

POLICY

Policy Title: Access to Information Relating to ECU Staff and/or Students for Research Purposes

Descriptors : 1) Administration 2) Research 3) Staff 4) Students

Category : Governance

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1. Title

Access to Information Relating to ECU Staff and/or Students for Research Purposes.

2. Purpose

To assist the University in the administration and management of requests to access information relating to the University's staff and/or students for research purposes.

3. Organisational Scope

3.1 This policy applies to:

- Researchers from outside ECU (including external agencies, organisations or individuals)
- Researchers affiliated with ECU (existing ECU students and/or staff)

3.2 This policy does not relate to the formal surveys that the University is required to undertake (e.g. CEQ), or to quality assurance activities (e.g. surveys on the quality of a teaching unit such as the UTEI).

3.3 This policy does not relate to research projects where ECU staff and/or students will be recruited directly, i.e. research projects that do not seek to access information held by ECU.

4. Policy Statement

The University collects and uses information about staff and/or students. To the extent that the information is private, the University will restrict access to those who may need the information in order to carry out their responsibilities in the personal and/or academic interests of students and/or staff.

The University also has a strong commitment to research and will consider requests for access to information for the purposes of bona fide research. This policy exists to allow for requests for information to be processed in a co-ordinated manner, in order to ensure research is supported within a culture where the privacy and confidentiality of ECU staff and/or students is appropriately managed.

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- 'Access to information relating to ECU staff and/or students'
- This may range from the use of non-identifiable information only to the use of contact details in order to invite ECU staff and/or students to participate in a research project.
- 'Human research'
- Is research conducted with or about people, or their data or their tissue. Human research may involve the recruitment of participants and/or access to their information. Human research may be conducted by both staff and student researchers.

6. Principles

6.1 Privacy of ECU staff and/or students

Privacy considerations apply to the information that the University may hold relating to staff and/or students, and the University restricts access to this information. The University subscribes to the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (C'ith).

6.2 Ethics approval

Human research may be conducted only with ethics approval. Evidence of ethics approval must be provided by the researcher.

7. Policy Content

7.1. Guidelines and procedures

A request for access to information relating to ECU staff and/or students for research purposes must be made according to the guidelines and procedures (see Appendix 1).

7.2. Review and approval of requests

A request for access should be referred for review and approval, as follows:

- Staff – Director, Human Resource Service Centre
- Students – Director, Student Services Centre
- Staff and Students – Directors, Human Resource Service Centre and Student Services Centre

7.3. The University will pursue a co-ordinated approach to avoid duplication and to manage the resource implications of the research.

Requests for access to information relating to ECU staff and/or students will be reviewed according to the guidelines and procedures. This review will take into consideration:

- Type of information requested;
- Available resources;
- The extent of the work required to provide access to the information, and estimated costing; and
- Any potential impacts on University surveys and core business.

7.4. Conditions of approval

Approval to access information relating to ECU staff and/or students in order to invite participation in a research project will be conditional upon the following:

- no personal or contact details of staff members or students will be provided by ECU to the researcher, under any circumstances;

- an invitation to participate in the research will be sent to ECU staff members and/or students by a nominated ECU staff member on behalf of the researcher; and
- initial and continued participation in the research by ECU staff members and/or students will at all times be voluntary and participants will be free to withdraw at any time.

7.5 Use of E-mail

The use of global e-mail to identify participants or survey the student and/or staff population will not be permitted.

8. References

Policy Code:	ac070	File No:SUB/3248
Policy Owner:	Director, Student Services Centre Director, Human Resource Service Centre	
Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor	
Date Approved:	11 th December, 2007	
Revision Date:	November, 2010	
Amendments:		
Related Policies/Documents:	Ethical Conduct in Human Research Student Survey policy Confidentiality of Personal Student Information	

9. Contact Information

Contact Person:	Kim Gifkins
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ACCESS TO ECU STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

ECU has a strong commitment to research and working with industry, government and community groups in research activities that provide mutual and/or long-term benefits.

ECU also subscribes to the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 and protects the privacy and confidentiality of staff and students. Privacy considerations apply to the information the University may hold relating to staff and/or students, and ECU restricts access to this information.

However, requests from researchers to access the University's staff and/or students for research purposes will be considered according to these guidelines. Requests may range from the supply of deidentified information (i.e. data that does not identify any individual) to access to ECU staff and/or students in order to invite participation in a research project.

These guidelines do not relate to the formal surveys undertaken by administrative areas such as Human Resource Service Centre or Planning Services, e.g. approved evaluation instruments used within the University such as UTEI, or to surveys undertaken for quality assurance purposes.

Requests may be made from:

- Researchers from outside ECU, (including external agencies/bodies/individuals); or
- Researchers affiliated with ECU (i.e. existing students and/or staff).

These guidelines are designed to assist in the formal assessment of such requests.

