

# Sample Ethics Application

## Alphacrucis College – Human Research Ethics Committee

The following pages contain a sample ethics application. The pages show the questions that are asked on the form and the responses show the sort of information that is required. Please look at this form in conjunction with the document ‘Requirements for Ethics Application Forms’ which is available on Moodle.

Please note that the Ethics Application Form may vary according to the nature of your project. If you are doing research with participants under the age of 18 years, a section on Research with Minors will appear. If you are doing research overseas, a section on Research Outside Australia will appear. If all your participants will be aged 18 years or over and are living in Australia, these sections will not appear.

Depending on the nature of your research, the Ethics Application Form may require that you submit a number of documents from you, such as:

1. Permission letter to relevant organisations for doing research;
2. Advertising flyers for recruiting participants;
3. Agreement with assistant researchers who may see confidential data;
4. Information Sheet about the research;
5. Consent Form for participants to complete;
6. Surveys; and
7. Interview schedules.

You will see in this Sample Application Form references to such documents which have been downloaded as part of the Application. These additional sample documents, as relevant to this application, have been gathered and added as appendices. See the document ‘Requirements for Ethics Application Forms’ for templates.

If you have any questions about filling in your Ethics Application Form, you may email me [philip.hughes@ac.edu.au](mailto:philip.hughes@ac.edu.au) . We are here to help you do your research ethically and fulfil the legal requirements in so doing.

*Philip Hughes,*  
Chair, Alphacrucis Ethics Committee.

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021



ALPHACRUCIS COLLEGE

## Ethics Application

### To be tabled to Ethics Committee

#### Important Information

Before completing this form, please see [Research Ethics Policy](#) and the Information Required for Making an Ethics Application document available through Moodle (in the [Faculty Handbook](#) under Research, and [HDR Candidate](#) and [HDR Supervisor](#) handbooks under Forms). For more information, please also see this helpful video on [Applying for Ethics Approval for Research \(18:58 mins\)](#).

#### When to complete an ethics application?

If your research involves gathering new information or data from people, such as through surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation, personal written information or personal measurements (e.g. weight, saliva measures, etc.) which will be made public, it needs ethical approval. This form is provided to enable easy applications to the Alphacrucis Human Research Ethics Committee for such approval.

If your research only uses data or information that has been previously collected with its own ethical approval (such as censuses, past surveys) or data that is publicly available (such as blogs publicly posted on the Internet), then ethics approval is not needed and you do not need to complete this form.

If you are doing research within an organisation solely for the use of that organisation, such as seeking feedback from students on their experiences of their studies or feedback from staff, no ethical approval is needed as long as that research is not going to be made public. If it will be made public, even in summary forms, ethics approval should be sought.

**Note:** For HDR Candidates, Confirmation of Candidature must be passed before applying for ethics approval.

## Save & Return

Use an account to return to saved work.

Log in

## Details of Researcher

Name of the researcher \*

Philip Hughes

Email Address \*

philip.hughes@ac.edu.au

Phone Number \*

438708675

Is your research being overseen by a supervisor/s?

Yes

No

Names of any additional researchers involved in the project



## Details of Research Project

Name of the Research Project \*

Religious Faith and Volunteering

Explain the nature and aims of your research project (max. 200 words) \*

This project will build on a national survey of religious faith and volunteering that was conducted in 2016, reported by Hughes (2020). It will look at volunteering of church attenders in two churches: one rural and one urban. The study of Verba, Brady and Schlozman (1995) has noted that there are three major factors in volunteering: motivation, engagement and skilling. It was noted in the previous work that the impact of

176/200 words

For whom or for what are you doing this research? If you are doing the research for a degree, indicate the degree. If it is commissioned for an organisation, give the name of the commissioning organisation. \*

This project is being done for DMin at Alphacrucis College

Is the research being funded? \*

Yes

No

Other

To what organisation are you accountable in this research? \*

Alphacrucis College

What are the anticipated starting and concluding dates of your collection of information or data for your research? ( You may give an approximate dates).

Start date \*

01/04/2021



Concluding date \*

31/03/2022



## Participants in the Research

A basic ethical principle is that people make a truly voluntary decision as to whether or not to participate in your research project.

