

12 July 2010

Tēnā koe e te rangatira

We are seeking your feedback on the proposed revisions to the NZARE Ethical Guidelines.

The NZARE Ethical Guidelines were last revised in 1998.

In recent years, new educational research approaches, contexts and cultures have challenged the relevance of the existing Guidelines. The advent of e-learning and social networking, systematic reviews and digital technologies all pose new ethical challenges for researchers, while non-Western epistemologies and participatory research relations have become more accepted.

During the same period, the membership of NZARE has become more diverse. There are now more postgraduate students, novice researchers, polytechnic and wānanga research programmes and private contractors undertaking educational research in both formal and informal educational settings. Our Ethical Guidelines need to be able to respond to ever more complex requests from members for guidance and advice.

In November 2008, NZARE and NZCER jointly hosted a one day workshop entitled Ethics in the 21st century: emerging issues in educational research/evaluation in new times. The participants in general saw ethics as being a dynamic, ongoing, principle-based process of decision-making by researchers, often on a case-by case basis, not a 'tick-box' exercise to check compliance with generic rules set by external authorities. Ethics is an integral part of research quality, and is a key responsibility of researchers, not external authorities. However, participants also raised a number of practical issues to do with implementing broad principles in the 'real world' 'impure' contexts in which they often find themselves working.

The workshop ended with a suggestion that a smaller working group of volunteers be set up to begin the process of reviewing the NZARE Ethical Guidelines (last reviewed in 1998). This working group met briefly at the NZARE Conference in late November 2008 and for full days in Wellington in February and September 2009 to scope the revisions.

This draft revision has been written by John O'Neill and Liz Gordon, drawing on recommendations of the working group and the codes of our sibling national Associations: the American Educational Research Association, Australian Association for Educational Research, and the British Educational Research Association.

Council has now approved the release of the draft for member consultation. You are invited to provide feedback to John O'Neill (j.g.oneill@massey.ac.nz) by 31 August 2010.

Council is also undertaking formal consultation of the draft with our Māori, Pacifica and Student caucuses and the Early Childhood Special Interest Group.

A revised version, incorporating feedback and suggestions for changes will be considered by NZARE Council at its September meeting. Following Council approval, and barring major

requests for change, it is planned to include a final version in the NZARE Conference and Annual Meeting satchel, to provide for member discussion of the final version at conference, and to table the 2010 Revised Guidelines for approval at the NZARE Annual General Meeting, also at the Conference.

If successful, this will mean that the Guidelines revision process will have taken two years. Following approval, the Guidelines will be published on the Research Ethics section of the NZARE website. This constitutes completion of Phase 1 of the proposed revisions.

In Phase 2, and taking advantage of educational technologies, Council has agreed that selected research ethics scenarios will be written and published to help members engage with major ethical dilemmas in educational research. In Phase 3, additional educational resources and links for members will also be added to the NZARE website.

We look forward to your feedback as your views are important to us and will greatly assist in strengthening our work to date.

Ngā mihi nui
Nāku noa nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda T. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith
President NZARE