**Request for Ethical Review and Research Approval**

**Background**

Research provides a significant benefit to the delivery of effective health promotion and services. ACON seeks to encourage researchers to participate in a process of peer-review regarding ethical issues to promote ethical conduct in human research in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community; among people living and affected by HIV; and among sex workers. This process helps to improve the quality of research related to these groups, which, in turn, makes the research more useful for health providers such as ACON.

The ACON Research Ethics Review Committee exists to provide advice to ACON on ethical issues relating to research and to provide ethical guidance to researchers and research participants. Research projects seeking ACON’s endorsement, or access to ACON’s support and resources, are required to attain approval from the RERC. Approval is a prerequisite for the consideration of assistance or support for the research by ACON.

**Who should seek ACON ethics approval?**

* Projects that seek to use ACON or SWOP staff, mailing lists, or other material resources,
* Projects that specifically target LGBTIQ populations, either as their sole sample group or as an identified sub-sample,
* Projects that specifically target people with HIV or those who provide their care and support,
* Projects that specifically target people who work in the sex industry, and
* Projects that concern issues relating to the health of people living with HIV, LGBTIQ people, or sex workers.

**ACON support for, or involvement in, research projects**

ACON RERC approval does not imply any formal assistance from ACON. The provision of any assistance, including resource allocation, is a management decision to be made by ACON. However, ACON will generally only provide formal assistance to research projects that have RERC approval.

**Procedure for consideration and assessment of research proposals**

1. A *Request for Ethical Review and Research Approval* form should be completed and submitted to research@acon.org.au, along with other relevant forms (a checklist is attached at the end of this application form). All forms should be submitted electronically. Please carefully check the meeting date and its cut-off date for submission (provided on ACON Ethics Committee website).
2. In the event that the proposal is to be submitted to a granting agency, these relevant forms should also be included. If you have applied to a relevant Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), please provide a clearance/approval statement from the project investigators’ HREC. If your project is considered to be a quality improvement or evaluation project and as such does not require approval from an HREC, you must still complete the ACON RERC application form. In these cases your application will be considered in line with the NHMRC *Ethical considerations in quality assurance and evaluation activities*. A decision on whether ACON support will be granted for the application will be made by a delegate of the ACON RERC.
3. The Committee may in rare circumstances invite the applicant to attend the meeting of the Committee at which the application will be considered. If the applicant is unable to or does not wish to attend, the Committee shall review the application in their absence.
4. Before submitting your application please consider reviewing the following key points
	1. Sexuality, gender and intersex indicators – please refer to ACON’s recommended indicators which can be found at: <http://www.acon.org.au/what-we-are-here-for/policy-research/#recommended-sexuality-and-gender-indicators>
	2. List of Support Services – Please ensure any listed support services are known to be LGBTIQ inclusive and that it is clearly indicated whether the service is appointment-based or available 24 hours.
5. After an open discussion of the proposal, the Chair of the Committee will formulate a consensus recommendation concerning the proposal as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| **Approval** | The proposal is approved as submitted. |
| **Approval after amendments or clarifications** | The proposal is approved subject to the incorporation of the amendments or clarifications into the proposal. |
| **Deferment** | The proposal is not approved as submitted, but it can be reassessed after revision to address the reasons for deferment. |
| **Declined** | The proposal is not approved as submitted. |

1. Applicants will be advised of the decision of the Committee in writing within two weeks of a recommendation of the Committee.

**Sex Worker Related research seeking SWOP support:**

1. If you are a researcher interested in engaging in sex worker related research and you are seeking SWOP support, you must contact SWOP directly (www.swop.org.au)

2. Sex worker related proposals that are seeking SWOP support can only be reviewed by the ACON RERC if they are submitted by SWOP staff

**For ease of distribution to Committee members, please merge all files into one PDF document with the application form being the first document, omitting the first two pages.**

**Request for Ethical Review and Research Approval**

# Project Details

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| **Title of Research Project** |
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| **Proposed Start Date** |  | **Proposed End Date** |  |

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| **Principal Researcher** |
| Name: | Institution: |
| Highest Academic Qualification: |  |

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| **Co-Researcher** |
| Name: | Institution: |
| **Co-Researcher** |
| Name: | Institution: |
| **Co-Researcher** |
| Name: | Institution: |

**Insert additional boxes if necessary.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Contact Person (Please include job title, if different from above.)** |
| Name: | Institution: |
| Address: | Email: |  |
|  | Phone: |  |
|  | Fax: |  |

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| **Identify any research partners and funding relationships** |
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| **Is this research being conducted as part of the completion requirements of a degree?** |
| Yes [ ]  No [ ]  |

# Project Description

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| 1. **Provide a brief summary of the project in lay language (approximately 100 words)**
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# Research Participants

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| 1. **Please describe which parts of our communities will be included in this research. Specify any inclusion and exclusion criteria. What is the rationale for selecting these particular groups with LGBTIQ communities for your study?**
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# Relevance to our communities and individuals

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| 1. **How is this research relevant to our communities (i.e. LGBTIQ communities and people living and affected by HIV)?**
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| 1. **What are the potential risks specific to our communities (i.e. LGBTIQ communities and people living and affected by HIV)?**
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| 1. **Outline the potential direct and indirect benefits of this research to our communities (i.e. LGBTIQ communities and people living and affected by HIV).**
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# Community Consultation

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| 1. **Explain the process of consultation that you have taken with LGBTIQ communities and people living and affected by HIV, or related organisations.**
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# Feedback to the Community

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| 1. **Please explain the knowledge exchange activities you plan to engage in, particularly in relation to ACON and our communities (i.e. publication in peer-reviewed journals, results reports, media articles, etc.).**
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# Relevance of this project to ACON

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| 1. Please discuss the implications of this research for ACON specifically. You may wish to describe the potential benefits and risks to the organisation, contributions to its member base, potential changes to operating practices, and/or its relevance to the organisation’s overall mandate.
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# Request of ACON

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| 1. **What assistance are you requesting from ACON?**
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| Have the research team either applied to a HREC and are awaiting outcome, or received approval from a HREC?**N.B – Projects which are deemed quality improvement or evaluation do not need HREC approval and will be approved by a delegate of the Ethics Committee out of session** | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Use of premises | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Advice on recruitment | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Distribution & promotion | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Provide input into methodology | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Act as a formal partner in research | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Invite ACON staff as research participants  | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Invite ACON staff to participate in ongoing advisory capacity | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Use of a[TEST] premises including for promotion or recruitment | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Does your survey questionnaire ask participants if they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |
| Other (please specify) |  |

# Research Ethics Application Checklist

**Please ensure the following documents are included in your final application. Omission of any information below will delay the assessment of your application.**

1. Completed ACON ethics application form with **all** questions clearly answered [ ]
2. Final completed application form to a National Health and Medical Research

Committee registered Human Research Ethics Committee (i.e. University, LHD, [ ]

Hospital committees).

1. Final approval letter from National Health and Medical Research Committee

registered Human Research Ethics Committee if required and available [ ]

1. Copy of participant information sheet [ ]
2. Copy of participant consent form [ ]
3. Copy of all data collection tools (questionnaires/surveys/interview questions) [ ]
4. Copy of all recruitment material (posters/ads/notices) [ ]
5. Copy of study protocol (if applicable) [ ]
6. Letter of support from SWOP, if applicable (Only for Sex Worker Related proposals) [ ]