If you are conducting interviews or focus groups, you must obtain written consent from all participants before the interview or group event. Ensure your consent form template is attached to this application.

If participants are doing a survey in their time or in a private space, the fact that they complete the survey is understood as their consent to it.

If participants are aged under 18, they you should ALSO obtain consent from a parent or guardian. If they cannot fill in the form themselves, then you will need consent from a guardian.

Are the following statements true of the people you are inviting to participate in this research?

They are 18 years or older \*

True  Not true  May be true

They live in Australia \*

True  Not true  May be true

They are in a state of good health and able to make their own decisions \*

True  Not true  May be true

They are NOT dependent on the researcher in any way or in an unequal power relationship (such as students in the researcher's class) \*

True  Not true  May be true

They are NOT members of a culturally or ethnically vulnerable group \*

True  Not true  May be true

**This research is NOT of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders \***

True  Not true  May be true

## Recruiting Participants for Your Research

Recruitment of participants must take place in such a way that people feel under no obligation to participate. It is also important to respect the privacy laws in recruitment. Thus, you cannot use a church directory, for example, to contact people. However, you can ask the leaders of the organisation to publicise the research. You cannot ask individuals for the names and addresses of people you might contact to participate in the research, but you can ask them to give an advertisement to other people who may then get in touch with you.

**Do you need permission from an organisation, club or business to recruit people for the research? \***

Yes

No

Other

**Please upload the letter you plan to use to seek permission, OR if you have received permission, the evidence that permission has been granted**

**Browse...** No files selected.

**How will you be inviting people to participate in your research? \***

I will be advertising publicly (or within an organisation) for participants

I will be asking people who are in a public position (such as leaders of a group or professionals with publicly advertised expertise)

Other

**Explain how you will recruit people to participate in your research and how you will obtain contact details. \***

The churches involved will be advertising the project in their weekly bulletin.

## Conducting the Research

In your research, it is important to minimise any harm or discomfort which could arise from the questions or from the way that the research is conducted.

**Does your research cover any of the following issues?**

**Personal issues including trauma, loss, death, suicide, grief, gambling, substance abuse, sexuality or gender \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Sensitive workplace, church or other organisational issues \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Sensitive cultural issues including race, ethnicity and sexuality \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Possible criminal behaviour of participants \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Physical, emotional, mental or spiritual health of participants \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Fertility and/or pregnancy (including abortion) \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Other sensitive issues \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Do the methods in your research involve any of the following?**

**Deception or concealment \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Disguised or covert observation or recording without consent \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Counselling practices or psychological interventions or treatments \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Administration of a physical stimulus \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Collection of physical samples from participants \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Consciously withholding a benefit from a participant for the purposes of research \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Use of personal data obtained from a 3rd party, such as government, medical or psychological records \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Other methods which might involve some harm to the participant \***

Yes  No  Maybe

### Confidentiality

**In your research, will you be asking for or recording the name of your participants or any information which could be used to identify them? \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Will anyone apart from the research team be involved in the research, either conducting interviews or assisting with the analysis? \***

Yes  No  Maybe

**Explain how you will ensure that the information is gathered in a confidential way. For example, will you ensure a location for the research where other people cannot hear what the interviewee is saying? If you are interviewing groups, how will you encourage all group members to maintain confidentiality? If a survey is done, will it be done in a private location? \***

The survey will be entirely anonymous, posted back to me in provided post-paid envelopes. Interviews will be undertaken in a counselling room at the church. All details of the individual will be removed from notes and recordings following the interview. The list of interviewees and those who have asked for a report will be kept in locked storage separately from the data itself.

## After the Collection of Data

**Explain how you will be protecting the confidentiality of the information or data collected during analysis. For example, where will the data be stored? \***

While the research is in progress, the data will be stored on my own computer which is locked with passwords and which is kept securely in home. All of this data will be in a de-identified form.

**Explain where and how the data will be stored following the completion of the research. Note: it should be stored for 7 years for legal reasons. \***

Following the completion of the research, all data will be placed on a CD-Rom in a locked cabinet at Alphacrucis College.

**How will the data be used? How will you ensure the confidentiality of the participants when it is used, for example, in theses or publications? \***

The data will be used in the publication of articles. Only generalised results will be reported and in a form whereby neither the church nor individuals will be able to be identified.

