



REFERENCE: 19\18\1\1

ENQUIRIES: SG. Petros

**CIRCULAR: 91 of 2018**

**TO:**

- 1. ALL HOSPITAL MANAGERS/WARD HEADS & CEOs /CHIEF DIRECTORATES/REGIONAL AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS/ NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS/TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS /HR & FINANCIALMANAGERS/RESEARCHCOUNCILS/MUNICIPALITY MANAGERS/NGOs/PHRC**
- 2. ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS DEPUTY DEANS OF HEALTH RESEARCH**
- 3. RESEARCH COUNCIL DIRECTORS OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH**

**Re: Access to public health facilities for undergraduate students' research projects**

The Western Cape Provincial Health Research Committee (PHRC) oversees health research access and supports departmental research priorities. This includes research conducted by established and emerging researchers such as under- and post-graduate students. However, research applications submitted and conducted by *undergraduate students* will not follow the formal application procedure through the National Health Research Database (NHRD) as outlined in the *Provincial Research Approval Guidelines 2017/18*. Rather permission for research is granted in the context of agreements between supervisors and the facility(ies) management where approval is negotiated and students are placed for learning. Importantly, all undergraduate research must be approved by an Ethics Committee registered with the National Research Ethics Council (NHREC).

The PHRC has developed a research access template letter for local and internationally registered undergraduate students to gain access to health department facilities at primary, secondary and tertiary services to conduct research as part of their studies.

The purpose of the template is to:

- i) standardize research approval access for undergraduates;
- ii) help reduce the load of research applications processed centrally at the Provincial office;
- iii) facilitate the conducting of student research projects, and
- iv) facilitate communication with facility staff so that they are appraised of research projects approved, and activities.

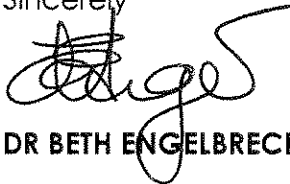
**This circular must be read in conjunction with the following documents:**

- *Provincial Research Approval Guidelines 2017/18*
- *The Western Cape Provincial Health Research Mutual Courtesy Guide*

**The introduction of the student access approval template will not affect the current approval process. The approval template is attached for your information, and any other document mentioned in this circular can be obtained from the Health Research Sub-directorate at: [health.research@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:health.research@westerncape.gov.za)**

Western Cape Government: Health will be grateful if you could further circulate this document to all relevant stakeholders within and outside your setting.

Sincerely



**DR BETH ENGELBRECHT**

**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: HEALTH**

**DATE: 2018-08-07**

## **RESEARCH APPROVALS IN WESTERN CAPE HEALTH FACILITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE HEALTH STUDENTS**

Whereas postgraduate students are expected to follow the procedure outlined in the Provincial Research Approval Guidelines (2017/18) for permission to conduct research in health facilities and among departmental staff, research undertaken by *undergraduate students* does not follow this process. Rather research undertaken by undergraduate students takes place in the context of agreements between supervisors and the facilities where approval is negotiated and students are placed for learning.

Undergraduate students are therefore not required to follow the formal approval procedure outlined in the *Research Approval Guidelines* for individual projects. Instead, their supervisors need to liaise and obtain permission in advance from managers where research will be undertaken. A local ethics committee approval letter – usually from the educational institution where the supervisor of the research is based – is required. This ethics committee must be registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC).

### **Approval for foreign students**

Increasingly, we have undergraduate students from foreign universities applying to conduct research in the Western Cape. The PHRC expects international undergraduate students registered at a foreign university who plan to conduct research in a Provincial health facility(ies) to have a local supervisor at a South African university or other research institution. However, post-graduate students from foreign institutions are expected to follow the standard application process and submit their application through the NHRD.

INSERT INSTITUTION/FACILITY LOGO

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**HEALTH RESEARCH ACCESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

Student Name/s:

Higher Education Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated start date and duration of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility clinic/ward where research will be conducted (e.g Casualty): \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

The student/s' research methods requires(✓)

Patient interviews

Patient questionnaire

Staff interview

Staff questionnaire

Folder review

Observation:

Other

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Re: HEALTH RESEARCH ACCESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**To whom it may concern**

Dear Students and Staff,

The Western Cape Provincial Health Research Committee (PHRC) requires that research projects to be conducted by *undergraduate students* are agreed to by designated facility manager(s) in health facility(ies). Research will take place in the context of agreements between supervisor(s) and the facility(ies) management. Prior to commencing fieldwork, research proposals are approved by the registered ethics committee of the higher educational institution where students are registered.

This letter serves to confirm that permission has been granted for the above mentioned undergraduate research project between the dates noted. At the commencement of the study, it should be given to the head of the ward/clinic/section where the research is to be conducted. It is signed by the student(s), project supervisor and the head of the institution or designate official and should be available for scrutiny if demanded by a facility manager. Arrangements for data collection need to be made.

**Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. The student/s adhere/s to the agreed project duration,
2. All research to be conducted according to the proposal approved by a registered ethics committee,
3. The student/s provide an ethics clearance letter or reference number,
4. The student/s to provide feedback to the facility(ies) if requested to do so,
5. The student/s to adhere to the rules of the facility(ies).

..... <b>Facility Manager:</b>	..... <b>Signature</b>	..... <b>Date:</b>
..... <b>Project Supervisor</b>	..... <b>Signature</b>	..... <b>Date:</b>
..... <b>Student</b>	..... <b>Signature</b>	..... <b>Date:</b>