

Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Professional Practice and Community Contact in the Conduct of University Research or Related Activities

This Appendix should be read in conjunction with the preamble.

The Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations are published in the University of Waikato Calendar (available online at <http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/humanresearchethics.html>) and explain the standard of ethical conduct required in University research involving human participants, and the procedures that apply for the maintenance and monitoring of those standards.

In the course of engaging in research activities as part of their work or study at the University, staff and students may interact with members of the wider community in a variety of ways. In all such interactions, the staff member or student concerned is representing the University, and must therefore be mindful of the importance of professional conduct, with a view to upholding and enhancing the University's, as well as their own, reputation.

The following guidelines have been developed by the University of Waikato's Human Research Ethics Committee to articulate good practice for engaging with members of the community in the course of planning and carrying out research involving human participants.

These guidelines list generic items of protocol that should be taken into consideration when arranging appointments and participating in meetings. Advice is also provided about appropriate follow-up actions and relationship-building.

General Principles

The guidelines reflect common sense practices based on the principles of:

- respect
- cultural awareness
- commitment to learning and sharing knowledge

Understanding the context

- Familiarise yourself with the University's policies and regulations about research. As well as the Human Research Ethics Regulations, the following documents all provide important information relevant research and ethical conduct:
 - Student Research Regulations
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Code of Ethics for Academic Staff

Preparing for the engagement

- Ethics approval is required in advance for any research involving people, so you must first seek approval of your research project (refer section 22 of the Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations).
- Be clear about the purpose of your research, whether it is a regular part of your professional training or a one-off assignment as a student, or a professional/research activity as a staff member.
- Discuss proposals with your supervisor, course co-ordinator, or other appropriate staff member before arranging meetings with members of organisations or the general public.
- Organise well ahead of time: schedule appointments appropriately in advance (normally at least one week). Accept that you may have to accommodate your own preferences to fit the busy timetables of individuals and organisations.
- Respond to phone calls, letters, faxes, text messages or emails related to the project as promptly as possible.
- Learn as much as possible ahead of time about the person/ organisation/cultural group you will be contacting. Actively seek advice, through supervision and professional support,

regarding both major and minor matters that may contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

- Prepare for sessions thoroughly to ensure as far as possible that the time spent with those you consult will be used efficiently.

During the engagement

- Act professionally at all times: be polite, courteous, prompt and dependable.
- Adopt appropriate standards of dress, behaviour and language that signal your commitment to the successful conduct of the meeting.
- Arrive on time for appointments. If lateness or late cancellation is unavoidable, ring and apologise (preferably *before* you are due to arrive).
- If negotiating entry into a setting without prior arrangement, seek permission appropriately from those with the right to grant it and express your gratitude to all those who facilitate the visit.
- If activities are related to coursework requirements, adhere to agreed arrangements and do not change plans without the formal approval of a staff member with responsibility for the assignment.
- Use appropriate language for introducing yourself, based on your own position and the position(s) of those with whom you are meeting. Normally introduce yourself by your own full name (first name and surname, and title if appropriate) and address others using their full name and titles as appropriate (e.g., Dr, Professor, Your Worship) until they instruct you otherwise.
- Follow appropriate etiquette (e.g., do not sit until invited) and become familiar with cultural variations (e.g., regarding the exchange of business cards).
- Do not take things for granted: attention (or lack of it) to even apparently trivial conventions or protocols can significantly influence the outcome of encounters.
- Regardless of information sent in advance, restate or further explain your purpose, intention, what you want or expect from the meeting, how you wish to use any information obtained, and what you can do for the individual(s) or institution(s) participating (e.g., share reports, offer a presentation).
- Ensure there is mutual agreement regarding the way any information discussed may be used and disseminated. Formalise this agreement in writing when there are conditions.
- Ensure any financial reimbursement arrangements are professionally and ethically appropriate and that payments have been properly organised.
- Follow practices consistent with the University's commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi. Be aware of Māori protocol, where appropriate, and behave accordingly. If you are in doubt, ask an appropriate person.
- In all contexts, be aware of and respect the cultural practices of others.

Following and ongoing relationships

- Always explicitly thank the contact person/placement supervisor/ organisation before and after the interaction. Be sincere in expressing your appreciation for their time and effort, even if the meeting failed to achieve everything you hoped for.
- As appropriate, sustain healthy and collaborative working relationships with individuals and/or organisations.
- Adhere to agreed arrangements for confidentiality or anonymity. Check any issues that were not explicitly clarified during discussions.
- Do not take advantage of people's willingness to divulge sensitive or proprietary or trivial information. You are in a position of trust: do not share information around, even informally.
- Implement the principle of reciprocity in relationships. As far as possible follow through on anything you promised to undertake or provide.
- More generally, try to ensure through your conduct that individuals and organisations will be likely to assist other University staff or students in similar ways in the future.
- If matters do not proceed in a satisfactory manner for any reason, contact your supervisor/course coordinator/Departmental Chairperson or other appropriate senior University staff.