

## **ACT HEALTH HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)**

### **Social Research Sub-Committee**

#### **Terms of Reference – September 2016**

The role of the Social Research Sub-Committee (SRSC) is to provide advice to the ACT Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on the research merit and integrity of research proposals referred to the sub-committee. This advice will be provided in such a way that the HREC will not be required to duplicate the discussion with respect to the research merit and integrity assessment criterion.

#### **Objectives**

The Subcommittee shall review and make recommendations, to the Ethics Committee, on the research merit and integrity of research proposals referred to it. SRSC shall consider proposed protocols in terms of:

- Epistemological validity, study design and statistical aspects (eg, justification of sample size)
- Safety of researchers and research participants
- Regulatory issues (eg, working with vulnerable populations, child protection)
- Data protection and security issues
- Value of the research with regard to contribution to health and wellbeing benefits and body of knowledge

The Sub-committee may provide other advice to the HREC on a proposal, including in relation to the other three National Statement criteria of beneficence, respect and justice, where the Sub-committee wishes to do so. The HREC may request that the subcommittee provide advice on other matters.

The terms of reference shall be reviewed periodically to ensure their ongoing relevance.

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<i>HREG16-003</i>	<i>HREG16-001</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>Feb 12</i>	<i>Sept 2016</i>	<i>HREG</i>	<i>Sept 2016</i>

## **Membership**

SRSC shall consist of:

- At least four members with relevant knowledge and research experience and from a suitable mix of disciplines including, but not limited to:
  - Psychology
  - Epidemiology
  - Social Work

SRSC shall be provided with the appropriate level of administrative support.

At least one member of SRSC, preferably the Chair, shall also be a member of HREC

SRSC may, from time to time, consult with a person or persons with specialist knowledge relating to a matter under discussion.

Membership of SRSC is by appointment from the Chair of HREC who will consider the recommendations of the SRSC Chair and give due consideration to the knowledge base of the membership and current research trends.

Appointments will be for a minimum of 12 months. Members, including the Chair, may serve successive terms at the discretion of the HREC Chair.

Members will complete conflict of interest declarations on an annual basis. A member who is not covered by a current COI declaration will not be permitted to attend meetings or act as a reviewer.

## **Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of at least two members, including the Chair or Acting Chair and at least one researcher. One of whom is to be an ACT Health Representative.

No decision shall be taken where a quorum is not present, although members present may provide preliminary feedback to applicants.

The Secretary should keep a record of attendance, indicating which members were present for the discussion of each review.

Where the Secretary of the Committee believes that a forthcoming meeting may not be attended by a quorum of members due to foreseen absences, he or she should consider the following options with the Chair and the Director of Research:

- Postponing and re-scheduling the meeting
- Cancelling the meeting

## **Schedule of meetings and reporting**

SRSC shall meet once per month for 11 months of the year (January to November) where there are proposals for the Sub-committee to review. Meeting dates will be scheduled to complement the HREC meeting schedule. Meeting dates and agenda closing dates shall be available on the website. SRSC recommendations will be reported to HREC in a standard format and will be distributed to HREC members at least seven calendar days before the HREC meeting date.