RESEARCH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (RIMS)

Human Research Ethics Application –
Quick reference guide
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The Griffith University Human Research Ethics Review process is web based. This means that academic staff complete the ‘Human Research Ethics Application’ by logging onto the Griffith Portal, and electronically submitting the completed application to the Office for Research. This document explains how to enter data and submit the application.

The ‘Human Ethics Coversheet Questionnaire’ previously known as the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist in the old database system, is made up of four (4) Tabs: Coversheet, Questionnaire, Documents and Status History. Within the ‘Questionnaire Tab’ each question is presented in turn and only those questions that relate to previous answers will be presented. The same questionnaire may result in one researcher answering many questions and another only a few. The information gathered in these tabs will allow the ethics reviewers to assess your application.

You may be advised by the system that Ethics Clearance is not required (Outside of Scope or Exempt) however you are still required to submit the completed application. While completing the questionnaire section of the application you may be advised that a Full Review is required in which case you will be instructed to stop completing the application until you have completed a NEAF and uploaded the NEAF to the application, after which you can submit the application to the Office for Research.

1.0 Access to RIMS is via the Human Ethics Website: https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/human/ethical-reviews

Go to the “Human research ethics” webpage
Click on “Applications and forms”
Click on “Access RIMS”
1.1 Logging in for the first time? Don't have an IRMA/RIMS account?:

If you see this screen you will need to enter your ‘s’ number (without the ‘s’) in the field at “Griffith University Username” and press the ‘Submit’ button.

This will automatically create your IRMA / RIMS account.

This screen may come up also, click on “Please click this link to login” under the padlock.

To access the Human Ethics module select the ‘Human Ethics’ Tab from the ‘Researcher Profile’ landing page in RIMS.
A) NEW APPLICATION

Begin an application by selecting ‘A New Coversheet’ in the in the Picklist and clicking on the Create button.

DO NOT PRESS “Create a New Protocol” on the ‘Home’ Page, the following error will occur: “Sorry, your security profile does not allow the requested function”

Regardless of whether you are submitting a new application, a variation or a progress/final report these all start the same way.

Select the required form type.
- **New Application** = “New Research Ethics Review Application”
- **Progress Report** = “Progress Report” due annually
- **Final Report** = “Final Report” due upon completion of the data collection

Then click on the Next button.
2.0 COVERSHEET TAB

Coversheets are comprised of a set of code blocks, each of which collects related pieces of data. This section details how to complete each code block that may appear on a coversheet.

NOTE: BY CLICKING ‘SAVE’ YOU WILL EXIT THE COVERSHEET AND RETURN TO THE ‘HUMAN ETHICS’ LIST SCREEN (shown below).

The application will auto save every 5 minutes.

The symbol contains helpful information for this field as per the example, hover your mouse cursor over this symbol to reveal the help text.
2.1 Protocol Title

The Protocol Title is a mandatory field and will accept a maximum of 256 characters. Choose a title that reflects the subject matter of your study, e.g. NOT “John Smiths Ethics Application”

2.2 Chief investigator

A student researcher (PhD, Masters, Honours, Grad Dip) cannot be the CI, enter the Supervisor instead.

In addition to recording the Chief investigator's details, this code block is also used to determine the department to be used for some approvals and the primary department of the protocol. The department of the CI cannot be overridden.

You will need to contact research-ethics@griffith.edu.au (555 29251) if this is incorrect.

Enter the Chief Investigator’s (CI) last name only if you don’t have their Staff Number and need to look them up.

If you know the CI’s Staff Number, enter this into the field and the name will be automatically filled. If the Staff Number has less than 7 digits, add zeros (0) to make up the 7 digits, e.g. 9191 should be entered as 0009191.

Then click on the ‘Link’ button to the right of their name to add them to the Coversheet.
2.3 Internal Investigators

The Internal investigators code block records all investigators except the CI.

