



3.0 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF OBTAINING ETHICS APPROVAL?

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Safety and respect of participants and researchers

The aim of ethical review is primarily to protect and respect research participants. They are a valuable part of the research process and not merely a source of accessing data. However, ethical review also helps to protect the researcher. By obtaining ethical approval you are demonstrating that you have adhered to the accepted ethical standards of a research study which could increase recruitment potential and ensure safety of both research participants and researchers.

Submitting research findings for publication

Many peer-reviewed journals will no longer accept for publication results of research and evaluation that has not been ethically approved. As such, researchers may need to present evidence of ethical approval in order to publish their results to the wider community.⁷

Legitimacy

An official Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) 'stamp of approval' can provide assurance that research-like activity in health promotion, and the knowledge it generates, are more likely to be trustworthy. But the systematic process required to obtain HREC approval is just as important as the approval itself. This process is designed to maximise the quality and ethical justifiability of research and evaluation. It also encourages ethical reflection on issues such as the possibility of unintended harms, and whether a plan for data collection or intervention shows sufficient respect for participants.⁶

Applying for research project funding

Other benefits of obtaining ethics approval include enabling you to apply for research funding. It is generally accepted that funders, such as research councils (e.g. [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\)](#), [Australian Research Council \(ARC\)](#)) will not provide financial support for research and evaluation that does not have ethical approval.