**What benefits do you expect from the research? Are there benefits for the participants? How will you ensure the participants receive some benefits? Note: It is usual to offer the participants a short report. \***

This study will provide more information regarding the ways that churches may both motivate and engage people in voluntary activities. Participants will be offered a short report and a longer report will be provided for the churches involved. A report will also be sent to the denomination to which these two churches belong. I also plan to use the information in some workshops for church leaders.

## Letters and Forms

For templates of and requirements for the documents below, see the **Information Required for Making an Ethics Application** document available through Moodle (in the [Faculty Handbook](#) under Research, and [HDR Candidate](#) and [HDR Supervisor](#) handbooks under Forms).

### Information Sheet

This is required if doing interviews or focus groups.

Upload information letter.

No file selected.

[Information\\_Sheet.docx](#) (32k) ✕

### Consent Form

This is required if doing interviews or focus groups.

Upload consent form.



Browse... No file selected.

[CONSENT\\_OF\\_RESEARCH\\_PARTICIPANTS.docx](#) (12k) ✕

### Agreement with Research Assistants

A signed agreement is only needed when you are using research assistants to help you in conducting interviews or in analysing data which is not anonymous and which involve confidential information.

Upload agreement with research assistants.

Browse... No file selected.

### Data Collection Instruments (surveys or interview schedules)

Provide the Ethics Committee with the survey or interview schedule that you will be using to gather information or data.

Upload your survey or interview schedule.

Browse... No files selected.

[Interview\\_Schedule\\_-\\_Religious\\_Faith\\_and\\_Volunteering.docx](#) (13k) ✕

## Additional Information

Is there any additional information you would like to provide the Human Research Ethics Committee? \*

Yes

No

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that:

1. The information supplied in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge;
2. I have read the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) and accept responsibility for the conduct of the project in accordance with those guidelines;
3. I have no other conflicts of interest other than those stated in the above application.

Signature/s of researcher/s \*

P H

[clear](#)

Save Progress

Submit

# Sample Materials for an Ethics Application for Alphacrucis College



[Your contact details]

[Date]

John Brown, Chair of Church Council

Dear John Brown,

I am studying religious faith and volunteering at Alphacrucis as part of the requirements for a Doctorate of Ministry. This study is being supervised by Dr P Black.

The aims of the study are to understand the role of religious faith in motivating and engaging people in volunteering. I expect the research to have benefits for both your church and the wider church in providing direction as to how people can best be motivated and engaged in volunteering for the benefit of the wider society and the church.

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you could invite people in your church to participate in this research. Firstly, I would be most grateful if a short survey could be distributed to all members of the congregation for them to complete in their own time. It will come with a pre-paid postage envelope so they can post it back to me when they have completed it. I will also be seeking people who could do an interview with me in which I can explore in greater depth the nature of their volunteering, their motivations and the forms of engagement that were significant for them. Would it be possible for me to hold these interviews in the church counselling room?

All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for 7 years for legal reasons, it will be kept in locked cupboards at Alphacrucis. Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research. I will also offer a short report to all who participate in the research.

I am happy to provide further information on the research, and you may contact me on [your email address]. The research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Alphacrucis and any ethical concerns regarding this research may be addressed to secretary.HREC@ac.edu.au .

Please let me know if you are willing to assist me in the research and I will then be in touch to make practical arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]



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### *Information Sheet*

#### Religious Faith and Volunteering among Church Attenders

I am studying religious faith and volunteering at Alphacrucis as part of the requirements for the Doctorate of Ministry. This study is being supervised by Dr P. Black.

The aims of the study are to understand the role of religious faith in motivating and engaging people in volunteering. I expect the research to have benefits for both your church and the wider church in providing direction as to how people can best be motivated and engaged in volunteering for the benefit of the wider society and the church.

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you would be willing to participate in this research. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences for you of not participating. Participants will be asked firstly to complete a short survey which will be distributed at church services from 1<sup>st</sup> March. You may complete this in your own time at home and post it back to me in the postage paid envelope provided.