To add an internal investigator:

- Select ‘Yes’ beside “Other Internal Investigators Involved”, a new code block will display which allows adding and editing internal investigators.
- Click Add in the Internal Investigators section.
- Enter a staff/student ID or surname. This can be a partial surname, do not enter an initial.
- Click Search.
- If a valid staff ID was entered this step will be skipped, otherwise a list of internal staff members matching the search term will be displayed.
- Click Link beside the correct staff member or click Back to enter a new search term.
- Select this person’s role from the Picklist.
- Click ‘Save’.
- Continue adding researchers until the entire team is listed.
- Ensure you enter the total number of Griffith investigators (including the CI) in the ‘Number of Internal Investigators (Including Chief Investigator)’.

2.4 External Investigators

Similar to the above, to add an external investigator:

In the External investigators section, click Add. Enter a surname, this can be a partial surname.

Click Search. A list of externals matching the search term will be displayed.

Click Link beside the correct external or click Back to enter a new search term.

To set an external investigators role:

- Click the edit icon beside the relevant investigator.
- Update the role.
- Click Save.
If your research team member is not shown click ‘Create’

You can enter as much information as you like but please enter at least the person’s full name and their Institution.

Click Save

2.5 Start and End dates
Enter the requested start and end dates. These are both mandatory fields. These indicate the dates data collection will commence and finish. The start date cannot predate the submission of the application.

Date format is dd/mm/yyyy. However d/m/yy is accepted also.

NOTE: THE FINAL TWO SECTIONS OF THE COVERSHEET TAB ARE NOT REQUIRED BY RESEARCH ETHICS:

1.6 Contracts and Grants / Publications
The final two sections of the Coversheet are not compulsory to complete.

To link a Contracts and Grants record to a coversheet:
- Click the Add button in the Contracts and Grants section
- Search for the relevant record using the filters and search fields available
- Click the Link icon beside the relevant record
3.0 QUESTIONNAIRE TAB

Answer each question in order until the message "Questionnaire has been completed" displays. The questions presented will depend on the answers to previous questions. Answers can be revised at any time, until the application is submitted using the controls described below.

The symbol contains helpful information for this field as per the example, hover your mouse cursor over this symbol to reveal the help text.

The three icons on the right of the questions do the following:
- View the full question and answer
- View question and change the answer to this question
- Delete this answer

PLEASE NOTE: If you CHANGE or DELETE an answer you will be taken back to that point of the questionnaire and will lose all answers that you had previously entered after that question.

clicking this button will undo just your last answer and you will be asked that question again.

Select your answer to the question from the Picklist then click 'Next'.

Where a 'question' directs you to go to a certain step e.g. "Proceed to step 2.1" simply go to the Picklist and select this option, then click 'Next'.

NOTE: The first two questions give you the option to check if your research requires ethics clearance:

q1.0 Do you wish to test if the planned work falls outside the scope of the University’s human research ethics arrangements?
q2.0 Do you wish to test if the planned work is exempt from ethical review?

If you know your research does require ethics review you can skip these two sets of questions by answering ‘No’ to both of these.
If you press ‘Next’ without answering a question, the system will require you to provide a response before you may move onto the next question. Go to the picklist and select an answer or type an answer if you are presented with a free text box.

At the Question 5 section you will be asked about the level of risk involved in your research in relation to the participants. There are two types of risk for each of six categories and there are four levels of risk: e.g.

**Category:**  **Type:**
“Physical risk impact after the application of the research design”

**Category:**  **Type:**
“Physical risk incidence after the application of the research design”

**Level:**
Your response options: Negligible / Very Low / Low / Greater

**Type of risk:**

Risk Impact – how great is the impact of the risk if it were to happen e.g. (Negligible) inconvenience of time only, (Low) a minor bruise, (Greater) a sprained ankle, a broken arm, death.

Risk Incidence – how likely is it that an incident will occur e.g. (Negligible) don’t foresee an incident occurring, (Very Low) one occurrence in every 10,000 times an ‘experiment’ is performed, (Low) one occurrence in every 100 times the ‘experiment’ is performed, (Greater) one occurrence in every second time the ‘experiment’ is performed.

