

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES


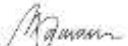
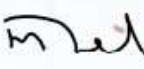
Standard Operating Procedure: SOP_HSSREC_2.5

SOP for complaints management


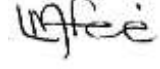
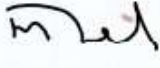
Faculty of Humanities

Standard Operating Procedure			
Title	SOP for complaints management		
SOP No	SOP_HSSREC_2.5	Version No	2
Date of approval		Next Revision date	April 2023
Web address		Page No	

1 COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

Action	Designated person	Signature	Date
Revised by:	Prof. C. van Eeden		7 April 2021
Checked by:	Prof. J. Rothmann		22 April 2021
Authorised by:	Prof. M. Nel		28 Sep. 21

2 DISTRIBUTION

Department/Unit	Name	Signature	Date
HSSREC	Prof. M. Heyns		27/4/21
Faculty of Humanities: Faculty Board	Prof. LM Fourie		20 Sept 2021
Committee for Research, Innovation and Higher Degrees	Prof. M. Nel		28 Sep 21

3 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version No	Reason for revision
11 March 2018	1	Revision of 2015 SOP in line with NHREC audit of 30 November 2017. Based on the SOP of the NWU: HREC.
27 April 2021	2	Revision of 2018 SOP in line with NHREC requirements. Based on the SOP of the NWU: HSSREC: 2018.
29 October 2021	3	Final approval of HSSREC SOP documentation by Faculty Board and Deputy Dean Research and Innovation, Faculty of Humanities.

4 PURPOSE OF THE SOP

This SOP provides guidelines for the management of three types of complaints:

1. Complaints from researchers about a member of the HSSREC or the HSSREC itself.
2. Complaints from a member of the HSSREC or the HSSREC itself about a researcher.
3. Complaints received from a research participant, co-researcher, research assistant, or interested community member about research conduct and/or the researcher.

During any investigation of complaints, the HSSREC will adhere to the following principles:

- *Fairness*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Integrity*
- *Prevention of detriment.*

5 SCOPE

Notwithstanding this complaint procedure, processes will comply with National Regulations, including that the Chair of an HSSREC retains the right to immediately suspend or terminate any research study that violates National Regulations.

6 ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation/definition	Description
HSSREC	Human Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
NWU	North-West University
SCRE	Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Complaint	Refers to any action of the HSSREC, HSSREC member, researcher, co-researcher, research assistant, research participant or interested community member about dissatisfaction with research-related activities which they wish to take forward in a formal manner.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

This SOP provides guidelines for the HSSREC, an HSSREC member, researcher, co-researcher, research assistant, research participant, or interested community member on how to handle any dissatisfaction related to research-related activities.

8 PROCEDURE(S)

8.1 Procedure for complaints from researchers about a member of the HSSREC itself

Should a researcher/postgraduate student experience a problem with a specific HSSREC member's behaviour or the HSSREC itself regarding meeting procedures, application management or reviewer report(s), they have the opportunity to lodge a complaint.

The complaint should be lodged in writing to the chair of the HSSREC (Prof Jacques Rothmann; 21081719@nwu.ac.za).

Such a written complaint will initiate the following process:

A meeting will immediately be constituted with the complainant, the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the HSSREC and the member to discuss the complaint in an attempt to find an amicable solution. If the complainant is a postgraduate student, the supervisor will be included in this discussion. A written report of this meeting will be compiled by the HSSREC. If a mutual agreement regarding a workable solution is reached, the matter will be considered resolved.

If not, the process will proceed to the next phase as described below:

