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**Faculty of Humanities**

**ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST**

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| **Instructions for completion:**   * Select the section applicable to you and complete the appropriate checklist. * If you have **any yes answers** in your applicable section, you will have to apply for ethical approval. * Should you have **only no answers** it means you do not require ethical approval. This will be confirmed by the scientific/proposal committee reviewing your proposal. * Attach the completed and signed list with your application to the scientific/proposal committee. |

**INTRODUCTION**

This checklist is for the use of researchers in the Faculty of Humanities. It also guides researchers not doing human social sciences research but doing research with vulnerable participants or that are medium and high risk level studies.

Research with **human participants** can never have a *“no risk level”* and if it is human social sciences research, it will always require ethics approval from a National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) registered research ethics committee (REC) for research studies of both academics and students.

The World Health Organization defines **health** as *“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.*

In this context **research** refers to *“a range of activities conducted by many disciplines that may use different methodologies and explanatory frameworks to extend knowledge through disciplines or systematic investigation”* (Ethics in health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures. Second edition. Department of Health, 2015). Further referred to as DoH, 2015.

**Human social sciences research** refers to any research conducted by disciplines about topics or participants within the fields of social, political, institutional, cultural and historical environments and developmental contexts, or investigating or striving to improve the human social functioning of participants.

**SECTION A: FOR RESEARCHERS IN THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

1. **Research making use of human participants**

All research with human participants (or their data) require ethics review (*all minimal to high* risk level studies).

The exceptions, however that do not require ethical clearance are:

* Research that relies exclusively on publicly available information or that is accessible through legislation or regulation. This does not mean that ethical considerations are irrelevant to the research.
* Research involving observation of people in public places and natural environments, provided:
* the researcher does not interact directly with individual groups;
* the researcher does not stage any intervention;
* the individuals or groups do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy;
* dissemination of research findings does not identify any individual or groups.
* Quality assurance and quality improvement studies, programme evaluation activities and performance reviews *not intended for publication.*

**Note:** Should *publication be envisaged* for the above mentioned research and ethics approval may be requested (e.g. required by sponsor or journal), prospective ethics approval should be obtained before the research activity, because RECs may not and cannot grant retrospective ethics approval.

1. **Other scenarios not using humans for research purposes that might require ethics approval**

* Systematic reviews that have direct impact on human intervention studies.
* Risk to the researcher due to the research.

1. **Checklist to be used by researchers in the Faculty of Humanities:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Items** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Does the study involve human participants? |  |  |
| Does the study use previously collected data of human participants? |  |  |
| Is the study a systematic review that has a direct impact on interventions with humans? |  |  |
| Does the journal to which the publication is to be sent, require an ethics approval number? |  |  |
| Does the study pose a risk to the researcher? |  |  |
| Does the study pose a risk to the name of the NWU? |  |  |

**Note:** If the answer is **“Yes”** to any of the above, ethics review is required.

**SECTION B: FOR RESEARCHERS FROM OTHER FACILITIES MAKING USE OF THE HSSREC**

Research with **human participants** can never have a *“no risk level”* and will always require ethics approval from a REC for research studies of both academics and students.

Research conducted in other Faculties than the Faculty of Humanities that does **human social sciences research** with **human participants** whether *minimal, medium or high risk level* research, require ethics approval from a NHREC-registered REC.

**Note:** **Human social sciences research** refers to any research conducted by disciplines about topics or participants within the fields of social, political, institutional, cultural and historical environments and developmental contexts, or investigating or striving to improve the human social functioning of participants.

**Checklist to be used by researchers in other Faculties than the Faculty of Humanities doing social sciences research:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Items** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Is the research about human social sciences? |  |  |
| **If the answer to the first question is “Yes”, please continue:** | | |
| Does the study involve human participants? |  |  |
| Does the study use previously collected data of human participants? |  |  |
| Is the study a systematic review that has a direct impact on interventions with humans? |  |  |
| Does the journal to which the publication is to be sent, require an ethics approval number? |  |  |
| Does the study pose a risk to the researcher? |  |  |
| Does the study pose a risk to the name of the NWU? |  |  |

**Note:** If the answer is **“Yes”** to any of the above, ethics review by the HSSREC is required.

**SECTION C: CHECKLIST FOR RISK LEVELS ABOVE MINIMAL RISK LEVEL RESEARCH**

The following checklist helps you to assess whether your research is above the minimal risk level.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Items** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Does the study involve vulnerable human participants where there is a diminished ability to fully safeguard their own interests in the context of the research to be conducted, e.g. staff members, students, patients, aged, prisoners, mentally disabled people, participants from low socio-economic groups, people in dependent/ power relationships, ethnic and religious minorities? |  |  |
| Does the study involve specifically children even if only observing them? |  |  |
| Does the study involve participants in interviews with sensitive questions e.g. related to personal information, personal socio-economic information, sexual preference or activity, drug use, crime, violence, etc.? |  |  |
| Is the research topic considered as sensitive e.g. personal in nature like finances, sexuality, illness or confidential topics, etc.? |  |  |
| Does the study involve participants in focus groups with sensitive questions e.g. related to personal information, personal socio-economic information, sexual preference or activity, drug use, crime, violence, religious activities or choices, etc.? |  |  |
| Is there the possibility of a loss of privacy and/or confidentiality e.g. collect information with personal identifiers (names, student numbers, etc.)? |  |  |
| Does the study involve a psychological, physical, educational or socio-economic intervention? |  |  |
| Will the study involve potentially harmful activities e.g. sharing confidential information, involved in focus groups on sensitive topics? |  |  |
| Will the participants be misled/deceived in any way? |  |  |
| Will any personal data of a human participant be used? |  |  |
| Could the study induce more than negligible stress or emotional reactions (e.g. trauma, embarrassment, stigma, devaluation of values and beliefs) beyond those encountered in very day life? |  |  |
| Could the wider community be linked to the research and suffer harm e.g. community stigma, stigmatization due to religious choices? |  |  |
| Is there the possibility that the research may cause varying degrees of harm to any participant? |  |  |
| Does the risk of harm include several identified risks (e.g. physical, psychological, educational, social, legal, socio-economic, dignitary or community)? |  |  |
| Are there no precautionary measures available for some of the identified risks of harm? |  |  |
| Does the study have the possibility of adverse or serious adverse events (e.g. undesirable or unintended responses or occurrences from a research participant during research that is related or not related to the research), occurring during the study? |  |  |
| Are there any conflicts of interest e.g. a researcher’s individual interests or responsibilities that have the potential to influence the carrying out of his/her role or professional obligations during the research? |  |  |
| Does the research investigate illegal activities e.g. involving illegal immigrants or people engaged in illegal activities, etc.? |  |  |
| Will the researcher (or research team) be placed at any risk of harm (e.g. dangerous sites, breaking of law by performing research activities such as investigating gang activities or the possession of illegal firearms)? |  |  |
| Is there a possibility that the research may reveal information requiring mandatory action by the researcher or the university that could place the participant or others at risk e.g. researching child victims of abuse, victims of domestic violence, etc.? |  |  |
| Is there a risk to the name of the NWU? |  |  |
| Is there a potential risk to the environment? |  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Researcher/Student** |  |
| **Name and surname** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |

|  |  |
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| **Supervisor** |  |
| **Name and surname** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |

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| **Chairperson of the scientific/proposal committee** | |
| **Name and surname** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |

**Acknowledgement to the developer:**

Prof. Minrie Greeff  
Head of the Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office

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