

SOP 15: Complaints Procedures

The South African College of Applied Psychology Research Ethics Committee	
Title	SOP 15: Complaints Procedures
SOP No.	SOP 15_SACAP REC_15.1
Date of approval	January 2022
Revision date	April 2022
Pages	7

1. COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

Action	Designated person	Date	Signature
Compiled for SACAP by	Dr Malesa Kgashane	6 August 2021	
Amended for SACAP by	REC Office	26 October 2021	K. J. Young
Checked by	Academic Manager	12 November 2021	C.E. Ford
Authorised by	Academic Dean	20 January 2022	J.O. Lotter
Revised by	SACAP REC Chair	4 April 2022	D.S. De Sousa
Authorised by	Academic Dean	24 April 2022	J.O. Lotter

2. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version no	Reason for revision
July 2021	1	Development of the document
April 2022	2	Amendment to process for ethical complaints

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation/ Term	Definition
SACP REC	The South African College of Applied Research Ethics Committee
NHREC	National Health Research Ethics Council
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure(s)
ERC	Ethics Review Committee
Complaint	Complaints arise because of alleged ERC procedural irregularities, breach of researcher confidentiality, unacceptable delays, or conflict of interest.

4. PURPOSE OF THE SOP

This SOP provides guidelines for the management of two types of complaints:

- 4.1. Complaints from researchers about a member of the SACAP REC issue.
- 4.2. Complaints received from a research participant, co-researcher, research assistant, or interested community member about research conduct and/or the researcher.
- 4.3. During any investigation of complaints, the SACAP REC will adhere to the following principles of fairness, confidentiality, integrity, and non-maleficence.

5. SCOPE

The scope of this document covers the establishment of the procedures to follow for the implementation of complaints. This document also covers the responsibilities and procedure to be followed for the complaints process.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

All SACAP REC members, researchers issued with ethics approval and REC Administrator should be aware of the procedure to follow during the complaints process.

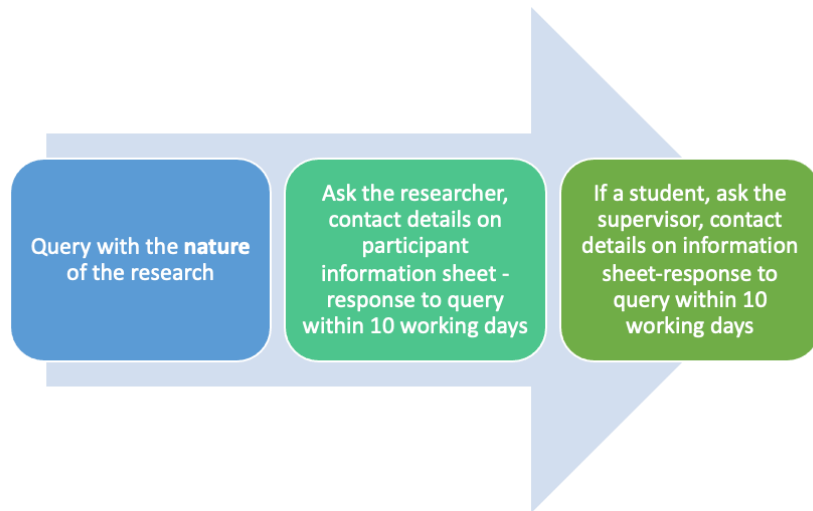
7. PROCEDURE

The procedure for complaints from researchers about a SACAP REC issue is as follows:

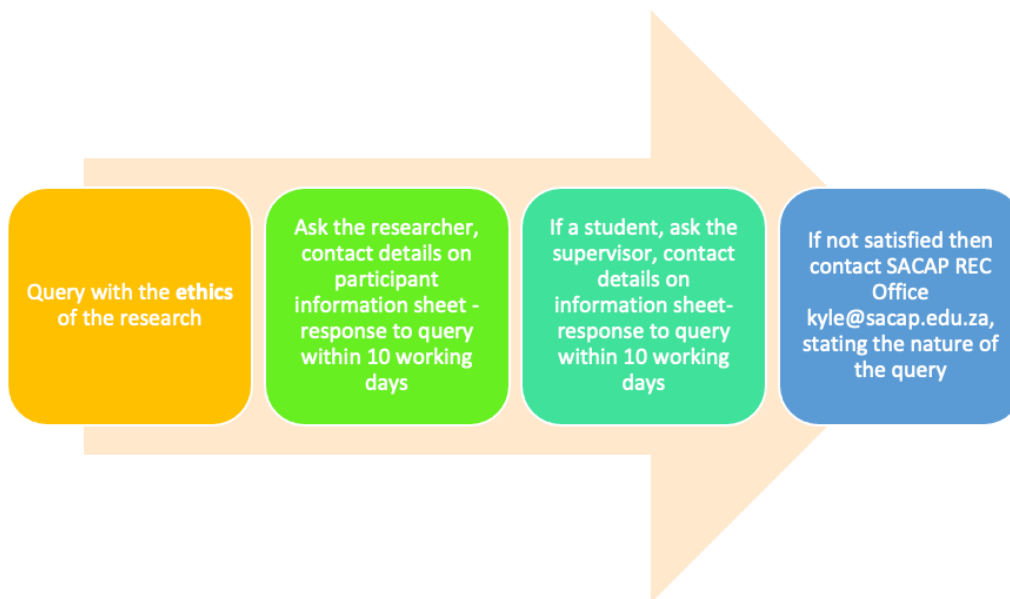
- 7.1. Should a researcher (internal and external, supervisor and/or a postgraduate student) experience a problem with a SACAP REC member's behaviour regarding application management or reviewer report(s), they have the opportunity to lodge a complaint. The complaint should be lodged in writing to the SACAP REC Chair through the Administrator. Should the complaint be against the SACAP REC Chair, the complaint should be logged in writing to the SACAP REC Vice Chair.
- 7.2. Such a written complaint will follow the following process:
 - 7.2.1. The SACAP REC Chair shall convene a meeting with the complainant and the SACAP REC members to discuss the complaint in an attempt to find an amicable solution. If the complainant is a postgraduate student, the supervisor will be included in this discussion.
 - 7.2.2. If a mutual agreement regarding a workable solution is reached, the matter will be considered resolved.
 - 7.2.3. The SACAP REC Chair will compile a written report of this meeting and the incident will be reported to the Academic Head of the institution (Academic Dean) and or College Management.
 - 7.2.4. Should all the processes fail to address the issue at hand, then the matter can be escalated to the Academic Head of the institution (Academic Dean) for a consultation.
 - 7.2.5. Should the complaint remain unresolved, the complainant is encouraged to report the incident then to the NHREC.

