MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (MPHREC) STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR MAJOR AND MINOR AMENDMENTS

MPUMALANGA
THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation/Definition	Description
1. MPHREC	Mpumalanga Provincial Health Research Ethics Committee
2. NHREC	National Health Research Ethics Council
3. SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
4. Protocol	A document that describes the objectives, design, methodology, statistical considerations, and organization of a research study.
5. Major Amendment	A significant change that could affect the safety of participants, the scientific value of the study, or the integrity of the study data.
6. Minor Amendment	A minor change that does not have a significant impact on the safety of participants or the integrity of the study data.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Major and Minor amendments involves outlining the administrative procedure to record all amendments submitted to the MPHREC. This includes steps required to process and approve changes to a protocol, which will ensure that amendments are managed consistently, compliantly, and efficiently.

2. PURPOSE OF THE SOP

The purpose for this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to provide guidance for submission, review, and approval of amendments to previously approved applications submitted to the MPHREC.

3. SCOPE

This SOP applies to all individuals involved in the management of protocol amendments submitted to the MPHREC.

4. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- South African Ethics in Health Research Guidelines, Principles, Processes and Structures, 3rd edition (Department of Health, 2024).
- Standard Operating Procedures of the MPHREC: Mpumalanga Department of Health, 2024

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator

5.1.1 The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for initiating and overseeing protocol amendments.

5.1.2 Complete and submit all required information to the MPHREC using appropriate forms (See MPHREC SOP).

5.1.3 Avail and link key documents from one study by study name/number.

5.1.4 Ensures copies of key documents are readily available when the study is active.

5.2 Responsibilities of the MPHREC Committee

5.2.1 MPHREC reviews and approves protocol amendments. i.e., the MPHREC Chairperson or his/her designee may review and approve research that meets the definition of a minor amendment.

5.2.2 When a proposed change in a research study is not minor, then the MPHREC Chair or designee must review and approve changes for expedited protocols, and the MPHREC committee reviews and approves changes at a convened meeting for Full Committee protocols before changes can be implemented.

5.2.3 All Committee members will receive:

5.2.3.1 The cover letter, if applicable.

5.2.3.2 The amendment form (See Annexure 1).

5.2.3.3 All amended information or additional information including the amended protocol, amended MPHREC proposal and amended informed consent document if applicable, or the most current informed consent document if not amended.

5.2.3.4 Any additional pertinent material (e.g., questionnaires, advertisements, reports, etc.).

5.3 Responsibilities of the MPHREC Secretariat

5.3.1 The MPHREC secretariat will review the requested amendment and determine whether it reflects a major or minor change.

5.3.2 Requested changes meeting the criteria for minor amendments or major amendments for expedited protocols will be stamped for review and signature by the MPHREC Chairperson or his/her designee.

5.3.3 Requested changes meeting the criteria for major Full Committee amendments will be prepared for MPHREC Committee review by assignment of Reviewers, placing the study on the next available Committee agenda, and collation of Reviewer and Committee member packets. Access to the full file will be available at the Committee meeting.

5.3.4 The secretariat will assist in obtaining any additional information requested by the MPHREC Chair or Reviewer.

5.3.5 At any time, the secretariat may consult with the MPHREC Chairperson for assistance in determining the type of review that is required to process the amendment.

5.3.6 The secretariat will make the appropriate database entries including Committee notification of approval of minor amendments on the next available agenda.

6. GENERAL PROCEDURE

6.1 Identification of Amendment

6.1.1 Due to unforeseen circumstances, it may sometimes be necessary to amend a research ethics application with existing ethical clearance.

6.1.2 Researchers faced with the prospect of research ethics application amendments must apply to the MPHREC detailing the proposed amendments before they are implemented using an appropriate form (Annexure 1).

6.1.3 The research ethics proposal amendment application, with supporting documents where necessary, and a copy of the ethical clearance letter must be submitted to the Secretariat.

6.1.4 The MPHREC Chairperson and one Vice Chairperson review the submitted research ethics proposal amendment application and decide whether the proposed amendments are material on the basis of, among other factors, whether the proposed amendments:

6.1.4.1 Affect the research method and the probability of delivering a meaningful and valid result.

6.1.4.2 Affect the informed consent process and whether this is viable or may necessitate a process of re-consenting.

6.1.4.3 Alter the risk to benefit ratio of the research in an unfavourable way or increase the possibility of harm to participants.

6.1.4.4 Whether the proposed amendments in any way infringe on the participants right to privacy.

6.1.5 All amendment applications are placed on an agenda of the next available MPHREC meeting for notification or ratification.

