

Understanding Ethics Review Timelines

Introduction

Researchers must consider the ethical risk of their human research in accordance with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct of Human Research 2025](#) (NS) and [RMIT Research Policy](#). The review process at RMIT is outlined by the [RMIT Human Research Ethics Procedure](#) (RMIT HRE Procedures).

The National Statement outlines categories of risk and RMIT provides for review based on those risk categories:

Exempt (NS 5.1.15 - 5.1.18), RMIT HRE Procedures 15 - 17	Assessed by the Research Ethics and Governance (REG) team
Lower risk (NS chapter 2.1), RMIT HRE Procedures 18	Reviewed by an RMIT CHEAN
Higher risk (NS chapter 2.1), RMIT HRE Procedures 19	Reviewed by the RMIT HREC

All human research activities must be reviewed by either the REG team or an Ethics Committee.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to allow enough time for the ethical review process. Human research ethics applications should be submitted early and must consider other relevant deadlines such as grant submissions, start dates for studies, contract research, additional permission requirements etc.

All **exemption requests** are reviewed by the REG team in the order in which they are received, typically within 5 business days of their submission.

All **human research ethics applications** undergo a governance review by the REG team and ethics review cyclically based on the meeting cycle of the ethics committee.

All applications must be prepared in the Research Ethics Platform ([REP](#)).

Review process for human research ethics applications

Governance review: On submission, all human research ethics applications are reviewed by the REG team who will check the application for completeness, missing documents/information, evidence of permissions/support, etc.

Governance review will typically take three to five business days. Submissions are placed in the queue for governance review in the order in which they are received. The time it takes for the review will depend on the complexity of the submission and the current workloads and priorities within the REG Team. At the end of the review, the application will be sent back to the applicant for revisions and resubmission before ethical review is initiated.

Ethical review: Performed by ethics committees (HREC or CHEAN) in meetings. All meeting dates are published on the researcher portal:

[RMIT HREC](#), [STEM CHEAN](#) and [BL CHEAN](#) and [DSC CHEAN](#) meet monthly. There are 2 DSC CHEANs and each CHEAN meets once a month.

Factors affecting the review process

It is recommended that applicants start their application **three (3) months** in advance of the anticipated start date. This is to allow enough time for both governance and ethical reviews to occur and will include reviews, relevant discussions and any necessary modifications before approval.

Applicants must consider submission deadlines when planning their submission. New applications must be submitted **before the agenda deadline**. The deadline is set well in advance of the meeting to allow for the governance review to take place and for applicants to resubmit their revised application before the meeting.

Factors that may have an impact on the turnaround times for review include:

- The completeness and quality of the human research ethics application.
- Number of human research ethics applications currently under consideration by the REG team, CHEAN or HREC.
- Response time by the applicant to provide requested information.
- Waiting time for external documents or letters of permission for related items.
- RMIT shutdown periods (i.e. public holidays) and/or staff leave periods.

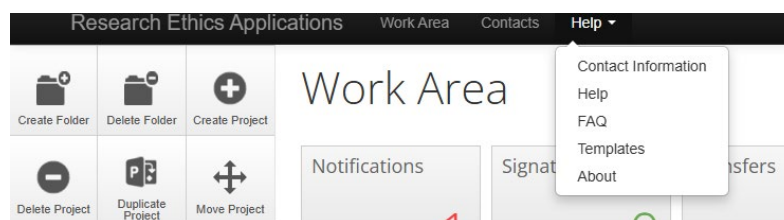
Expedited review

The National Statement on Ethical Conduct of Human Research 2025 does not allow expedited reviews. If expedited review is needed, the principal investigator should send an email to REG team for consideration. The decision to expedite review is made by the REG team and is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Further information

It is recommended that first time applicants consult the helpful guide available in the [Researcher Portal](#). This guide describes criteria to meet the requirements of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Procedures.

Guidance notes on specific human research topics can be found on the [Research Ethics Platform](#) by clicking the Help button and selecting Templates:



Note: HDR students do not have automatic access to the Researcher Portal. It must be requested by their supervisors. They do, however, have access to the Research Ethics Platform using single sign-on and can access the guides and guidance notes as outlined above.

For further assistance, contact humanethics@rmit.edu.au