I am also looking for people who would be willing to be interviewed about their voluntary activities. This should not take longer than 30 minutes, but it will allow me to understand your volunteering at greater depth: what has motivated you and sustained you in your activities. There are no costs to being involved. However, your involvement in this way will help the churches in motivating and engaging other people in volunteering.

I would like to record the interview for the purposes of analysis. Please let me know if you are willing for this to occur on the consent form. If you would prefer that I did not record the interview, that is fine. I will rely on the notes that I take. If, at any time, you do not wish to answer a question, you can simply say 'Pass' and we will move on. It is not anticipated that you will find any of the questions sensitive or difficult to answer. There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in your thoughts: your experiences, insights and your opinions. If you wish to withdraw your participation, you may do so up by simply letting me know up to 2 weeks after the interview.

All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for 7 years for legal reasons, it will be kept in locked cupboards at Alphacrucis. Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research.

I am happy to provide further information on the research, and you may contact me on [\[your email address\]](#). The research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Alphacrucis and any ethical concerns regarding this research may be addressed to [secretary.HREC@ac.edu.au](mailto:secretary.HREC@ac.edu.au).

Please complete the Consent Form if you are willing to assist me in the research and I will then be in touch to make practical arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of researcher]

**CONSENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

**Project: Religious Faith and Volunteering**

**Researcher:** <name of researcher>.

I (*the participant*) understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in the project, realising that I can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for my decision. I agree that research data collected in the study may be published in a form that does not identify me in any way.

I am willing / not willing for the researcher to make an audio recording of the interview or focus group. (Please indicate if you are willing OR not willing.)

I am happy for the researcher to contact me to arrange a suitable time and place for a conversation.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT .....

*(block letters)*

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

CONTACT DETAILS: Email contact: .....

Telephone (if needed to arrange the conversation): .....

*[Include the following section if appropriate.]*

***If you are under the age of 18, please also ask you parent to sign their consent to the conversation.***

**Parent's confirmation**

I confirm that I..... (the child's parent/guardian) have provided written consent for.....(child's name) to take part in the research and that I have explained the information provided above to my child and that he/she has indicated that he/she understands the activity and wants to participate.

SIGNATURE .....(parent/guardian) DATE .....

***Please hand this form to <name of person> or post it to <address of researcher>.***

***Agreement with Research Assistants  
Regarding Confidentiality and Intellectual Property***

Name of Project: .....

We thank you for your willingness to assist in this project. In doing so, it is important that you keep the confidentiality of all the information that has been gathered in the course of the project. Hence, we ask that you sign your agreement to following points.

**Confidentiality**

The research assistant must not during the term of their involvement or anytime afterward (except in the proper course of their duties or as may be required by law):-

1. Without prior consent of Alphacrucis College copy any document or disclose to any other party any confidential information or material relating to the research project;
2. Use or attempt to use any information gained in the process of the research and data gathering in any manner outside of this research project;
3. At the end of the research project, returned to the [name of the researcher], who will arrange for a copy to be kept at Alphacrucis for the required time of 7 years, while all other copies are destroyed;
4. Will not keep in electronic or hard copy any material or notes relating to this research once the files have been sent to [the name of the researcher].

**1. Copyright and Intellectual Property**

In signing this form, [name of the research assistant] forfeits any rights to intellectual property that the member may have developed at the direction of [name of the Alphacrucis researcher] whilst in any capacity of research data gathering.

*"I ..... both acknowledge and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of my responsibilities towards confidentiality and intellectual property during my involvement with any and all aspects of the research project of [name of researcher]."*

Name of research assistant: .....

Signature of research assistant: .....

Date of signing: .....

## Introduction to Survey

I am studying religious faith and volunteering at Alphacrucis as part of the requirements for Doctorate of Ministry. This study is being supervised by Dr P. Black.

The aims of the study are to understand the role of religious faith in motivating and engaging people in volunteering. I expect the research to have benefits for both your church and the wider church in providing direction as to how people can best be motivated and engaged in volunteering for the benefit of the wider society and the church.