6.2 Examples of Major Amendments

6.2.1 Major amendments to a currently active study are subject to full REC-H review.

6.2.2 Examples of major amendments include but are not limited to the following:

6.2.2.1 Increasing the inclusion criteria.

6.2.2.2 Reducing the exclusion criteria.

6.2.2.3 Emergence of new and/or serious and/or significant risks to either participants and/or researchers.

6.2.2.4 Requirement for new and/or additional study documentation to be distributed to or viewed by participants that include information and/or data collection items significantly different to that in materials previously approved by MPHREC.

6.2.2.5 Any other change that does not qualify as a minor amendment (see Clause 6.3 below)

6.3 Examples of Minor Amendments

6.3.1 Minor amendments to a currently active study are subject to expedited approval. Minor amendments are restricted to the following:

6.3.1.1 Any modification that would not significantly affect the assessment of the risks and/or benefits of the study.

6.3.1.2 Any change that does not significantly affect the aims and/or design of the protocol for the study.

6.3.1.3 A decrease/increase in sample size, supported by relevant statistical motivation.

6.3.1.4 Administrative changes such as researcher contact details, the removal / addition / replacement of research personnel and/or study sites.

6.3.1.5 Reducing the inclusion criteria.

6.3.1.6 Increasing the exclusion criteria.

6.3.1.7 Modifying data collection points or volume of data collected as long as any safety regulations/constraints are retained.

6.3.1.8 Changes in compensation and/or reimbursement with adequate rationale.

6.3.1.9 Any editorial modifications that serve to clarity but not alter the existing meaning of a document.

6.3.1.10 Any translations of documents previously reviewed and approved by MPHREC.

6.4 Drafting the Amendment

6.4.1 **Process for Major Amendments**:

6.4.1.1 When a proposed change in a research study is not minor, then the MPHREC Chair or designee must review and approve changes for expedited protocols, and the MPHREC committee reviews and approves changes at a convened meeting for MPHREC before changes can be implemented. Amendment is accompanying by:

6.4.1.1.1 Draft a detailed description of the proposed changes, including rationale and potential impacts.

6.4.1.1.2 Update the protocol document to reflect changes.

6.4.1.1.3 Revise associated documents (e.g., informed consent forms, case report forms).

6.4.2 **Process for Minor Amendments**:

6.4.2.1 The procedure for requesting approval for a minor modification is by means of written communication on a signed letterhead to MPHREC secretariat (www.mpuhealth.gov.za) citing the study reference number and providing a detailed description of each change, supported by a rationale for each change as well as any and all relevant revised documentation for each change.

6.4.2.2 One copy of each amended study document which clearly highlights the changes must be submitted (highlighting of changes can be implemented by means of tracked changes, striking through "old text" and showing the "new text" in bold, underlined or in italics, or similar).

6.4.2.3 Additionally, one clean copy of each amended document should accompany the written request.

6.4.2.4 Failure to submit both copies of modified documents and/or rationale for proposed modifications will delay the review and approval process. i.e.,

6.4.2.4.1 Draft a concise description of the changes.

6.4.2.4.2 Update the relevant sections of the protocol document and associated documents.

7. RECORD KEEPING FOR MAJOR AND MINOR AMENDMENTS

7.1 Each document has an individual record of amendments.

7.2 The current amendments are listed below.

MPHREC Record Keeping file for Major and Minor Amendments						
Amendment number	Amendment Date	Version Number	Amendment Type (Major or Minor)	Amendment Page Number	Section (s) involved	Detailed Amendment

8. REVIEW AND REVISION:

This SOP should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains current and effective in managing the expedited review process.

9. SOP APPROVAL

APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED

DR LK NDHLOVU

HEAD: HEALTH

8/8/2024

DATE

Effective date_____

(Annexure 1)

MPHREC Application/Notification form for Amendments

.....

(Name of the Institution)

NHRD Ref. No:

Title of study:

.....

.....

Principal Investigator (Name, Designation and Affiliation):

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Date of MPHREC approval:				
MPHREC Number:				
Date of start of study:				
S.No	Existing Provision	Proposed Amendment	Reason	Location in the protocol/ICD [1]
a) Impact on benefit-risk analysis				Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, describe in brief:				
b) Is any re-consent necessary?				Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, have necessary changes been made in the informed consent?				Yes ☐ No ☐

[1] *Location implies page number in the ICD/protocol where the amendment is proposed.*

c) Type of review requested for amendment:	Expedited review (No alteration in risk to participants) ☐	
	Full review by EC (There is an increased alteration in the risk to participants) ☐	
d) Version number of amended Protocol/Investigator's brochure/ICD:		
Signature of PI:		