The researcher is a student of the school (at levels up to and including PhD); and
   b) The project involves no more than *low risk* (i.e. where the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort); and
   c) The school committee considers that there is no need for institutional review (by either BSSERC or MREC).

Projects involving commonly accepted professional or clinical practices and procedures may be assessed by a school ethics committee to be low risk. Research protocols involving potentially greater levels of risk must be submitted to the Behavioural and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (BSSERC) or the Medical Research Ethics Committee (MREC), which are subcommittees of the UQ Human Ethics Review Committee (HEERC). These three institutional ethics committees are duly constituted under the Australian Human Ethics Committee (AHEC), which is a committee of the NHMRC.

Research that involves any of the following must be reviewed by one of the institutional ethics committees:
   ▪ Interventions and therapies, including both clinical and non-clinical trials, and innovations;
   ▪ Human genetics;
   ▪ Human stem cells;
   ▪ Pregnant women and unborn children;
   ▪ People highly dependent on medical care and potentially unable to give consent;
   ▪ People with a cognitive impairment, intellectual disability, or mental illness;
   ▪ People potentially involved in illegal activities;
   ▪ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For further details see the [NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) and [UQ's interpretation of the National Statement](#).

Research protocols must be submitted to BSSERC or MREC for review where:
   a) The School Ethics Committee considers they involve more than low risk; or
   b) The School Ethics Committee considers it prudent to do so (e.g. if the research is of a particularly sensitive nature, or it involves inherently vulnerable groups).

School Ethics Committee

The School Ethics Committee is a subcommittee of the School Research Committee, comprising:
   ▪ Head of School (Chair)
   ▪ Director of Research
   ▪ Deputy Director of Research
   ▪ Director of RHD Studies
   ▪ Deputy Director of RHD Studies
   ▪ RHD Student Representative

Procedure

1) The student will complete the standard UQ [Application Form for Ethical Clearance for Research Involving Human Participants](#) and the [Application Checklist](#). It is expected that the student will complete these forms with the guidance and assistance of their advisory team.

    In the case of students carrying out project work as part of their coursework requirements, it is expected that project advisors and/or course coordinators will take responsibility for ensuring that ethical applications are appropriately completed and submitted to the School Ethics Committee in a timely manner (ideally, prior to the start of semester). Course Coordinators should ensure students are aware of the requirement to apply for ethical approval, and adjust their project schedule accordingly.

2) The student will submit an electronic copy of the completed forms to the Research Administrative Officer (rao@itee.uq.edu.au). Applications must be submitted no later than the first Friday of each month, for review at that month's meeting of the School Ethics Committee.

    Expedited review may be available in exceptional circumstances, in the case of minor amendments to an earlier application, or where ethical clearance has already been obtained from another organisation. Students seeking to submit applications for expedited review should first speak with the Research Administrative Officer.

3) The Senior Administrative Officer (Research) will conduct a preliminary review of the application and checklist to ensure there are no minor problems that require attention prior to the application being reviewed by the Committee. Should any such minor problems be identified, the application will be returned to the student for amendment.

4) The Senior Administrative Officer (Research) will forward the application and checklist to the members of the School Ethics Committee by email.

5) The members of the School Ethics Committee will review the application.

6) The School Ethics Committee will meet to discuss and evaluate applications immediately following the meeting of the School Research Committee (usually, the third Wednesday of each month).

7) If necessary, the Chair of the School Ethics Committee may forward applications to the relevant UQ HEERC subcommittee for clarification or advice.

8) The School Ethics Committee will agree to either:

    a) Approve the application;

    b) Provide feedback and request amendment and resubmission of the application;

    c) Require that the application be submitted to the Ethics Officer for review by an institutional ethics review committee (i.e. either BSSERC or MREC, as appropriate).

9) The student will be advised of the outcome of their application.

10) Projects that have been approved by the Ethics Committee will be given a reference to cite on relevant project materials (e.g. EC201201XXX), along with contact details of the ITEE Ethics Officer (ethics@itee.uq.edu.au).