8. PROCESS GUIDELINES FOR ETHICS COMPLAINT

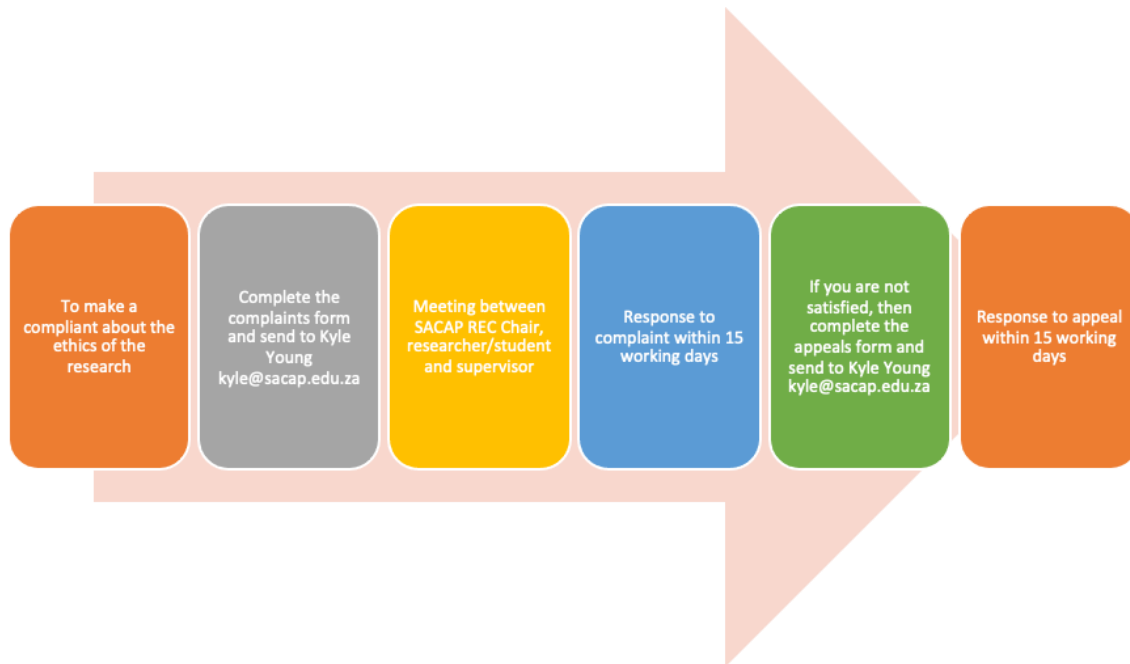
8.1. Query with the nature of the research



2. Query with the ethics of the research.



3. To make a complaint about the ethics of the research.



9. DOCUMENT REFERENCES

- North West University Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office. (n.d.). *SOP for complaints management*. http://health-sciences.nwu.ac.za/sites/health-sciences.nwu.ac.za/files/files/Health_Ethics/TOR%20&%20SOPs/5%20SOP%20for%20complaints_1.5_AL.pdf

**ANNEXURE A
COMPLAINT FORM**

Please complete this form to make a complaint about the ethics of the research. Providing the name and contact details of the complainant is not a requirement. Should no name and contact details be provided, however, the complainant will not be contacted for further clarity, consultation or resolution of the case and entrusts the Chair of the REC to see the case to resolution on their behalf.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name of complainant	
Phone	
Email	
SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY	
Title of the research study	
Name(s) of the researcher(s)	
Contact details of the researcher(s)	
Site(s) at which research is being conducted	
SECTION 3: DETAILS OF THE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE	
Name of Ethics Committee that approved the study	
Name of Chair of Ethics Committee	
Contact details of the Chair of Ethics Committee	
NHREC Registration number	
Response of the researchers(s) to the complaint/query:	
Please provide comprehensive details of the research procedures followed, including the protocol/ proposal, proof of ethics clearance, status of the study as at the date of submission of this response, with evidence where possible.	

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SECTION 4: DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER(S)			
I hereby declare that the above submission is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.			
NAME AND SURNAME			
SIGNATURE		DATE:	

COMPLAINANT'S RESPONSE

SACAP REC CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS			
NAME AND SURNAME			
SIGNATURE:		DATE:	



APPEAL FORM

Please complete this form to appeal response to complaint by the SACAP REC Chair.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name of complainant	
Phone	
Email	
SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY	
Title of the research study	
Name(s) of the researcher(s)	

SACAP REC Chair's resolution of complaint

Explanation of why complainant disagrees with the SACAP REC Chair's resolution of complaint