

**Health Research Ethics Review Committee**  
**College of Health Sciences**  
**Mekelle University**

**TOR and Operating Procedures**

**1. Responsibility**

The sole responsibility of the review committee is to review health researches involving human participants, if

- CHS staff is involved
- Supported or funded by Mekelle University
- Conducted at CHS facilities
- Formal request from other institutions

**2. Organization**

The review committee is organized under the College Research and Community Services Council (RCSC). It uses the same experts and facilities (office, computing facilities, etc) of the RCSC.

**3. Composition**

The committee is composed of five experts from different fields of study including biomedical sciences, medicine, public health, nursing and pharmacy.

**4. Review types**

The committee reviews proposals as per the protocols listed below.

- Exempt
  - Done by the chairperson or secretary without prior notification of the other committee members
  - The committee is briefed about it in its next meeting
- Expedited
  - Done by one or more than one members of the committee
  - The committee is briefed about it in its next meeting
- Full Board
  - Reviewed by all members of the committee

**5. Review Process**

- Applications are submitted to the Dean's office
- The Dean forwards the applications to the RCSC/HERC office
- HERC secretary checks for all the documents required to initiate the review process
  - Application signed and dated by the PI
  - Proposal signed by the PI and the advisor, if the PI is a student (MSc, PhD)
  - Updated CV of the PI and the advisor, if the PI is a student (MSc, PhD)
  - IRB review from all collaborating institutions, if applicable
  - Information sheet , outline or script to be provided prior to subject's agreement to participate in both English and the language understood by the study subjects

- Informed consent forms in both English and the language understood by the study subjects
- Assent forms both in English and the language understood by the study subjects, if applicable.
- Instruments or tools (questionnaires, FGD guides, Key informant interview guides, etc ) both in English and the language understood by the study subjects
- Chairperson/secretary distribute the documents to the members/reviewers
- Review the proposal
  - Exempt
  - Expedited
  - Full board
- Submit review reports to HERC office
- HERC notifies the Dean
- The Dean communicates the decision of the HERC to the PI

## **6. Challenges**

- Heavy workload
  - Not compensated for their time
- Lack of experience (awareness) – both from the research staff and committee members
  - Learning by doing
  - No one is trained from the five review committee members
- Our demands for IRB reviews is not (sometimes) well appreciated by collaborating institutions
  - Domestic vs. international
  - Europe (support letters) vs. US (IRB reviews)
- No support (?)
  - National or regional review committees
  - Our working relationships vis-à-vis the NERC and RERC are loose or missing