1. **Policy**

All research undertaken by students or staff of the Navitas College of Public Safety (NCPS) that involves human participants must be designed and conducted in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Such research must be ethically reviewed and monitored by NCPS’s Ethics Committee.

2. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the constitution of the Ethics Committee and its responsibilities in determining whether a research project has the values of respect, research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence, and the assessment of any risk related to a research proposal. NCPS staff undertaking research and NCPS students engaged in the Research subject may only conduct research that carries a low or negligible risk level and which research can be reviewed by the NCPS’s Ethics Committee.

3. **Responsibility**

The Dean/Head of College through delegation to the Manager of Study Programs is responsible for compliance with this procedure.

4. **Guidelines**

The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, updated 2009* (www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e72) “… is Australia’s primary source of guidance for the conduct of all research that involves human participants. Its purpose is to promote ethically sound human research; to set national standards of ethical conduct for all research involving humans; and to guide institutions, researchers and Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) in the ethical review and conduct of such research.”

The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007* (www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/r39.pdf) “sets down the broad principles of responsible, accountable research practice, and identifies the responsibilities of institutions and researchers in areas such as data and record management, publication of findings, authorship, conflict of interest, supervision of students and research trainees, and the handling of allegations of research misconduct.”

This policy is applicable to NCPS staff undertaking research and to NCPS students undertaking the NCPS’s Research subject.

5. **Definitions**

**Accountability** – the measure by which researchers, review bodies and institutions can demonstrate their responsibilities have been, or are being fulfilled. Accountability measures include reporting to the Ethics Committee.

**Beneficence** – doing good to others, avoiding doing harm.

**Benefit** – that which positively affects the interests or welfare of an individual or group.

**Confidentiality** – the obligation of people not to use private information – whether private because of its content or the context of its communication – for any purpose other than for which it was given to them.

**Conflict of Interest** – where a person’s individual interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her institutional role or professional obligations.

**Consent** – a person’s or group’s agreement, based on adequate knowledge and understanding of
relevant material, to participate in research.

Data – pieces of information.

Ethical/Unethical – right or morally acceptable.

Ethical Review Body – body set up to carry out ethical review of human research.

Harm – that which adversely affects the interests or welfare of an individual or a group. Harm includes physical, anxiety, pain, psychological disturbance, devaluation of personal worth and social disadvantage.

Human Research is conducted with or about people, or their data or tissue. Human participation in research is therefore to be understood broadly, to include the involvement of human beings through (but not limited to) - taking part in surveys, interviews or focus groups.

Independent member – someone external to NCPS.

Justice – regard for human sameness shared by all human beings, expressed in a concern for fairness or equity.

Low Risk – research in which the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort.

Negligible Risk – research in which there is not foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort, and any foreseeable risk is of inconvenience only.

Participant – anyone who is the subject of research.

Privacy – a domain within which individuals and groups are entitled to be free from the scrutiny of others.

Qualitative – research involving such methods as case studies, personal experience, life stories, interviews, observations and cultural texts.

Research Misconduct – includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research and failure to declare or manage a serious conflict of interest.

Respect for Human Beings – recognition that each human being has value in himself or herself.

Risk – the function of the magnitude of harm and probability that it will occur.

Subject Chair – the professional educator in NCPS responsible for teaching, coordinating and running the subject titled Research. Also called the Research Subject Chair. This is not the same person as the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Voluntary Participation – participation that is free of coercion and pressure.

6. NCPS’s Ethics Committee

6.1 Role of the Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee is established to review all research proposals from staff or students involving human research (with a low or negligible risk) and it is responsible for the quality, safety and ethical acceptability of research within NCPS.

The Ethics Committee will determine the risk of all research proposals, taking into account the kinds of human discomfort or inconvenience that may occur, the likelihood of these occurring, and the severity of any harm that may occur. Risks to research participants is only acceptable if they are justified by the potential benefits of the research.

6.2 Ethics Committee Member Responsibilities
Each member of the Ethics Committee is responsible for deciding whether, in his or her judgement, a proposal submitted meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, updated 2009 and is ethically acceptable.

Each member should be familiar with the National Statement and other guidelines relevant to the review of specific research proposals.

All members should be available to attend meetings which will be scheduled as required to review staff research proposals or when NCPS’s Research subject is offered to NCPS students. Those members unavailable must provide their opinions on the ethical acceptability of a research proposal/s prior to the meeting.

6.3 Membership

Members should be appointed to the Ethics Committee based on their knowledge, qualities and experience in regard to ethical standards and acceptability. NCPS should ensure that the expertise of its members is such that they are able to address the ethical issues arising from low or negligible risk proposals that they are likely to consider.