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you would be willing to complete this survey. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences for you of not responding to the survey. You are also free to refrain from answering any question. The survey is likely to take you about 10 minutes

There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in your thoughts: your insights and your opinions. All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for 7 years for legal reasons, it will be kept in locked cupboards at Alphacrucis. Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research. I will not be asking your name or identifying details in the survey.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research. You may contact me to request a report or to obtain further information about this research on [\[your email address\]](#). The research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Alphacrucis and any ethical concerns regarding this research may be addressed to secretary.HREC@ac.edu.au .

Please note that your willingness to participate in the research is indicated by your completion of this survey.

[Name of researcher]

## Survey Questions

### Informal Volunteering

*One way many people contribute to the lives of others is through the care of people in their families and their neighbourhood.*

1. Which statement best describes your household? You live ...

- Alone
- As a single parent living with children
- With a partner/spouse and children
- With a partner/spouse without children
- With a variety of family members
- With other adults not related to me
- With parents, with or without other brothers or sisters
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following, outside of your paid employment?

*(Please click on all that apply or leave blank if none apply.)*

That are members of your family, including your extended family and people who are not members of

your family.

- Cared for a person who is sick or who has a disability
- Cared for babies or children (other than your own children)
- Cared for an elderly person
- Provided financial or other support for children who are not living with you

3. On average, how many hours per month do you estimate you have spent in the physical care of babies or children (other than your own), or sick, disabled or elderly people, outside your paid employment? *(Enter '0' if you have not spent any hours in such activities.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours per month

4. Over the last 12 months, did you provide any help without pay for others in the following ways? *(Please click on all that apply or leave blank if none apply.)*

- Domestic work, home maintenance or gardening
- Providing transport or running errands
- Teaching, coaching or practical advice
- Providing emotional support
- Use of your specialised or professional skills to help others
- Other

5. If you clicked 'other' in question 4, please describe how you provided help.

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6. On average, how many hours per month do you estimate you have spent without pay helping people in such was as described in questions 11 and 12? *(Enter '0' if you have not spent any hours in such activities.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours per month

### **Unpaid Work**

*The next few questions are about unpaid voluntary work, that is, help willingly given in the form of time, service or skills to a club, organisation or association.*

7. Here are examples of the types of organisations or groups for which people may do voluntary work. In the past 12 months, did you do **unpaid voluntary work** for any of these types of organisations? *(Click all that apply or leave blank if none apply.)*

- Arts, music or drama (other than as a performer)
- Parenting, children or youth
- Welfare or community services
- Ethnic or cultural organisations
- Business, professional or union organisations
- Education and training (such as schools, U3A)
- Emergency services
- Environmental or animal welfare (including landcare)
- Exercise or health (including gyms, hospitals, infant welfare)
- International aid and development
- Political, law or justice organisations
- Religious organisations (including churches)
- Sport and physical recreation
- Other recreational or personal interest groups
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_





# Interview Schedule

I am studying religious faith and volunteering at Alphacrucis as part of the requirements for Doctorate of Ministry. This study is being supervised by Dr P. Black. As I indicated in the Information Sheet, the aims of the study are to understand the role of religious faith in motivating and engaging people in volunteering. I expect the research to have benefits for both your church and the wider church in providing direction as to how people can best be motivated and engaged in volunteering for the benefit of the wider society and the church.

This interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you okay with that?

There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in your thoughts: your insights and your opinions. All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. However, if you do not want to answer a question, you may choose to just say 'Pass' and we will move on. You do not need to give any reason for not answering.

And if you decide that, after the interview, you would rather withdraw your participation, send me an email and I will delete all the information you have provided. I can do that in the next two weeks, but after that it will not be possible to separate from the other data what you have provided.

Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research. I will not be identifying you in anything that is published.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research. Would you like a report?

Firstly, are you happy for me to record this interview?

1. Tell me about the groups with which you have been volunteering over the past 12 months? What sort of volunteering have you done? What roles have you played in those groups?
2. How did you become involved in those groups? Did you have friends who were involved? How did you hear about the groups?
3. What first motivated you to become involved?
4. Have there been times when you have thought of giving up or reducing your involvement?
5. What has sustained you in your volunteering?
6. Do you think your religious faith has played a role in motivating you? How?
7. Have you received any encouragement from people within the church?
8. Who else has given you encouragement and support? Your family, for example?
9. How long do you think you will continue to be involved?

10. Are there other forms of volunteering you would like to give a go?