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School of Education Research Ethics Exemption Guideline

The following arrangements are made under the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007), especially NS 5.1.22 and 5.1.23.

Students in Education (both undergraduate and postgraduate) learn about research methodology and the practice of research. A range of units currently offered in the School of Education contribute to this. Students may practise applying methods such as surveys, questionnaires, action research, basic interviews and observation techniques. The purpose of such activity is to learn the skills to conceptualise a research question; to identify and operationalise the constructs involved, identify an appropriate target population, confront the ethical considerations involved in research, recognise the strengths and limitations of the research, carry out appropriate analysis of data, interpret the results and write up the research process and results in an assignment. These projects, by their very nature, are small and manageable within the context of a unit taught over a single semester and focus on student learning not on research outcomes. The learning may be considered to be part of professional practice – that is, the learning provides students with tools that they may choose to use to inform their practice when they enter the professional workforce.

This kind of research training will be exempt from ethics review so long as:

The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e72syn.htm> provides the standards applied at all times.

- The lecturer and / or unit co-ordinator takes overall responsibility for the students' work.
- It is clear that the project and any associated assignment is training in professional practice.
- Any data obtained are not used for publication, conference presentations or for any purpose other than completing the unit assignment.
- No private, confidential or personal information is collected by the students.
- The identity of any individual people and / or research site remains confidential.
- Department of Education policy "Research Conducted on DET Sites by External Parties" is applied wherever research is conducted on their sites. The DET policy is available via the Murdoch research ethics website or at http://policies.det.wa.edu.au/our_policies/ti_view?uid=6cc0bd38095e5fb30d79b6af9c771a01&iview=summary_view. Assignments should be designed and presented in such a way that separate approval from DET is not required (see Section 4 – Definitions – of the DET research policy).
- Students, wherever possible, survey or interview each other.
- Where people from outside the Unit are invited as participants,
 - Consideration must be given to issues such as dependency and power relationships.
 - The method of recruitment must be clearly outlined and must be free of pressure or coercion.

- One of the Information Letters and Consent Forms from the research ethics website must be used.

Lecturers and course co-ordinators need to consider:

Under *NS 5.2.9* an auditable record of any research that is conducted under these rules must be kept.

Research Ethics should be incorporated into the student learning program.

Wherever possible students should complete a research ethics application form as part of the learning process. These could be evaluated either by the lecturer or by students critiquing each other's applications.

Note:

1. **All postgraduate students undertaking thesis or dissertation work must complete a research ethics application through the normal process.**
2. **Data collected as part of an assignment which has been exempted from ethics review cannot be used as part of a subsequent thesis or dissertation.**