Appointments to the Ethics Committee will include:
(a) Chair: an independent member with expertise in research and ethics;
(b) Dean/Head of College;
(c) Manager of Study Programs;
(d) Two internal professional educators with experience in research (one of whom may be the Research Subject Chair);
(e) Administration representative (minute recorder).

7. Procedures

7.1 An NCPS staff member wanting to undertake research can request that an Ethics Committee be formed to review his/her research proposal. The staff member must make such a request at the start of a trimester and/or in conjunction with when NCPS conducts its Research subject.

The Research Subject Chair is responsible for formally asking the Manager of Study Programs at the commencement of the teaching of the Research subject to request that an Ethics Committee review take place in a timely manner.

7.2 Either the staff member or the Research Subject Chair is respectively responsible for ensuring that the staff member or the students doing Research have all the relevant documentation available for approval by the Ethics Committee in a timely manner.

This documentation must include:
- the application form;
- a copy of the research proposal;
- materials used in recruiting potential research participants, such as any advertising, letters of invitation, consent forms and information sheets (plain language statement).

7.3 The Manager of Study Programs will convene an Ethics Committee meeting and disseminate an agenda for that meeting on notification from the staff member or Research Subject Chair of the requirement for such a meeting. All research proposal documentation must be forwarded to the administration representative for presentation at the meeting at least seven days before the proposed meeting.

7.4 The Ethics Committee will consider all applications and may invite the staff or student researcher to be present for the discussion of their research proposal.

7.5 The Ethics Committee may approve a research proposal, request amendment of it, or reject it on ethical grounds.

7.6 Where the proposal is approved, all communication will be in writing (which may include email). This will inform the staff member or the student researcher that the proposal meets all ethical
standards by which the Ethics Committee are bound.

7.7 Where a proposal requires amendment, all communication will be in writing (which may include email) requesting the amendments and outlining the reasons for amendments.

7.8 Where a proposal is rejected, communication will be in writing (which may include email) and will state the reasons for refusal based on ethical grounds.

7.9 All Ethics Meetings will be minuted and a copy of these provided to the Learning and Teaching Committee at the convening of its next meeting. A copy of all minutes and agendas will be kept on Q drive (Q:\9 Quality Assurance\Meeting Documentation\Ethics Committee Minutes) and in the Ethics Committee folder stored in the Operations Manager’s Office.

Copies of students’ Research subject forms submitted for Ethics Committee approval and data packs will be located in the N drive folder: N:\Higher Education\2012\Ethics Committee and will also be kept in the Ethics Committee folder stored in the Operations Manager’s Office.

**Note:** The above N drive folder relates to the year 2012. Remember to choose the year that the documentation relates to.

Access to the above N drive folder is limited to only the Dean/Head of College, Manager of Study Programs, the Professional Educator chairing the Research subject, and the NCPS Ethics Committee Administrator.

When a new folder is created (e.g. N:\Higher Education\2013\Ethics Committee) for a new calendar year, the NCPS Ethics Committee Administrator is required to restrict access to only the above four mentioned Navitas Staff members via the Navitas IT department.

Other documentation and forms related to the Ethics Committee and Research subject can be located in the Q drive folder: Q:\5 Higher Ed Administration\Course Materials\Subject Content\Research.

8. **Authority**

Authorised by the Dean/Head of College

9. **Approved**

Approved by the Academic Council on 19 February 2009.

10. **Amendments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Modified by</th>
<th>Sections amended/added</th>
<th>Approved by Academic Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19/02/09</td>
<td>Christine Ashton</td>
<td>New Policy</td>
<td>19/02/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>19/09/11</td>
<td>Mirian Meade</td>
<td>Amended titles, updated logo</td>
<td>22/09/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/10/11</td>
<td>Christopher Snedden</td>
<td>Added details throughout so that NCPS staff can use the Ethics Committee to obtain approval for research projects</td>
<td>Major change; approved out-of-session, following meeting of 20.10.2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>21/11/11</td>
<td>Christopher Snedden</td>
<td>Clarified the term ‘Independent member’ and the title ‘Subject Chair Research’ throughout; clarified in 7.1 re when a staff member can request an Ethics Committee be formed.</td>
<td>Minor changes in response to feedback from Chair, Academic Council, out-of-session, following meeting of 20.10.2011.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/4/12</td>
<td>Paul Sifonios</td>
<td>Added details to 7.9 re where Ethics Committee and Research subject documentation is stored. Changed reporting in 7.9 from ‘to the Academic Council’ to ‘to the Learning and Teaching Committee’; better reflects NCPS’s Governance Structure</td>
<td>Minor addition 23/04/2011</td>
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