



Pieper, I and Thomson, CJH (2011) Contextualising Merit and Integrity within Human Research, *Monash Bioethics Review*, Volume 29, Number 4, pp 15.1 – 15.10 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF03351329>

The scientific merit of a project is an ethical issue because in our culture and society, participation in research is not obligatory. Accordingly, when people choose to offer themselves as research participants, they do so out of a sense of altruism. We agree with the argument that this choice should be based on sufficient information about and belief in the purpose of the research. Central to this is that the research has merit: that it is of value.

For any research to realise that value, it must be designed so that the results are recognised as being true or meaningful: that is, that the research has validity. The validity of research rests on the principles and processes of scientific, academic and disciplinary traditions relevant to the project and researchers need to show ethics review bodies that their project conforms to them.

Although ethics review bodies are not scientific review bodies, they do need to be satisfied that the research that they approve has merit so that involvement of human participants is ethically justified.

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## How do we ‘do’ consent?

*This blog post expands on ideas from our recent publication: McWhirter, R. E., & Eckstein, L. (2018). Moving Forward on Consent Practices in Australia. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 1-15.*

Recently I participated in a research study. With the research nurse sitting opposite me expectantly, I moved quickly to sign in the appropriate place.

Hang on a minute. I’m a researcher, and an HREC member. I’ve published papers on informed consent, for goodness’ sake. I know better than this. Dutifully, I went back to the information sheet to read it properly.

After a couple of lines, I got bored and started scanning for key phrases. What will they do with my data? Which HREC approved this? Am I signing myself into eternal servitude?

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## It’s not (just) about the money

Let’s imagine for a moment that you are a mid-career university researcher with growing expertise in a particular field. A pharmaceutical company contacts you and says that it would like to recognise the important work you are doing in this area, and has asked you to choose among the following forms of recognition:

1. \$10,000 towards a research project related to one of the company's drugs.
2. Being chosen as a Keynote Speaker to present at a prestigious conference, with no honorarium.
3. Being invited to join an international advisory board.

What would you choose? Would you choose the money? Or is there something appealing about the acknowledgement of your expertise in Option B, or impressive status associated with Option C?

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## **Save the Date (please)**

# **Constructive Voices: Implementing the 2018 updates to the National Statement and Australian Code**

## **Get answers to your questions and hear essential implementation tips**

The 2018 changes to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research are significant. However, identifying and meeting new requirements by their respective due dates – Australian Code (30 June 2019) and National Statement (31 December 2018) – can seem daunting. In addition, a focus just on compliance may make it harder to take advantage of the opportunities for constructive changes to policies and processes that might enhance ethical conduct and responsible research practice.

Your research office staff, HREC Chairs and members, Research Ethics Advisers/Research Integrity Advisers and research community may have ideas for implementing the two documents, but are they sound and how will they compare to better practices elsewhere in the Australian sector?

In November 2018, AHRECS is hosting two panel discussions to help answer those questions and consider how best to implement changes.

[The full date claimer includes a downloadable pdf version.](#)

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2. [Ethical Considerations When Using Geospatial Technologies for Evidence Generation](#) - Paper
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4. [Sexual misconduct in academia: reassessing the past](#) - Times Higher Education
5. [Did a study of Indonesian people who spend most of their days under water violate ethical rules?](#) – Science

1. [Release of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 \(updated 2018\) – With interview](#)
2. [Research Ethics in Australia: A Story](#)
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