

THE PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All applicants should read the National Statement for the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans (2025) at: <https://ages.com.au/resources/research-grants/>

Do you need to submit your project for ethical review?

The first step in deciding whether it is necessary to complete an HREC Application is for you to determine whether your project is research. The National Statement provides a broad definition of "research", which you may find helpful.

If you decide that your project is not research but is, instead, an audit or quality assurance activity, you may not need to submit it for ethical review by an HREC. However, if the proposed activity involves any potential breach of confidentiality or privacy, or raises ethical issues, then review by an HREC may be necessary. For example, if the project involves identified (or potentially identifiable) information about an individual that is being collected, used, or disclosed without that person's consent, then the activities must be approved by an HREC, whether they are for the purposes of research, compilation, or analysis of statistics.

In summary, the following types of projects must be submitted to an HREC for ethical review:

- All research projects;
- All projects involving the collection, use or disclosure of information for the purposes of compilation or analysis of statistics, where the information is identified (or potentially identifiable) and consent will not be obtained;
- All projects involving the collection of health information for the purposes of management, funding or monitoring of a health service, where the information is identified (or potentially identifiable) and consent will not be obtained, where the Privacy Principles set out in Section 95A of the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 apply.

Other projects involving the collection, use or disclosure of information for the purposes of funding, management, planning, monitoring, improvement, or evaluation may benefit from ethical review by an HREC, particularly if the activity raises any ethical issues.

All projects requiring submission to an HREC will need to provide evidence of Ethics Committee approval before funding will be released by AGES.

It should be noted that within the NHMRC statement is the recommendation that Human Research should not be funded until there is ethics approval for the project. The AGES Society Research Committee endorses and follows this recommendation. It will be a requirement that all submissions be approved by a recognised HREC before research funds are released. Should ethics approval not be granted within 12 months of the funding application, the AGES Research Committee reserves the right to rescind the grant award.