**Category of risk:**

Physical risk - This relates to injury, significant pain, infection, disease, death and other deleterious impacts on the physical well being of individuals - most typically participants, but includes the researchers and others.

Psychological risk - A psychological risk refers to harms that include anguish, significant emotional distress or stress. In some cases (e.g. with a high level of suicide ideation or clinical depression) this can include devaluing personal worth.

Social risk - Research can have deleterious impacts on personal relations (e.g. within a familial unit) or peer relations (e.g. the standing of individuals within their peer group). These risks can frequently be an issue for research in the broad social sciences, where research can often relate to, and impact upon, personal relationships.

Economic risk - Economic risks are those relating to: loss of income; loss of job or career prospects; loss of benefits or entitlements; diminished market share or brand reputation, or other factors that might have deleterious financial implications.

Legal risk - Some research can raise legal risks, such as: civil or criminal proceedings, fines or some other form of regulatory response. While research can justifiably be intended to expose illegal or inappropriate behaviour, such research typically requires a higher level of ethical review.

Environmental risk - Researchers should conduct their research so as to minimise adverse effects on the environment.

**Level of risk:**

Negligible risk - describes research in which there is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort; and any foreseeable risk is no more than inconvenience.

Very Low Risk – No prodding, poking or pricking

Low Risk - describes research in which the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort.

Greater Risk – describes research in which there is foreseeable risk of harm.
At q9.1 to q9.6 you will be asked to provide free text answers to describe the research project. Please note these answers must be addressed within the fields provided, an answer of “please refer to attached document” is not acceptable. Text must be entered here or the system will not allow you to proceed. If you wish to come back to these questions type a letter or digit into the field and click next.

The maximum space available is 1,000 words, this should be a sufficient allowance as you are asked to provide a summary. You may wish to refer to documents which you will upload in the next section (Documents Tab).

It is recommended that you prepare your answers to these questions in a word document and copy and paste them into the fields in order to not loose information when the system times out. These questions and other assistance can be found in the following document located on the ‘Applications and Forms’ webpage.

“HELP with new Human Research Ethics Applications via RIMS”

To proceed to q10.1.1 click on the Picklist and choose this option.

At the q10 section you as the Chief Investigator (CI) are asked to provide your assurance on a number of ethics and integrity matters. You as the CI are speaking for the research team, therefore if the person completing the application is not the CI it is recommended that you continue to the next tab upload the appropriate documents, save the Application and contact the CI to complete section 10 of the application.

Also note that once the application is submitted in the system the CI will receive an email requesting their endorsement of the application. Therefore, if the CI gives another applicant permission to submit on their behalf, the CI will still be required to ‘approve’ the submission.
4.0 DOCUMENTS TAB

To attach a document to an application

- In the Documents Tab of a Human Ethics Application, click **Add**.
- Add a ‘Document description’
- Select a ‘Type of document’ - the only option is “Supporting information”
- Click **Browse**.
- Locate and select a file and click **Open**, this screen will vary depending on the operating system used
- If the file type is not supported an error will be displayed, otherwise click **Upload**.

The types of documents that can be uploaded are listed across the top of the code block:

msg, pdf, doc, wav, mp3, xls, tiff, jpg, jpeg, mov, wma, docx, xlsx, rtf file types

You are required to provide copies of the following documents for review where applicable:

- **Information Sheet** (all applications must have an Information Sheet attached unless you have specifically addressed at q9.5 why one is not being provided to participants). Templates for Participant Informed Consent Forms (PICFs) are titled **Appendix 1 - Example templates for informed consent mechanisms (DOC 168k)** and can be found under Booklet 22 of the GUREM: [https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/human/human-research-ethics-manual-2014](https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/human/human-research-ethics-manual-2014)

- **Consent form** (not required under certain circumstances refer to Booklet 22 of the GUREM as mentioned above)

- **Recruitment text** - provide the text that will be used for participant recruitment purposes (e.g. copy of the web page, telephone script, poster, email, letters, notices, advertisements, written invitation calling for volunteers). Section 5.2.23 of the National Statement (2007) specifies that all recruitment materials must be approved by the ethics review body prior to their use.

