



## Research at UnitingCare Community

### Applying to do research with UnitingCare Community staff or clients

#### Step 1. Discuss your project with the relevant service area.

Before commencing the formal approval process, it is important to talk to the service area in which you hope to locate your research to be sure that it provides an appropriate context for your project. Talk to management and staff at the service so that you have an accurate and thorough understanding of the service they deliver and the nature and availability of clients and staff as potential research participants.

If you haven't done this yet, a description of UnitingCare Community services is available on our website [www.uccommunity.org.au](http://www.uccommunity.org.au)

If your project will involve multiple service areas or you are not sure which service areas are relevant, contact us on 07 3250 1909 or [research@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:research@uccommunity.org.au) for more information.

#### Step 2. Submit an application to the UnitingCare Community Research Approval Group (RAG).

Formal applications to do research at UnitingCare Community must be submitted using the Combined RAG/HREC Application form, which can also be found on the UnitingCare Community and UnitingCare Queensland websites. Detailed instructions are included with the form, but if you have any questions please feel free to email us for clarification.

**Please note:** the form has two parts: the RAG Section and the HREC section. Only the RAG section needs to be submitted at this point in the process, however, you are free to complete and submit both sections if you wish. This may help to streamline the approval process by saving time after you receive RAG approval.

Submit your application to the UnitingCare Community Strategy and Innovation team on [research@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:research@uccommunity.org.au). **Please provide the name of the staff member you have liaised with in Step 1.** Strategy and Innovation will review the application and consider whether any further information is needed before the application is forwarded to the RAG. This is to ensure that the RAG is able to make a decision and avoid the application being returned for clarification.

The RAG meets twice each month and an application must reach the RAG at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which it will be considered. To allow time for Strategy and Innovation to review the application and forward to the RAG, applications should reach Strategy and Innovation **at least three weeks prior to the RAG meeting** at which you wish your application to be considered.



**RAG meeting dates are as follows:**

Due to Principal Researcher	Meeting Date
Friday 9 January	Tuesday 27 January
Friday 23 January	Tuesday 10 February
Friday 6 February	Tuesday 24 February
Friday 20 February	Tuesday 10 March
Friday 6 March	Tuesday 24 March
Friday 27 March	Tuesday 14 April
Friday 10 April	Tuesday 28 April
Friday 24 April	Tuesday 12 May
Friday 8 May	Tuesday 26 May
Friday 22 May	Tuesday 9 June
Friday 5 June	Tuesday 23 June
Friday 26 June	Tuesday 14 July
Friday 10 July	Tuesday 28 July
Friday 24 July	Tuesday 11 August
Friday 7 August	Tuesday 25 August
Friday 21 August	Tuesday 8 September
Friday 4 September	Tuesday 22 September
Friday 25 September	Tuesday 13 October
Friday 9 October	Tuesday 27 October
Friday 23 October	Tuesday 10 November
Friday 6 November	Tuesday 24 November
Friday 20 November	Tuesday 8 December

You will be formally notified of the RAG outcome in writing within a week of the meeting. There are three possible outcomes:

- Application endorsed for submission to the HREC
- Re-submit to the RAG with further information or amendments
- Application not endorsed for submission to the HREC.

If your application is not endorsed, you will be provided with a written explanation.

**Step 3. Submit an application for ethical approval to the UCQ Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).**

The UnitingCare Queensland HREC is a formally registered HREC and is independent of UnitingCare Community. Please be aware that approval by the HREC of another organisation, such as a university, does not guarantee approval by the UnitingCare Queensland HREC. It is important to consider all questions on the HREC application carefully. Responses should be succinct, but provide enough detail for the committee to adequately assess any potential ethical issues.



All research is governed by the [NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2007\)](#), which you should read before preparing your application. Projects that are consistent with the NHMRC definition of low or negligible risk can be reviewed by a subcommittee of the HREC, outside of the monthly meeting, which will speed up the process. It is important to consider this issue carefully, with regard to the definitions provided in the NHMRC National Statement (2007). If a decision that the research will cause only discomfort or inconvenience is made, it must be well-reasoned and clear.

More information about the HREC can be found on the [UnitingCare Queensland website](#). The HREC meets on the first Tuesday of each month and applications must be received approximately two weeks prior to the meeting date. A list of meeting dates and deadlines is on the website.

Applications should be submitted to [HREC@ucareqld.com.au](mailto:HREC@ucareqld.com.au).

Applications need to include:

- the complete RAG/HREC application form (both sections, including signed RAG approval)
- copies of all data collection materials (e.g., questionnaires, interview questions)
- all consent materials (participant information sheets and consent forms).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What does the RAG consider in making its decision?

The UnitingCare Community RAG will consider each application with regard to the following questions:

- Does the research topic fit with UnitingCare Community's strategic objectives and research priorities?
- What are the potential benefits of the project?
- Does the project plan make sense with regard to:
  - the proposed participant group (e.g. client type, numbers, access)
  - compliance with legislation and/or standards of care practice
  - the practicalities of undertaking the proposed research activities
  - actual or potential impacts of the project on UnitingCare Community's services (e.g. staff time, resources)
- Any other activities that will be occurring in the proposed service area and/or at individual facilities at the same time (such as other research projects, system rollouts) which together may result in an unreasonable additional burden or workload for staff.

### What do you mean by benefits for UnitingCare Community?

All research conducted within UnitingCare Community has resource implications for the organisation and it is important that our participation in this research is shown to have clearly defined benefits **for the organisation**. This is different to academic research, in which the only benefit might be contribution to knowledge.

Research will only be approved if it has the potential to contribute to at least one of the following outcomes:

- Improved outcomes for clients



- Enhanced service provision
- More efficient working practices within UnitingCare Community
- Benefits for UnitingCare Community staff
- Meeting of knowledge needs within UnitingCare Community
- Contribution to ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of services and practices.
- Contribute to enhanced practice within the sector.

It is important that your application clearly explains how your research will contribute to these outcomes. If you are not sure whether your research meets these requirements, feel free to contact us on 07 3250 1909 or [research@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:research@uccommunity.org.au) prior to writing your application.

### **What does the HREC consider in making its decision?**

The HREC will consider the following questions when making its decision:

- Is this research of use to the organisation or the broader community at this time?
- Does the organisation have the resources to support the research at this time?
- Is it likely the benefits will outweigh any risks?
- Does the method of data collection, analysis and publication of findings meet the ethical standards of good research?

Answering the first two questions is generally the responsibility of the RAG and organisational managers. However, they will also be considered by the HREC in addressing the second two questions, which are predominately the domain of the ethics committee.

It is essential that you demonstrate how the project conforms to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), particularly in relation to the most vulnerable clients, or clients with particular cultural needs and sensitivities in research. This includes young people, the frail and aged, clients from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.