**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 involving sexuality and gender diverse communities and among people living and affected by HIV. 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 provides ethical guidance to ACON, 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 staff, mailing lists, social media or other material resources,
* Projects that specifically target people of diverse genders and sexualities (LGBTQ 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 concern issues relating to the health of people living with or affected by HIV and sexuality and gender diverse people.

**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 approval from the RERC is required before formal assistance can be provided.

**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.
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. Community Indicators for Research – please refer to ACON’s Recommended Community Indicators for Research 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 LGBTQ+ inclusive and that it is clearly indicated whether the service is appointment-based or available 24 hours.
	3. The extent and appropriateness of consultation with affected populations.
5. Due to the high number of applications we receive, research submitted to ACON for review by the Committee will undergo a pre-assessment by the Committee Secretariat and/or Chair to ascertain the benefit of the research to ACON and our communities. Research projects will be assessed for their suitability for review on the following:
	1. The project’s suitability and alignment with ACON’s research priorities and programs.
	2. The age of participants (ACON generally does not promote research involving participants under the age of 18).
	3. Whether the project is already being promoted and/or recruitment is underway.
	4. The research experience and lived experience of the researchers (ACON generally does not promote honour’s degree research projects, unless the applicant has demonstrated that the project is of exceptional quality and benefit to our communities).
	5. ACON’s capacity to promote the research.

If your research will not be reviewed by the Committee, you will be informed of this in writing.

1. After an open discussion of the proposal with the Committee, the Chair 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 provision of clarifications to the RERC.. |
| **Deferment** | The proposal is not approved as submitted, but it can be reassessed if the applicant chooses to resubmit the application with changes asked by the RERC.  |
| **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.

**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 researchers if necessary |  |

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

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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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| 1. **Is the research already being promoted or is recruitment underway? When do you plan on commencing recruitment?**
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# Research Participants

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| 1. **Please describe which parts of our communities will be included in this research and the rationale for selecting these groups. Specify any inclusion and exclusion criteria, particularly in relation to sexuality, gender and HIV.**
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| 1. **How many participants are you aiming to recruit for your research?**
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| 1. **Will you be using ACON’s recommended community indicators? If not, please explain which indicators you will be using and why.**
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# Benefits to participants and our communities

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| 1. **Outline the potential direct and indirect benefits of this research to participants and to our communities (i.e., people of diverse genders and sexualities, and people living with or affected by HIV).**
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| 1. **What are the potential risks to participants and to our communities ((i.e., people of diverse genders and sexualities, and people living with or affected by HIV).)?**
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# Community Consultation

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| 1. **Explain the process of consultation that you have taken with community members and organisations. Please include consultation activities that have occurred, as well as planned activities throughout the project life cycle.**
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| 1. **How will the results be published and communicated *to our communities*? (i.e., academic 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, and its alignment with ACON’s purpose (creating opportunities for people in our communities to live their healthiest lives).**
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# Request of ACON

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| 1. **What assistance are you requesting from ACON?**
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| Act as a formal partner in the research project | Yes [ ] Please specify:No [ ]  |
| Distribution & promotion  | Yes [ ] Please specify:No [ ]  |
| Invite ACON staff to participate in ongoing advisory capacity | Yes [ ] Please specify:No [ ]  |
| Use of premises | Yes [ ] Please specify:No [ ]  |
| Invite ACON staff as research participants  | Yes [ ] Please specify:No [ ]  |
| Other assistance  | Yes [ ] Please specify:No [ ]  |

# Research Ethics Application Checklist (Please Tick)

**Please ensure you have considered the following:**

1. Have you used ACON’s Recommended Community Indicators for Research? [ ]
2. Have you included a list of LGBTQ+ specific support services (if appropriate)? [ ]
3. Have you adequately consulted with affected communities? [ ]

**Please also 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). [ ]