- **Questionnaire example** - provide a copy of the questionnaire or at least the most sensitive questions to be used.

- **Any other supporting documents** – excluding CVs, Grant applications or awards, contracts.

Please **do not** provide CVs, Grant applications or approvals, PhD proposals etc.

The three icons on the right of the questions do the following:

- View question and change the answer to this question
- View the document that has been uploaded (this will take you to a screen where you can download the document)
- Delete this answer
5.0 STATUS HISTORY TAB

You are not required to do anything in this tab. This tab allows you to monitor the progress of your application.

‘New’ – Application is in the process of being completed
‘Submitted’ – Application has been submitted but not yet viewed by the Office for Research
‘To be Considered’ – Application has been forwarded to a reviewer
‘Considered – create/update protocol’ – Application has been converted to a Protocol and therefore has received at least Provisional Ethics Clearance.

6.0 SUBMIT APPLICATION

In order to submit your application, return to the ‘Coversheet’ Tab

To submit the completed application;

Click the button

The database will send an email to you to confirm the application has been submitted.

After an application has been submitted the Chief Investigator must approve the submission before it will be reviewed by the Office for Research. Go to your ‘My Approvals’ Tab in your ‘RIMS Researcher Profile’ page to approve the submission of the application.

Instructions for how to do this are located in Section D of this document.

The Head of School / Centre Director will also need to approve the submission of the application. A pdf copy of the application will be sent to the Authorising Officer and the Chief Investigator once downloaded by the Ethics Administrator.

If you as the CI are aware that the HoS is on leave and/or a Centre Director (not a HoS) or a Deputy Head / Acting Head needs to approve the application submission please contact the Office for Research (555 29251 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) and advise the name of the alternate approver.

If you have any questions please contact the Human Research Ethics staff:
Ph: 555 29251
Research-ethics@griffith.edu.au
Print Coversheet and Questionnaire

As the signing of ethics applications is now conducted via an online workflow, the Office for Research does not require an additional hard copy or pdf version. However if you would like a printed / pdf copy for your own records follow these steps:

- Return to the Coversheet Tab
- Click Print Form

- Click on the magnifying glass

- Click (1), this will download the document to your default download location e.g. a Download folder on your computer, or your desktop. We cannot help you find this document but it will be named “TMP.....” and several digits e.g. TMP621247102015724141141.doc
- Click (2) to return to the ‘Coversheet’ tab

The document will look like the image on the far right.
7.0 OTHER INFORMATION – RIMS FUNCTIONS

7.1 Common controls

The following navigation controls are available when answering the questionnaire:

**Undo**: deletes the last answer and presents the question before that with the answer removed

**Next **: move to the next answer, the current question must be answered or an error message will display

**Preview**: open a new screen which displays the questions in the order they were presented and with no truncation of questions or answers

**Restore**: restore a previously deleted answer to the current question. This button is only displayed where an answer to the current question has been deleted

**Return**: Displayed when viewing a question answer, clicking returns the user to the current question

**« Back**: Return to the coversheet from Preview mode

The following controls are available beside each question answer:

**Search** : view questions, opens the question and answer in the current question pane with neither question nor answer truncated. The answer cannot be changed on this screen

**Edit** : edit the question. Edit the answer to the relevant question. Depending on the question type and new answer the question logic may result in some questions being re-presented or a new set of questions being presented. The user is warned that this will happen but the deleted answers are available through the restore functionality

**Delete** : Delete the answer to the relevant question. Depending on the question type and new answer the question logic may result in some questions being re-presented or a new set of questions being presented. The user is warned that this will happen but the deleted answers are available through the restore functionality

6.2 Question types - There are four question types displayed when answering a questionnaire:

**Memo**: free text is used to answer the question, text must be entered before moving to the next question

**Picklist**: A drop down box with a set of possible values, only one of which can be selected. Not selected is the default answer and must be updated before moving to the next question

**Yes / No**: the value Yes or No must be selected. Not selected is the default answer, Yes or No must be selected to proceed
**Tick box**: A list of possible answers is displayed with a tick box beside each answer. One or more tick boxes can be checked, at least one checkbox must be checked.