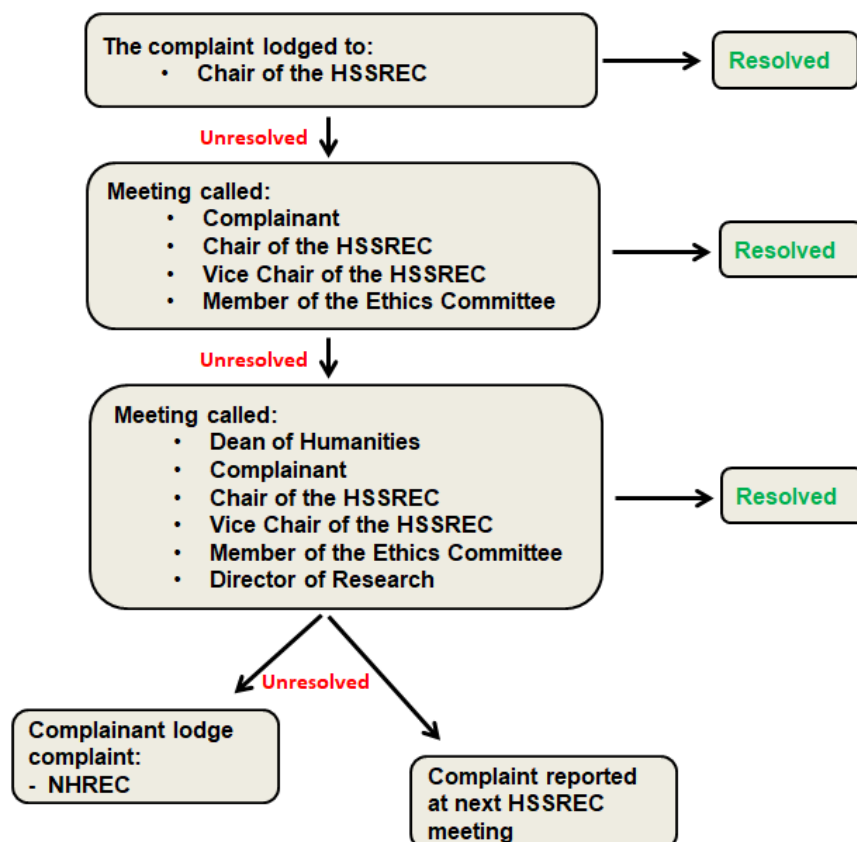
A meeting will be called as soon as possible with the complainant, the Dean or Deputy Dean Research and Innovation of the Faculty of Humanities responsible for research, the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the HSSREC, the member and the Director of the applicable research entity to discuss the complaint in an attempt to find an amicable solution. A written report of this meeting will be compiled by the HSSREC. If a mutual agreement regarding a workable solution is reached, the matter will be considered resolved.

If not, the process will proceed to the next phase as described below:

The complainant may approach the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) to lodge the unresolved complaint, also providing proof that the aforementioned internal mediation process was followed unsuccessfully. The procedure is available on the webpage of the NHREC.

The complaint and its outcome will be reported during the following HSSREC meeting.

Flow diagram 1: Procedure for complaints from researchers



8.2 Complaints from a member of the HSSREC or the HSSREC itself, about a researcher

Should a member of the HSSREC or the HSSREC itself experience a problem with a specific researcher's behaviour or research actions, they have the opportunity to lodge a complaint.

The complaint should be lodged in writing to the chair of the HSSREC (Prof Jacques Rothmann; 21081719@nwu.ac.za).

Such a written complaint will initiate the following process:

A meeting will immediately be called with the complainant, the researcher, as well as the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the HSSREC to discuss the complaint about the researcher in an attempt to find an amicable solution, and to communicate the problem and consequences to the researcher in the most appropriate way. A written report of this meeting will be compiled by the HSSREC and kept on file. If a mutual agreement regarding a workable solution is reached, the matter will be considered resolved.

If not, the process will proceed to the next phase as described below:

