

Endorsement for Research means that the REA Research Assessment Panel has found that the Researcher who wishes to conduct Research has met the threshold for the conduct of safe and appropriate Research

The Research Assessment Panel is guided in its assessment by the principles of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* ([NationalStatement](#)) As the governing authority of EREA Schools, EREA also considers:

- x How the research process may benefit EREA Schools and the value of the potential research outcomes to our Schools and network
- x If the demand and interruption to Schools may outweigh any potential benefit, or significantly disrupt the work of Schools (ie learning and teaching)
- x The alignment (or possible misalignment) with an authentic Catholic anthropology of the human person, and EREA's strategic directions, programs and approaches to supporting its Schools
- x The potential risks to our young people, staff, families, Schools and jurisdiction in the conduct of the Research, reporting of findings, and achievement of EREA' mission and strategy
- x How potential risks will be prevented or minimised
- x The appropriateness of conducting the Research in a School setting.

The EREA Research Assessment Panel will make a recommendation to the EREA National Executive, which will make the decision as to whether the proposed Research is approved or not approved.

4. Research that does NOT require EREA Endorsement

ERE Endorsements NOT required:

1. From school staff undertaking Research in their own SCHOOL for the purposes of ongoing learning, reflection and improvement, and with no intention to publish the findings in the public domain.
2. Where External Research is being conducted by student researchers wishing to conduct Research as part of undergraduate study or postgraduate study at diploma, honours or masters level, their own institutions are obliged to manage the research compliance process and students may not enter EREA sites without the approval documentation from their accrediting university's HREC.
3. If the Research meets all of the following criteria:
 - a) Is appropriate for a student researcher to conduct in School/s (ie the topic is not sensitive according to Section 9 Risk, and the methodology is not intrusive)
 - b) Is 'negligible' or 'low' risk Research according to the [NationalStatement](#), and therefore highly unlikely to raise concerns for participants, or the school community
 - c) Is supervised by an experienced Researcher and given ethical clearance by the relevant institution
 - d) Minimises any risk of participants being identified given the small sample sizes associated with student research.

Student researchers who

- x There is a financial cost to participate in the Research
- x Schools and/or participants are not provided with adequate information, and appropriate consent is not sought
- x The Research is not adequately monitored by an ethics committee, and findings reported in the public domain are not subject to a peer review process.

8. Application & documentation

Researchers must submit their application via email to research@erea.edu.au

8.1 Principal Letter

EREA Endorsement is not an Approval, but an indication to Schools that the Research is ethically sound and meets EREA requirements. EREA Endorsement carries no expectation of or preference for participation. It is ultimately the Principal's Approval which determines whether their School participates in the Research or not. Principal Approval must be sought before the Research can begin or any participants are contacted. An introductory letter should be provided which clearly outlines:

- x the purpose of the Research
- x overall timeline
- x who the participants will be and what they are expected to do (ie methods)
- x time demand for each activity
- x any school resources required
- x how the Principal is to communicate their Approval (eg attached consent form or reply email)
- x the research instruments to be used (see point 6.3)
- x plain language statements
- x consent forms
- x and any other documents to be provided to participants.

8.2 Plain language statements

Plain language statements (PLSs) should be provided for each participant type, and clearly state:

- x the purpose of the Research, what the participant will be asked to do
- x the time demand for each activity
- x how their data and identity will be protected
- x the process for withdrawing if they no longer wish to participate and/or want their data removed
- x how to access follow-up support

Final versions are strongly preferred and are less likely to delay EREA Endorsement. Occasionally Researchers may not be able to provide the final instrument because it is dependent on early research findings, however an indicative draft is still required. If the research topic and method is not sensitive nor intrusive, EREA may be able to provide Endorsement on the draft versions. However, it is more likely EREA will request submission of final copies before Endorsements issued, or that particular phase of the Research commences.

8.4 Ethics approval

Ethics committee approval from the Researcher's respective university or organisation is required before EREA will issue Endorsement. The Researcher's university or organisation will generally be expected to be listed in the [NHMRC Registry](#). Researchers may submit their application to EREA while their institution's ethics approval is still pending, however it is preferred that the research proposal and documentation submitted to EREA already incorporates ethics committee feedback.

Should the Researcher/s choose to submit to EREA and the ethics committees simultaneously a copy of the institution's ethics approval and all revised documentation need

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8.9 Approaching Schools

Once an application is approved, Researchers can approach Principals of Schools inviting them to participate. Principals then decide whether the Research will add value to their school community and give informed consent. Principal consent must be granted before the Researcher can begin or any participant is approached.

8.10 Amendments

If Researchers wish to make changes to their application, either before or after it has been approved,

- x sensitive cultural issues, race, ethnic identity, religious beliefs or world views
- x gambling, alcohol use, illicit drug use, criminal activity or anti-social behaviour
- x disease or health issues (mental, physical or social)
- x fertility, pregnancy parenting (including children and young people's attitudes towards parenting).

A research project may also be deemed greater than low risk if the methodology is intrusive (either physically or emotionally), and if vulnerable participants are being recruited. By definition, all young people in EREA Flexi Schools are considered to be particularly vulnerable participants.

If Researchers wish to conduct Research in Schools that is deemed greater than low risk, they must demonstrate:

- x they have the necessary qualifications and experience to manage the research project
- x they are aware of relevant ethical and legal obligations
- x how potential risks will be

with (eg being video recorded, having their height and weight measured or their data being used in future Research).

12 Passive Consent

Passive consent refers to an 'opt-out' model of consent—following full disclosure of the nature and scope of the Research. As most young people of school age are minors, the consent of their parents or guardians is also necessary. It may be, in instances of Research which is of negligible or low risk, acceptable that parental consent is passive, but the acceptability of this will be assessed on a case by-case basis. Passive consent will only be approved if the following elements of the proposed Research have been fully disclosed to parents and guardians:

x the aims of the Research

x whether the Research is of negligible or low risk
with the following elements of the proposed Research have been fully disclosed to parents and guardians:

Data should only be used for the purpose for