### 7.3 Preview mode

To preview the questionnaire answers click [Preview]. This button can be clicked at any time. Preview mode will display only the questions currently displayed in the main questionnaire screen, i.e. not questions not yet answered or deleted.

### Types of review / Coding and time frames for review feedback:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Negligible Risk</td>
<td>approx. 5 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Low level risk</td>
<td>approx. 10 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Mid level risk</td>
<td>approx. 10 to 15 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Prior Review</td>
<td>approx. 5 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Course Clearance</td>
<td>approx. 5 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Outside of scope</td>
<td>approx. 5 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>Full Review</td>
<td>approx. 10 business days AFTER THE NOMINATED MEETING DATE – these dates are available here: <a href="https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/human/human-research-">https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/human/human-research-</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.0 OTHER INFORMATION – AFTER SUBMISSION

8.1 Current Coversheets:

When you first submit an application it is entered as a ‘Coversheet’. The screen pictured on the right lists each Coversheet you have created. If the Coversheet is highlighted in green it has been submitted. If the listed Coversheet is white it is still ‘New’ and must be submitted for the Office for Research for the review process to commence.

Once a Coversheet is highlighted in green, it cannot be added to or modified.

To view your Coversheets (submitted and new):
- Click on ‘Researcher Profile’ in the red banner at the top of the screen.
- Click the ‘Human Ethics’ Tab

8.2 Current Protocols:

Once the reviewers have considered the application they will issue Full Clearance, Conditional Clearance or Provisional Clearance. At this point it becomes a ‘Protocol’ and can be found on the screen pictured on the right:

- Click on ‘Home’ in the red banner at the top of the screen.
- Click on ‘List Existing Records’
- The screen shown on the right will then appear.

By clicking on the in the right hand column you can review the Protocol.
Click through each Tab to review the protocol, to return to the search screen go back to the ‘Main Details’ Tab and click ‘Cancel’ to return to the list page.

The ‘Coversheet’ Tab lists which Coversheets have been submitted - i.e. the original application, any Variation Requests, Annual or Final Reports.

The ‘C’ttee Outcome’ (Committee Outcome) Tab lists the status of each step of the protocol e.g.:

the original application - Approved
any variation requests – Not selected (not yet reviewed)
A variation request is submitted via email to the person who reviewed your original application, e.g. Kim Madison, Rick Williams, Gary Allen, Marnie Lawson. If you are not sure who your reviewer was email your variation request to research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

When requesting a variation please provide as much detail as possible including whether the change is a replacement or an addition to the approved protocol. Please also ensure you provide any documents that will be amended based on the requested variation.

Generally variations can be approved within a couple days. If after one week you have not received any feedback please follow up with your reviewer or the Data administrator: 555 29251.
C) ANNUAL REPORT / FINAL REPORT

An Annual and Final Report is submitted in the same way as an ethics application, as per page 3 of this document, however instead of selecting “New Research Ethics Review Application” you select “Progress Report” or “Final Report” from the picklist.

Then click on the Next button.

As with the Variation Request you must link the report to the appropriate approved protocol.

Search for and choose the protocol you wish to submit the report for by entering the protocol details into the search fields and click ‘Search’

Click the Link button to choose the protocol.

Click Next.

Coversheet Tab

Nothing is required in the Coversheet Tab.
Questionnaire Tab

Enter your response to the questions in the free text field provided.

