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To subscribe, email
e.bingle@alfred.org.au

Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee
Research & Ethics Unit
Ground Floor, Linay Pavilion
The Alfred
55 Commercial Road
Prahran Vic 3181
Melbourne, Australia
t: 9076 3619
f: 9076 8841
e: research@alfred.org.au
w: www.alfredresearch.org

Payments to research participants

How much is enough? When does it become inducement?

There is a range of ethical opinion regarding for what participants should (or may) be paid, and when payments cross the line into ethically unacceptable inducement. It is important to differentiate between reimbursements for direct costs and other payments.

The Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee offers the following guidance:

- Payments should not be portrayed as a form of 'compensation' for taking risks.
- Fair reimbursement for costs incurred (travel, parking, refreshments, etc) is not only acceptable but encouraged – taking into account the study budget.
- Payments which acknowledge the participant's input – whether it be time, inconvenience, personal knowledge and experience, etc. – are acceptable.
- Tokens of thanks such as movie tickets or shopping vouchers (reasonable amounts) are acceptable.
- Prize draws, raffles, lucky dips, etc. are discouraged. It is generally preferred that all participants receive the same; a strong case would need to be made otherwise.
- The average hourly payment accepted by this Ethics Committee in recent times has been between \$15-30. Payments significantly higher than this need to be justified by the researchers and assessed on a project-by-project basis by the Ethics Committee.
- Recruitment advertisements (e.g. flyers, posters, newspaper ads) may mention reimbursement, but should not include specific \$ amounts.

In principle:

- The Ethics Committee does not make assumptions about how a participant might use their payment.
- The autonomy of people to decide whether and why to participate should be respected.

Workshops: Preparing Ethics Applications

The Ethics Office is presenting a series of workshops designed to help research personnel at Alfred Health prepare applications for ethical review.

These workshops are designed for small groups, to enable you to obtain practical information in an informal, interactive way.

The first session, 'Getting Started' was held recently and generated some very positive feedback from people who are trying to navigate the different forms and review processes.

We plan to repeat the sessions every few months to enable as many people as possible to attend, so don't worry if you've missed one:

Getting Started held on 30 Aug

Health & Social Sciences (H&SS) Applications held on 20 Sep

Health & Social Sciences (H&SS) Participant Information & Consent Forms (PICFs) held on 20 Sep

Drug & Intervention (D&I) Applications held on 27 Sep

Drug & Intervention (D&I) PICFs held on 27 Sep

Low Risk Applications held on 04 Oct

Drugs & Devices 17 Oct
12.30-1.30pm, AMREP Classroom 3

Tissue & Genetic Research 31 Oct
1-2pm, AMREP Classroom 3

Radiation 15 Nov
12.30-1.30pm, AMREP Classroom 2

Consent, Guardianship & Admin Act 29 Nov, 1-2pm, AMREP Classroom 3

Privacy 14 Dec
1-2pm, AMREP Classroom 3

Register your interest by emailing research@alfred.org.au with your name, date and title of the workshop, or register interest for a future session.

If you have any specific areas you would like us to cover, please email the details, topics or any questions to us. We will try to incorporate your requests into any session you attend.

Confidentiality & participant details

Do we need to know who they are?

Before sending patient details to the Ethics Office or others within Alfred Health who are not involved in the research **think about whether or not the patient needs to be identified**. In most cases the Ethics Office does not need (or want) identifiable patient information. For example, adverse event reports should not include a patient's name, date of birth and UR number. If patient details are subsequently required, we will ask you for them. We do not need screening logs listing names and UR numbers: this is the type of information to be stored securely in your locked study files.

There are some exceptions when you *will* need to give us identifying details for a research participant:

- On Section 42T certificates, in the case of participants enrolled under Procedural Authorisation
- If you receive a complaint from a research participant that needs to be followed up by the Ethics Office.

Confidentiality tips:

- Avoid adding names, UR numbers, date of birth etc. to questionnaires, scales and data collection instruments. Use a code instead.
- Store the 'coding' document linking identities with study codes separately from your research data both during the study and when

your records are archived. In some cases (eg. some social sciences research), the Ethics Committee may recommend that the linking document is destroyed at the end of the study.

- A UR number on its own is identifiable information because it is not a unique study number/code and can be linked back to a specific person by others.

Reporting SAEs to the TGA, VMIA...

The requirements for reporting adverse events are set out on our website.

When the event involves an Alfred patient and is possibly, or likely, related to the intervention or drug being trialled, we may instruct you to also forward the adverse event report to other departments and/or agencies. These may include:

- The hospital's insurer (VMIA)
- Alfred Health Legal Counsel
- Alfred Health Clinical Governance.

In addition, if the study is researcher-initiated, serious adverse events related to drugs or devices are to be reported to the [TGA \(Therapeutic Drugs Administration\)](#). If your study is sponsored, the sponsor will provide you with specific reporting requirements to follow.

We rely on researchers to promptly forward the reports as instructed to enable accurate risk assessment and tracking of significant incidents.

New on the website:

The **radiation forms and guidelines** have been updated. Please make sure you always use the latest version from our website:

If submitting a CAF (Common Application Form) use:

- [Section 4 \(August 2011\)](#)

If submitting a NEAF (National Ethics Application Form) use:

- [Victorian Specific Form \(VSM\) \(August 2011\)](#)

Reminder:

SAEs, Protocol Deviations and Progress Reports

We prefer that you submit these forms in Word format to enable us to add our acknowledgement directly into your document and email it back to you. If you send us PDFs we are unable to insert the acknowledgement into the document and have to include it in the email message instead.

However, if you do send PDFs, make sure the subject of the email includes a reference to the specific document you are submitting so you can link the document to the Ethics Office acknowledgment.

VMIA Toolkit

The final session of the VMIA's free Research Governance Toolkit Training will be held at The Alfred in October in the AMREP Seminar Room.

Module 5: Legal & Insurance, Risk Management, IP & Publication
Wed 26th Oct, 11am-1.00pm.

If you would like to register, or to access further information about the training sessions, please go to the [Toolkit Training page on our website](#).

Using CERNER

Researchers sometimes have difficulty finding research-related information on PowerChart. You can now attend [instructor-led classes held by ITS](#). The introductory classes will be held at Caulfield and The Alfred.

