**Review matrix**

The sub‐committee will make its initial assessment based on 4 criteria:

1. The completeness and thoroughness of documentation provided

If documents are incomplete or missing, the sub‐committee will assess whether to return the Application to the researcher/s or whether sufficient material has been provided to enable an ethics review.

The competence & experience of the Chief Investigator and other researchers in the proposed research area

The vulnerability of participants in the proposed research

The potential impact/s of the research.

The last 3 of these criteria can be conceptualised as the axes of a 3 dimensional model, and each axis can be graded as low, medium, or high risk. A simple set of evaluation guidelines will be applied to assist decision making and ensure consistency. On each axis low risk = 1, medium = 2 and high = 3. These scores can be represented as a matrix (e.g. 1,2,2).

Impact/s

Competence & Experience

Vulnerability

For example, an experienced researcher utilising a standard / routine psychological instrument on students from the Subject Pool could be graded as low risk (1,1,1) given the competencies of the researcher, the ‘vulnerability’ of the participant population, and the known outcomes of the instrument. If a student is undertaking the research, then the risks may increase slightly (2,1,1, or 2,1,2) as the student may lack experience which could also increase the potential impact on participants. Yet, overall it still remains relatively low risk so long as the student is adequately supervised and the first (e.g. 10) tests are directly supervised by the Chief Investigator. If a student is testing the wider population, the risk profile could change to 2,2,2 but if the members of the wider population are recruited due to their advanced age or impaired psychological status, then it would likely increase at least to 2,3,2 and possibly higher.