1. Requests from researchers outside ECU

- 1.1 Any request from a researcher outside ECU to access the University's staff or students for research purposes must be submitted on the form attached and referred to the Director, Human Resource Service Centre (for access to staff) or Director, Student Services Centre (for access to students) in the first instance.
- 1.2 The researcher must provide the following:
 - The aims of the research and the purpose of the information being collected
 - What information or data will be collected and how data collection will be conducted
 - Details of who will have access to the information and how confidentiality will be protected
 - Copies of any information to be given to potential participants (information letter and consent form)
 - Copies of any proposed data collection instruments (questionnaire, survey or interview questions)
 - Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval from the researcher's parent institute

2. Requests from researchers affiliated with ECU (i.e. existing students and/or staff)

As a matter of principle, ECU will give priority to supporting its own researchers

- 2.1 Any student or staff member of ECU who is undertaking a research project that involves human participants should complete an application for ethics approval. The application must be submitted and approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Details on how to submit an application for ethics approval can be found on the Ethics website:
<http://www.ecu.edu.au/GPPS/ethics/>
- 2.2 A request to access the University's staff or students for research purposes must be submitted on the form attached and referred to the Director, Human Resource Service Centre (for access to staff)

or Director, Student Services Centre (for access to students), together with a copy of the ethics approval.

3. Review of requests

- 3.1 The Director, Human Resource Service Centre or Director, Student Services Centre will review requests to ensure that:
- data collection methods are appropriate;
 - data collection is not solely for commercial gain (unless there is a tangible benefit for the University);
 - information to be collected is relevant to the purpose of the University;
 - the workload involved in providing the data or assistance to contact staff or students is not excessive or the proposal contains appropriate provision for this;
 - the timescale for the data collection is realistic; and
 - privacy and confidentiality of the data is maintained.

Liaison between Human Resource Service Centre and/or Student Services Centre and the researcher may be necessary in order to clarify details about the research project and how the access to staff and/or students will be managed.

- 3.2 In reviewing such requests, the Directors may seek expert advice as appropriate. Advice may be sought from:

Sections of University Policy and Planning or Student Services

A review of the data collection instruments (e.g. survey, questionnaire, interview questions) may be necessary to prevent duplication of effort amongst areas, ensure conformity to appropriate policy and procedures, and ensure that the data collection meets the basic level of quality of construction and is appropriate to the proposed investigation.

Research Ethics Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee

For researchers outside ECU, ethics approval provided from the researcher's parent institute (as at paragraph 1.2) shall be considered. Review and approval by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) may be necessary if there are potential ethical implications for ECU.

- 3.3 If the request is deemed appropriate, the Director(s) will issue a letter of approval and record the information for record keeping purposes.

When a request is not deemed appropriate, the Director(s) will advise the researcher of the decision.

IMPORTANT

Researchers who seek permission to access ECU staff and/or students for the purposes of directly inviting them to participate in a research study (e.g. contact details) will require both the approval of (i) the Human Research Ethics Committee and (ii) the Director, HR Service Centre OR the Director, Student Services Centre.

Any approval granted shall require that:

- no personal or contact details of staff members or students will be provided by ECU to the researcher, under any circumstances;
- an invitation to participate in the research will be sent to the ECU staff member and/or student by a nominated ECU staff member on behalf of the researcher; and
- initial and continued participation by the ECU staff member and/or student in the research will at all times be voluntary and participants will be free to withdraw at any time.

The use of global e-mail to identify participants or survey the student and/or staff population will not normally be permitted.

ACCESS TO ECU STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

PROJECT DETAILS

TITLE OF PROJECT

Type of Project

Staff Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Masters (Coursework)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctorate/PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honours	<input type="checkbox"/>	Masters (Research)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

ETHICS APPROVAL

Name of Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

Name of HREC contact person

Approval

Pending Approved Other:

Duration of ethics approval **To:**
From:

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR

Title and Name	Degrees/Qualifications
University, Faculty/Division, and School	
Address	Contact Telephone Numbers
	Home:
	Work:
Email Address:	
Supervisor (for student projects)	

Aims of the project

Please describe the aims of the project below and indicate how the information to be collected will achieve these aims.

Student Services Centre/Human Resource Service Centre involvement

Please indicate what assistance from Student Services Centre/Human Resource Service Centre is required in order to access data, recruit participants, and/or collect data.

Data and information to be collected

Please indicate below what data is to be collected and how data collection will be conducted.

Please attach the following:

A copy of any information regarding the project to be sent to participants e.g. information letter and consent form.

A copy of any data collection instruments e.g. survey, questionnaire, interview questions.

Security and maintenance of confidentiality

Please indicate:

- who will have access to the data
- the form in which information, data and/or samples collected from participants will be stored during the research project (individually identifiable, re-identifiable, or non-identifiable)
- location of storage
- precautions that are being undertaken to ensure the security of information, data and/or samples collected from participants containing names and/or other identifying information

Attachments

Information Letter to Participants	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consent Form	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data Collection Instruments (e.g. survey, questionnaire, interview questions)	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
HREC approval	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

DECLARATION

As the Chief Investigator, I declare that:

- The research project will be conducted in the manner approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee, which includes any approved amendments to the research design and/or any specific conditions of approval.
- Any identifiable or potentially identifiable data, information and/or samples collected from or about participants will not be used for any other purpose or released to any third party not specified in the approved application, without the consent of the participant.
- Data, information and/or samples will be stored securely, and the confidentiality of all data, information and/or samples collected from or about participants will be maintained.
- Any further changes to research design, timeline or investigators will be notified in writing to the HREC.

Chief Investigator

Name

Signature

Date