

NATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

LAWYER MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia's largest professional general practice organisation and supports urban and rural general practitioners. We represent more than 41,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice.

The RACGP's mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of all people in Australia by supporting GPs, general practice registrars and medical students through its principal activities of education, training and research and by assessing doctors' skills and knowledge, supplying ongoing professional development activities, developing resources and guidelines, helping GPs with issues that affect their practice, and developing standards that general practices use to ensure high quality healthcare.

National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee

The RACGP National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee (NREEC) evaluates general practice research projects in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)

The NREEC's primary task is to assess the ethical principles for research involving humans in the Australian primary care setting, and to protect the welfare and rights of the participants in research. The committee also has a role in facilitating research that is or will be of benefit to the researcher's community or to humankind.

Member Responsibilities

Members are expected to:

- Abide by the RACGP NREEC Terms of Reference.
- Be familiar with, and base decisions regarding research applications on, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and other guidelines and legislation.
- Prepare for bi-monthly meetings of the committee by reviewing electronic copies of committee papers and research applications, attend meetings by teleconference, and participate in out-of-session activities as required.

Meetings are held bi-monthly, six times per year on a Monday evening. Meetings are usually held by teleconference, however a face-to-face meeting is scheduled annually, in December. Meeting dates are available on the RACGP website at [RACGP Ethics](#). Meetings commence at 6.00pm AEST and can be up to 2 hours' in duration.

Approximately two weeks prior to each meeting, committee members receive by email a copy of each ethics application and correspondence. The time required for reading and meeting preparation is usually between 2 to 4 hours.

Where members cannot attend meetings, adequate notice is appreciated and if possible, members are expected to provide comments on agendas to be considered at the meeting.

Lawyer member responsibilities

The lawyer member is expected to review submissions drawing on their professional knowledge and experience. Experience with a human research ethics committee (HREC) or an understanding of research would be an advantage. They can be located anywhere within Australia.

Lawyer member selection criteria

The following are essential:

- Current Australian legal qualifications permitting practice as a lawyer.
- Ability to participate in and contribute to committee discussions on research proposals and other research ethics issues in an open and constructive manner.
- Ability to appreciate the interests of potential research participants and the potential risks and benefits of research proposals.
- Knowledge and understanding of the ethical principles that are applied to research involving humans, and ability to apply these principles.
- Knowledge of the legislation and guidelines relating to human research and ethics.
- Understanding and respect for confidentiality requirements.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Interest in health and health research issues.

The lawyer member must have no affiliation with the RACGP.

Legal protection for members

The RACGP is required by the NHMRC to provide an assurance of legal protection to all those involved in ethical review of research, for liabilities that may arise in the course of bona fide conduct of their duties in this capacity. The RACGP has professional indemnity insurance to cover liability of committee members within these terms.

Reimbursement

Members are reimbursed for attendance at the meetings and reviewing application documentation. The rate for attendance at face-to-face meetings (including preparation) is \$400, and for attendance by teleconference, \$240. Where members are the lead reviewer on an application, \$80 per application is paid.

Expressions of Interest

To indicate your interest in this position, please forward a brief description of your experience and qualifications (1-2 pages), and curriculum vitae to:

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RACGP
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