GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AND SUBMITTING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The following guidelines have been prepared to assist you in developing your proposal for a HETI Mental Health Research Award.

It is important to read the guidelines carefully before submitting your application. If you are unclear about any aspect of the requirements you are advised to discuss this with your supervisor/s or HETI.

The aim of a research proposal is to present and justify the need to study a research problem and to present the practical ways in which the proposed study should be conducted. The design elements and procedures for conducting the research will be governed by your research question/s. These may include a number or variety of approaches such as qualitative, single case, group comparison, correlational designs, etc.

Formatting Requirements

Page size	A4
Line spacing	Double
Font size	No less than 11 point
Margins	At least 2cm
Page limit	The entire proposal, including reference list, must not exceed 12 pages

1. Your proposal should include the following sections:

1.1 Project title
1.2 Applicant's name and institution
1.3 Supervisor's name and institution
1.4 Aim(s)
1.5 Significance/innovation/impact on clinical practice
1.6 Hypotheses or research questions
1.7 Background (including pilot data if available)
1.8 Plan
  (1) sampling
  (2) materials
  (3) method/s
  (4) logistic issues and timetable
  (5) data analysis
1.9 Anticipated outcomes (e.g., CD Rom, practice guidelines, questionnaire, etc.)
1.10 Budget justification
1.11 Other sources of support sought and/or obtained
1.12 Ethical implications and a statement regarding the status of Ethics Committee approval from the relevant institutions
1.13 Key references.

2. The remainder of this document sets out a number of questions that are intended to raise some of the ethical issues that commonly arise when conducting research with human participants. It is not designed to inhibit research but rather to ensure that the ethical implications are being given serious consideration before the project begins. If an ethics application for your project has not already been submitted, then it is advisable that you consider these questions in planning your research and preparing for your interview. **It is essential that you develop and discuss your project with your intended supervisor/s, an**

experienced colleague or with your Department of Division Ethics Committee representative.

3. Hospitals, universities and other institutions require investigators to conform to the *Guidelines for Human Experimentation of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)* under the terms of the Helsinki Declarations to which the Australian Government is a signatory.

All projects involving human subjects are to be conducted in conformity with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. **Further information about the above codes and guidelines is available from the NH&MRC at https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72**

QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE DESIGN OF YOUR PROJECT

SECTION 1 NATURE OF RESEARCH INCLUDING RISKS

1.1 Does the research require any physically invasive or potentially harmful procedures? *(Consider the nature of the procedures, all the risks involved and, if possible, at what rate these risks are expected to occur. This will need to be included in separate Information and Consent Forms)*

1.2 Will any medication/drugs/invasive devices be used? *(Give details)*

1.3 If the proposed research involves the collection, storage and disposal of bodily samples, how will these be handled?

1.4 Could the research induce any psychological or physical stress or in any other way adversely affect participants? *(Consider what form these adverse effects could take and consider what facilities/trained personnel are available to deal with such problems)*

1.5 Will the true purpose of the research be concealed from the participants? *(Detail any deception and justify its use. Consider how participants will be debriefed about the deception once their participation has been completed)*

1.6 Does this research involve the **direct** investigation of any illegal behaviour or the potential to elicit information about illegal behaviour? *(Consider any legal/institutional reporting obligations)*

SECTION 2 POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.1 Will this research be undertaken on behalf of (or at the request of) a commercial entity or any other sponsor? *(Disclose the sponsor)*

2.2 Do the researchers have any affiliation with or financial involvement in any organization or entity with direct or indirect interests in the subject matter or materials of this research? *(Give details)*

2.3 Do the researchers expect to obtain any direct or indirect financial benefits from conducting this project? *(Provide details)*

2.4 Consider any other ethical considerations. For example, have conditions been imposed upon the use, publication or ownership of the results? *(Note that Ethics Committees are unlikely to approve arrangements that involve the censorship of research findings in publications)*

SECTION 3 RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

3.1 How will the participants be recruited? Consider how potential participants will be identified, how contact with them will be made and who will be involved in the recruiting. If recruiting will be done through an organisation, consider how consent from the organisation will be obtained.

3.2 Does recruitment involve a direct personal approach from the researchers to the potential participants? *(What precautions will be taken to minimise any pressure on individuals to enroll?)*

3.3 Does recruitment involve the circulation/publication of an advertisement*? (You will need to provide a copy of the advertisement)*

3.4 Will participants receive any financial or other benefits as a result of participation? *(Consider the amount/benefit and the justification)*

SECTION 4 PARTICIPANTS

4.1 Special considerations may apply if the participants who are the focus of this research are:

Under 16 years of age, physically ill or disabled, mentally ill, intellectually disabled, members of the armed services, prisoners, wards of state, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, in a carer-client relationship with the researchers or their associates, in a teacher-student relationship with the researches or their associates, in any other dependent relationship with the researchers or their associates, in a carer-client relationship with other professional workers. *(Consult the codes and guidelines available at* http://www.nhmrc.gov.au.

SECTION 5 PRIVACY AND PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Is there a requirement for the researchers to obtain information of a personal nature about individuals without their consent from Commonwealth departments or agencies, other third parties such as universities, schools, hospitals, State government agencies or employers, any other source? *(Consider what personal information will be sought and from whom and why written consent will not be obtained from the individual participants)*

5.2 Will the personal information you obtain from sources in 5.1 be sufficient to identify individual participants? *(Explain why or why not)*

5.3 Will any part of the procedures be placed on audio tape/CD, film/video/DVD or other electronic medium?

5.4 How will the confidentiality of data including the identity of participants be ensured?

5.5 What is the proposed storage of, and access to, files, electronic media, samples, etc. during the study? Specify how long the data files e.g., audio tapes/videos, etc., will be retained after the study and how they will be disposed of? *(Note that all original data [e.g. tapes, questionnaires] must be retained for a minimum period of five (5) years from the date of publication of the research as a thesis, journal article, book, etc.)*

5.6 How do you intend the results of the research to be published or presented? Specify how feedback will be provided to individual participants or, if relevant, to local communities or research-permit granting bodies. If no feedback is planned, a justification for this action must be given.

SECTION 6 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT

6.1 Will written consent be obtained? *(You will need to develop separate Information and Consent forms or justify not doing so)*

6.2 Will the consent (at least verbal) of minors participating in the research be obtained? *(Verbal consent of minors should be obtained unless there is a good justification for not doing so. In the case of minors, the implications of the research should be discussed with the parents or guardians)*

6.3 In the case of participants for whom competence in English is not adequate for informed consent, what arrangements are to be made to ensure comprehension of the Participant Information and Consent forms?