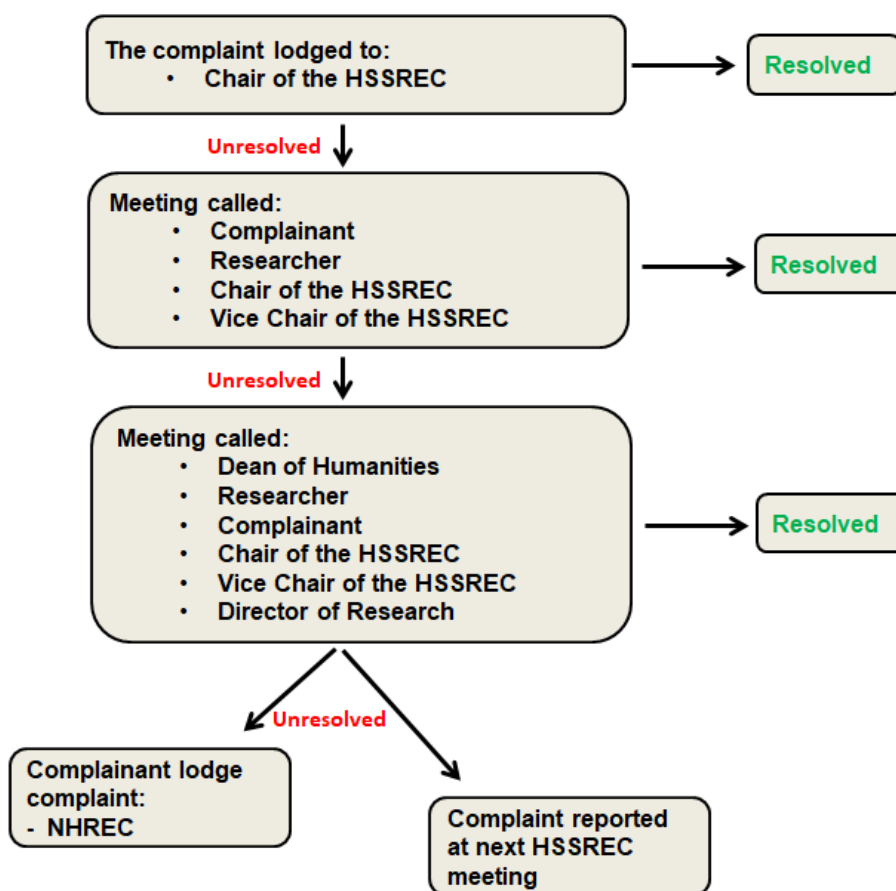
A meeting will be called as soon as possible with the researcher, the complainant, the Dean or Deputy Dean Research and Innovation of the Faculty of Humanities, the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the HSSREC, and the Director of the applicable research entity to discuss the complaint in an attempt to find an amicable solution. A written report of this meeting will be compiled by the HSSREC which will be kept on file. If a mutual agreement regarding a workable solution is reached, the matter will be considered resolved.

If not, the process will proceed to the next phase as described below:

The complainant may approach the NHREC to lodge the unresolved complaint, also providing proof that the aforementioned internal mediation process was followed and unsuccessful. The procedure is available on the webpage of the NHREC. Should the researcher feel unfairly treated he/she can follow the internal process and if unresolved also approach the NHREC.

The complaint and its outcome will be reported during the following HSSREC meeting.

Flow diagram 2: Procedure for complaints from HSSREC members



8.3 Procedure for complaints received from research participant, co-researcher, research assistant or interested community member about research conduct and/or the researcher

In the informed consent documentation, clear reference is made to either the researcher or the HSSREC, that should be contacted if a research participant has any queries or complaints regarding either the research conduct or the researcher.

Likewise, a complaint can be lodged by a co-researcher, research assistant, or interested community member about the research conducted itself and/or the researcher.

These complaints should be received in the form of a written letter, e-mail or phone call. It should be clear on the nature of the complaint and providing the necessary facts. When such a complaint is received, the chair of the HSSREC should be contacted immediately and a plan of action devised in agreement with the parties involved.

The minimum plan of action should include:

1. Immediately making contact with the complainant via telephone (preferred if available) plus e-mail if available (to have key deliberations on record).
2. If possible, an immediate meeting should be set up with the complainant.
3. The researcher is contacted immediately and requested to supply the Chair of the HSSREC with a written report.

A separate meeting is set up between the Chair of HSSREC and the researcher.

The outcome of the two meetings (one with the complainant and one with the researcher) will inform the necessity of a further meeting as soon as possible between the researcher, the complainant and the HSSREC chair.

Should this not be achievable, a final meeting between all parties mentioned previously, as well as the Dean or Deputy Dean Research and Innovation of the Faculty of Humanities and the Director of the applicable research entity, will be called as soon as possible in an attempt to find an amicable solution.