Please provide a detailed response if your answer is ‘No’ to question 1.0 or ‘Yes’ to questions 2.0, 3.0 or 4.0.

Click ‘Next’ to continue to the next question.

Documents Tab

If you have produced a Final Written Report (e.g. a summary of the findings) you can upload it to the documents tab for our file, however providing this is not a requirement by the Office for Research.

Return to the ‘Coversheet’ Tab and click ‘Submit’.
Every ethics application must be approved by the Chief Investigator listed in the application and the Head of School or Centre Director.

RIMS will default to request approval from the Head of School, therefore if a Centre Director (not a HoS) or a Deputy Head / Acting Head needs to approve the application submission a RIMS administrator will need to manually amend the approver. Please contact the Office for Research (555 29251 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) and advise the name of the alternate approver.

Access to RIMS is via the Human Ethics Website: https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/human/applications-and-forms

To review a submitted ethics application:
Click on ‘Researcher Profile’ in the red banner.
Click on ‘My Approvals’

**Note:** This tab may have a number in its description (e.g. [2]) which is indicative of the amount of outstanding approvals in your queue.

Above the list of outstanding approvals are four filters (Total, Animal, Human, and Grants). Because this document is exclusively handling Human approvals, click on the Human filter.

Click on the Pencil button to open an approval task.

**Reviewing an application**
Review the submitted application by clicking on any of the tabs:
- **Coversheet** – On this tab you will be able to view the research Title, all listed Investigators, the proposed Start and End Date, External Approvals etc.

Note: Clicking Continue will take you back to the ‘My Approvals’ list.
Questionnaire
You will be able to view all the questions and answers.

Once on the Questionnaire Tab,
Click on the Preview button to clearly view all the information.

Click on Back to return to the tabs screen

Documents
This tab will allow you to view and download any of the documents attached to application.

• Click (1), this will download the document to your default download location e.g. a Download folder on your computer, or your desktop. We cannot help you find this document but it will be named “TMP....” and several digits e.g. TMP621247102015724141141.doc

• Click (2) to return to the ‘Coversheet’ tab
Status History
This tab will show you the history of the application, including the name of the original submitter.

After carefully considering the information in the application, please determine whether you approve or reject the application.

- **To approve** the application, press the **approve** button. This will complete the approval process.
- **To reject** the application you should first provide justification for it in the ‘Reason’ textbox, before pressing the **Reject** button.

**Note:** If an application is rejected by either the Chief Investigator or the Head of School / Centre Director an email will be sent to the listed investigators e.g:

> Dear Ms Lawson,
> Your protocol 2015/369 - “How to submit a Research Ethics Application” submitted on 07/08/2015, has been rejected by the Chief Investigator. Please revise your submission.

The text that the **Head of School / Centre Director** is agreeing to is below:

I, as the Authorising Officer, I have considered this application and the ethical implications of the proposed research and recommend it for consideration by the HREC. I confirm that the qualifications and experience of all investigators are appropriate to the study to be undertaken, and the necessary resources are available to enable this research to be conducted. I confirm that the research / scientific merit of this project and the research safety has been considered and is appropriate.

The text that the **Chief Investigator** is agreeing to is below:

On behalf of the research team for this project, I confirm that all members of the research have read the current NHMRC National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the GU Research Ethics Manual. We accept responsibility for the ethical and appropriate conduct of the procedures detailed in this Checklist, confirm that we will conduct this project in accordance with the principles contained in the Statement, the GU Research Ethics Manual, and confirm that the research team will comply with any other condition laid down by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee. As the Chief Investigator I understand my obligations as outlined in the Griffith Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and that it is Griffith University policy to consider the Chief Investigator as having the principal responsibility for the ethical and appropriate conduct of the research. I have considered the details, values and the risks of this research and recommend it for ethical review. I confirm that the qualifications and experience of all investigators are appropriate to the study to be undertaken, and the necessary resources are available to enable this research to be conducted.