

Overview of Application Types and Committees



Application Types

Prior Approval

New applications for projects that have been approved by another HREC will be considered out of session for expedited approval.

Note: Prior HREC approvals are only accepted from universities and non-NMA HRECs (in NT, WA & TAS). Approvals from NMA HRECs (in NSW, QLD & SA) are not eligible for 'prior approval' and must be submitted via [SERP](#).

Negligible Risk/Exempt

All projects including Quality Assurance (QA), quality improvement, or audit activities, where there is an intention to publish or otherwise present the data beyond the hospital staff, must be submitted to the REGI Unit for review. However, research projects that meet the criteria for negligible risk research (research where there is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort) may be eligible for an exemption from full HREC review.

Low Risk & Greater Than Low Risk

If the research does not meet the requirements for exemption from ethics committee review, and is negligible or low risk, the project will be reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Low risk research is research where the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort. Where the risk, even if unlikely, is more serious than discomfort, the research is not low risk. Research that is greater than low risk is also reviewed by the HREC.

Barwon Health Committees

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

The purpose of the BH HREC is to perform the functions of an institutional ethics committee, consistent with those set out in the National Statement.

The BH HREC:

- Reviews all research applications involving low risk and greater than low risk, with advice from the RRC where appropriate
- Ratifies all applications that have been approved out of session, including
 - Negligible risk applications
 - Applications for acceptance of prior approval
 - Amendments, progress/final reports, and safety reports
- Monitors approved research.

In reviewing applications, the BH HREC may seek additional information or advice from other person(s), with relevant expertise.

For further information, please refer to the [Terms of Reference found on the Committees, meetings & dates webpage](#).

Research Review Committee (RRC)

The Research Review Committee (RRC) is a standing subcommittee of the BH HREC, and now operates as a virtual committee. The RRC has two roles:

1. To review all research projects for scientific merit, methodology and integrity, and to make recommendations to the HREC
2. To review low and negligible risk research applications

The HREC delegates the authority to the RRC to approve low risk projects, when required. The RRC also provides advice to the HREC.

Post Approval – Monitoring of Approved Research

The BH HREC is required to monitor all approved research in accordance with the National Statement, and to approve any amendments to approved research.

Researchers are required to submit an annual progress report for each research project. Reports are also due on the completion of a project, or if the research is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

Generally, annual progress reports and amendments to approved projects are reviewed out of session by the REGI Unit (and other specialist reviewers as required), and ratified by the BH HREC. These documents can be submitted to the REGI Unit for review at any time.

HREC Committee Meeting Dates

Submission close dates and committee meeting dates for the HREC are available on the [Committees, meetings & dates webpage](#).

Please note: All negligible risk, quality assurance and audit research, applications for exemptions, and amendments, are firstly reviewed out of session by the REGI Unit, and can therefore be submitted at any time. On receipt of complete applications, including all relevant signatures, and accurately named documents (as per REGI's [Document Naming Guidelines](#)), researchers can expect to receive initial feedback within a week following the submission to the reviewers.