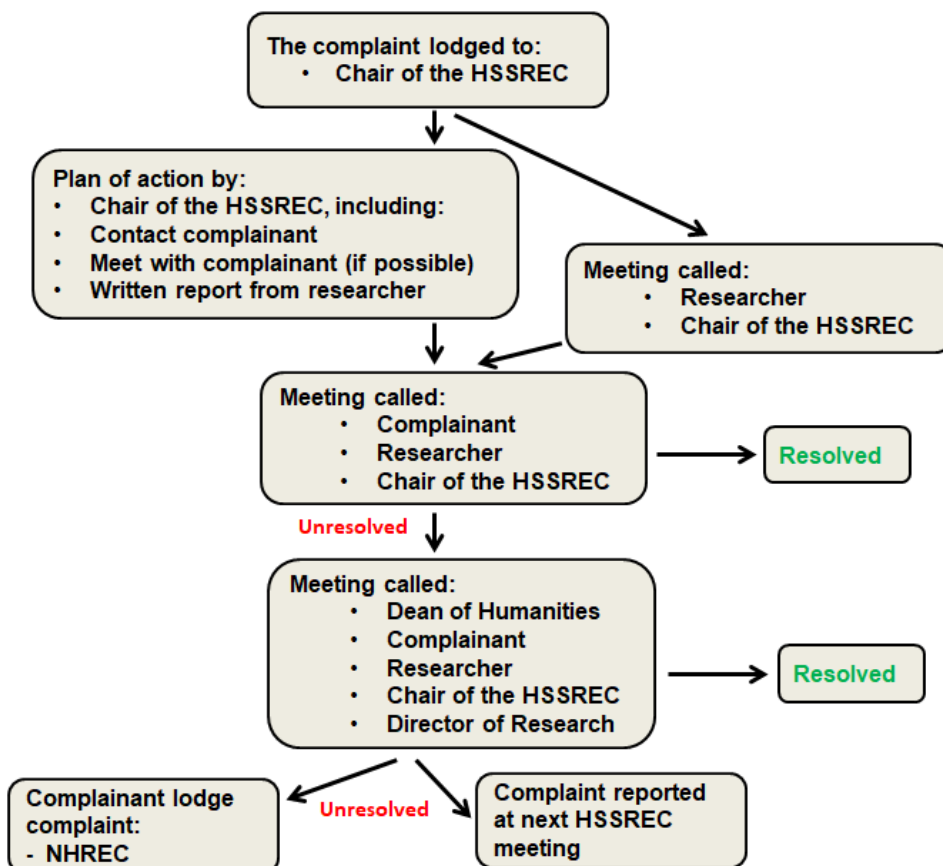
A detailed written report of the aforementioned processes and outcomes will be compiled by the involved persons (chairperson of the HSSREC) and circulated for correctness and fairness. If a mutual agreement regarding a workable solution is reached, the matter will be considered resolved.

If not, the process will proceed to the next phase as described below:

The complainant shall be advised about his/her right to contact the NHREC. The procedure is available on the webpage of the NHREC and all necessary contact information shall be provided to the complainant.

The complaint and outcome will be reported during the following HSSREC meeting.

Flow diagram 3: Procedure for complaints about research conduct



8.4 THE REPORTING OF POSSIBLE RESEARCH MISCONDUCT, FRAUD, MALADMINISTRATION, OR NON-ADHERENCE TO APPROVED RESEARCH PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES OR POLICIES BY WHISTLE BLOWERS

By completing the attached whistle blower's form (available from the HSSREC Chairperson), a complainant who wishes to be anonymous may lodge a complaint with the Chairperson of the HSSREC. Such a complainant may send the necessary documentation directly to the Chairperson at 21081719@nwu.ac.za.

The Chairperson may request to meet with the whistle blower in order to discuss the complaint and consider problem solving procedures.

The Deputy Chairperson of the HSSREC and, if necessary, the Deputy Dean Research and Innovation of the Faculty of Humanities may also be involved.

9 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Guideline for the Management of Complaints, Complaints and Advisory Disciplinary Committee (CADC), NHREC, February 2015.

SOP of the NWU: HREC.

10 ADDENDA

No	Document name
1	Form for the reporting of possible research misconduct, fraud, maladministration, or non-adherence to approved research procedures, guidelines or policies.



Faculty of Humanities

**FORM FOR THE REPORTING OF POSSIBLE RESEARCH MISCONDUCT, FRAUD,
MALADMINISTRATION, OR NON-ADHERENCE TO APPROVED RESEARCH
PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES OR POLICIES**

PART 1: CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1.1 Name of the person seeking action: _____

1.2 Status:

Current employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Current student	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1.3 Contact information:

Home or postal address:

Telephone numbers:

Home:

Office:

Cellular number:

E-mail address:

1.4 Department/Unit:

1.5 Campus:

PART 2: DETAILS OF DISCLOSURE

2.1 Please identify the person:

2.2 Research entity involved:

2.3 Please identify the type of wrongdoing you are alleging (check one or all of the boxes)

Misconduct (mark one or more of the following three items if applicable):	
- Fabrication (making up research data or results and recording or reporting the fabricated material).	
- Falsification (manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research records).	
- Plagiarism (the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit).	
Fraud.	
Maladministration.	
Non-adherence to approved research procedures, guidelines or policies.	

2.4 Please describe in detail of what you are disclosing (be as specific as possible. Also please attach any documents that might support your disclosure).

PART 3: CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE

I certify that all of the statements made in this allegation are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature _____

Date _____