Higher Degree Researchers

• Your principal supervisor is the responsible researcher for the project.
• Your supervisors will provide feedback and advise on your project design and ethical issues.
• Your principal supervisor (responsible researcher) must read your application and sign off on it before submitting.
Need Help?

RHD or HR Superiors
Design of your research and ethical considerations.

Chair of your advisory committee or the Associate Dean of Research Training

IT
Trouble with themis

Tim Mattingsbrooke
Technical/compliance issues
“Ethics – It’s not that hard … really!”

It is a six stage process:

1. Application is submitted to HEAG
2. Application is reviewed by HEAG
3. Researcher responds to HEAG feedback
4. HEAG refers application to HESC for review
5. Researcher responds to HESC feedback
6. Application approved by HESC

Note: Both Minimal Risk and Standard Risk undergo the same process, with Minimal Risk spending more time in Stage 2 and Standard Risk spending more time in Stage 4.
• **Minimal Risk application**

  Used for projects that present low risk according to a checklist of criteria. Applicants complete the risk checklist within the Themis online application form to determine whether this route may be appropriate. The ultimate decision as to whether the application is eligible for minimal risk review lies with the HEAG during review. HEAGs recommend approval of Minimal Risk applications to HESC who ratify.

• **Standard Risk application**

  Used for projects that present more than minimal risk as defined by the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. A Standard Risk Project must first undergo a ‘technical’ review by the HEAG before being submitted to the Human Ethics Sub Committee (HESC) for full review and approval.
• **Stage 2: The HEAG**
  – HEAG stands for **Human Ethics Advisory Group**. The HEAG provides technical review of all ethics applications before they go to a HESC. The technical review consists of ensuring all documents have been lodged and are compliant. This is discussed further in the helpful tips. The HEAG also recommends approval of minimal risk applications, which are then ratified by the HESC. All research proposals must be submitted to MGSE HEAG before your application can be reviewed and approved by the HESC. Please see the **handout** for more information regarding submission dates.

• **Stage 4: The HESC**
  – HESC stands for **Human Ethics Sub-Committee**. Under the **National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research**, all research involving human participants must undergo ethical review. At the University of Melbourne, this ethical review is undertaken by the HESC who will read all documents lodged and cross match with responses on the application form and on Themis.
• **On Themis:**
  - In your researcher profile ensure you have completed the academic qualifications; experience and skills relevant to the project; and ethics training already undertaken (including year).
  - Don’t forget to register the second supervisor (as a Co-researcher) as per Clause 4.15 of the [Graduate Research Training Policy (MPF1321)](#). Don’t forget when registering your second supervisor, ensure you complete their academic qualifications; experience and skills relevant to the project; and ethics training already undertaken (including year).
  - Don’t forget to register in the first instance and upload upon receipt all approval/endorsement letter[s].
On the Application Form:

- Ensure the Responsible Researcher named is your supervisor, not you the student.

- Ensure you provide adequate information on Participant Recruitment (Q.2.2), Obtaining Consent (Q.4.1), Dissemination of Results to Participants (Q.5.1) and Data Retention and Disposal (Q.5.3).

- Ensure all sections have a response and each set of check boxes has at least one box checked. If not applicable, then write or check N/A.

- Ensure the form you upload onto Themis is a Word document, rather than a PDF. This will allow the MGSE HEAG to complete the declaration on the last page of the form.
• On the Plain Language Statement (PLS) and Consent Form:
  – Need to be on MGSE letterhead, as per requirements outlined on the application form. The MGSE letterhead can be found on the MGSE HEAG website.
  – Don’t forget to populate the footer with the HREC (this is the Ethics Id. number), date and version number.
  – For multiple PLS and Consent ensure you label each document – e.g. Teacher PLS, Teacher Consent; Parent PLS, Parent Consent; Student PLS, Student Consent etc.
  – Encourage for every PLS you have a corresponding Consent Form, unless using implied consent for surveys.
• On the Plain Language Statement (PLS) only:
  – Ensure that the following statement matches, as per PLS requirements outlined in Item 14 of the application form:

