



Huber Social ERB

Overview

Purpose

Social impact measurement is an emerging field that sits between continuous internal improvement and research. As such, social impact measurement projects do not fit clearly under any existing industry standards for Ethical Review procedures.

For some sectors there are relevant ethics review bodies that will accept a submission for social impact measurement projects, such as the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Ethics Review Board or the Australian Research Council's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). However, for many projects there are no appropriate entities.

To ensure that Huber Social's impact measurement projects 'do no harm' and the integrity of our work is maintained, the Huber Social Ethical Review Board (ERB) was created. The Huber Social ERB is a registered human research ethics committee (HREC) with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Our ethics review procedure complies with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018¹ (the "Code") and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)² (the "National Statement").

The Huber Social ERB is responsible for reviewing each project against the requirements of the procedure and the general requirements of the Huber Social Ethical Standards Policy, the Code and the National Statement. The ERB must consider the ethical risks, issues and benefits of the project and decide whether to authorise measurement activities to proceed as planned or mandate conditions, revisions or resubmission.

Composition

The ERB is composed of:

- ERB Chair (held by the Huber Social Chief Integrity Officer)
- Huber Social ERB Secretariat
- External members drawn from diverse backgrounds to provide input as subject matter experts and as representatives of general community viewpoints.

Specifically, subject matter experts include those with knowledge of and experience in law; healthcare, counselling or treatment; and pastoral or community care (such as a chaplain or Aboriginal Elder). The committee also welcomes lay people members, with no organisation affiliation or current engagement in medical, scientific, legal or academic work.

Ethical approval is mandatory

All social impact measurement projects conducted by, or on behalf of Huber Social, or that use the Huber Social Impact Measurement Framework, platform or tools must obtain approval from the ERB before any measurement activities commence.

¹ *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Available for download at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/r41

² *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)*. The National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Available for download at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e72



Application Process

Applications for ethical approval must be made after the Measurement Plan (including the Social Impact Model and its associated measurement tools) has been documented and agreed with the client. The Measurement Plan must be submitted as an attachment to the application. All applications for ethical approval must be made using the current Huber Social ERB Project Application Form found on the Huber Social website. Verbal applications or applications in other formats will not be accepted. Each field in the Application Form must be completed and cannot simply refer to an attachment, although attachments may be used to support the information provided. The completed application form, along with the Measurement Plan, draft measurement tools, and any other attachments must be submitted via the online form and will be assessed for completion the ERB Secretariat.

Assessment Purpose

The purpose of the ERB review of the measurement project is to ensure that the applicant has considered all relevant ethical risks, assessed their level of materiality and has or will put in place appropriate controls to avoid, minimise or mitigate these risks and that from an ethical perspective, the benefits of the project outweigh its risks.

ERB approval signifies that the project is designed and conducted in accordance with the Huber Social Ethical Standards Policy and provides all stakeholders with justified confidence in the integrity of the approach and in the findings that they yield, and that no harm was caused in the process.

Assessment Process

The CIO will make an initial assessment of the ethical risk level of the project. Low-risk projects are reviewed by the ERB Chair, CIO and Secretariat. High-risk projects are reviewed by a full ERB. The ERB Secretariat will schedule the project for review and notify the applicant.

ERB Members will receive application details – Application Form, Measurement Plan, draft measurement tools, and any other supporting documentation supplied by the Applicant – for review prior to the ERB meeting.

ERB Members must complete their assessment using the current version of the Huber Social ERB Assessment Form and submit the completed form online prior to the scheduled ERB meeting. The Chair will ensure that the views of all ERB members are represented whether they are in attendance (personally or virtually) or not and that the ethical risks and benefits of the project are understood.

Approval

After the application has been reviewed, the ERB may either approve, approve with conditions, request further information or withhold approval. The Chair will communicate the decision of the ERB to the applicant and agree next steps. Approval does not absolve the project of its on-going responsibility to ensure that it does no harm, acts with integrity and adheres to Huber Social's ethical standards and those of the communities it impacts.

Assurance

On-going monitoring by the ERB may be built into the project approach or imposed by the ERB as a condition of approval. In addition, all projects must immediately notify the Chair of any material changes to the approach, conditions or assumptions under which approval was granted. Any breach of the conditions of approval, no matter how small, must be immediately reported to the Chair. Projects may also be subject to audit or review at any time and without warning. The ERB and its processes are also subject to audit.

Frequently Asked Questions – ERB Board Members

1. *Is attendance at ERB meetings compulsory?*



No. However, your input is still required and should be provided in advance using the review form and preferably also discussed with the ERB Chair.

2. *How often are ERB meetings held?*

ERB meetings are held every two weeks, based on need. The ERB Secretariat will notify you of the meeting date and arrangements and send you the material for review, usually at least a week in advance. Emergency meetings may be called if the request made by the Applicant is deemed compelling by the CIO.

3. *I am not an expert in the area that this project is working in. Do I still need to review it?*

Yes. The purpose of the ERB is to bring a range of perspectives to bear, and it is often the people who are less familiar with a subject who see the “obvious” things that the experts miss or assume.

4. *Am I protected from personal liability for the decisions made by the Huber Social ERB?*

Yes. You are covered through Huber Social’s professional indemnity insurance. It is important to note that the ERB is only assessing the ethical risks and benefits of the measurement project, not the underlying activities that are being measured, hence there is limited scope for any liability to arise.

For more information, please visit <https://hubersocial.com.au/ethical-review-board> to review the Huber Social ERB Standard Operating Procedures and Terms of Reference documents.