  “This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.”
Prior to initial submission there are three phases:

• **Phase 1: Registration**
  – Log into the Accounts Registration System (ARS) to set up your Themis account - [https://accounts.unimelb.edu.au/manage/](https://accounts.unimelb.edu.au/manage/)

• **Phase 2: Preparation** - see ‘MGSE HEAG Human Ethics Information Kit’ [http://education.unimelb.edu.au/ethics](http://education.unimelb.edu.au/ethics)
  The kit is broken up into three sections:
  – **Background Information** - Code of Conduct for Research, National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research, document guidelines, deadlines and contact details.
Three phases to initial submission

- **Themis Online** - Creating an application and associate documents, and Help Cards. **Note:** Letterhead is needed for all Consent Forms and Plain Language Statements - see ‘Checklists’ [http://education.unimelb.edu.au/ethics](http://education.unimelb.edu.au/ethics)

- **Useful Resources** - such as the Department of Education and Training, Victoria (DET Vic) and Catholic Education Offices (CEO), in the Victorian dioceses websites.

  - Phase 3: Submission - see ‘When should I submit an application’ [http://education.unimelb.edu.au/ethics](http://education.unimelb.edu.au/ethics)
    - Submit the application with associate documents by the deadline to me (Tim Mattingsbrooke).
• Incident Registration: Themis Service Centre (Ctrl+Click to follow link) and login with your Username and Password.
• Email: themis-help@unimelb.edu.au
• Phone: (+61 3) 8344 0888
• Operating Hours: 7:30am to 7:30pm, Monday to Friday
• Themis Support Guides: http://themis.unimelb.edu.au/support

NOTE: If the Themis Service Desk number is busy or you are calling outside operating hours, you are encouraged to log your issue, query or request using the Themis Incident Registration.

Non-Themis support contact Tim Mattingsbrooke – mgse-ethics@unimelb.edu.au
• When submitting please ensure you have a complete application. This generally consists of five components:
  A. An application summary, with online responses
  B. An application form, signed by all named
  C. All Plain Language Statement/s and Consent Forms on MGSE Letterhead with footer populated.
  D. All data collection tools, and
  E. Any other relevant documents, e.g. approval letter/s, recruitment advertisement etc

• Ensure the documents lodged on Themis, match those checked on your application form under the ‘Attachments Checklist’.
Don’t leave it to the last minute ... the Human Ethics Committee submission deadlines are virtually inflexible!
Useful Websites

• Accounts Registration System (ARS) to access Themis: [https://accounts.unimelb.edu.au/manage/](https://accounts.unimelb.edu.au/manage/)
• Themis Login: [http://www.themis.unimelb.edu.au/](http://www.themis.unimelb.edu.au/)
• MGSE Letterhead for Consent Forms and Plain Language Statements: [http://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0018/621351/Letterhead_for_Ethics_PLS_and_Consent_Forms.doc](http://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0018/621351/Letterhead_for_Ethics_PLS_and_Consent_Forms.doc)
• Themis Support: [https://unimelb.service-now.com/it?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=a167a4d04fdf5a00aa75c61f0310c7cc&origin=fix&question=0063e1944f139a00aa75c61f0310c7ff](https://unimelb.service-now.com/it?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=a167a4d04fdf5a00aa75c61f0310c7cc&origin=fix&question=0063e1944f139a00aa75c61f0310c7ff)
MGSE Ethics Studios is a new initiative.

All the remaining are scheduled in Room 514/515, 100 Leicester Street at 11:00am and BYO Laptop for:

- Wednesday 11 April (Note at 12:00pm)
- Wednesday 16 May
- Tuesday 12 June
- Monday 16 July (Note at 12:00pm)
- Thursday 16 August
- Wednesday 12 September
- Tuesday 16 October
- Wednesday 21 November
- Monday 10 December