Researcher frequently asked questions (FAQ) at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM)

The following information is designed to assist researchers in fulfilling the requirements of Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) in the planning and conduct of research within the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM). DHSV policies have been aligned to the answers to provide the researcher with a more in-depth understanding of the response.

Questions and Answers	DHSV Policy
Is there a DHSV/RDHM Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)? *DHSV does **not** have a HREC. However, DHSV has a Research Review Group (RRG) which oversees the conduct of research within the organisation. The principal investigator will need to apply for ethics approval from a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)-approved HREC. This ethics approval must be submitted to the DHSV RRG prior to receiving approval from DHSV RRG. Information on how to apply to the RRG is provided in the Research approval process webpage.*	
Can I submit my DHSV research application at the same time as my HREC application? *No, all applications submitted to the Research Review Group (RRG) will need to provide the HREC full application and approval letter when submitting a DHSV research application. Please ensure you consider DHSV organisational requirements, such as those shown in this document, in the planning phase of your research. If you have any questions please contact the RRG secretariat at researchreviewgroup@dhsv.org.au*	
How long will the RRG take to provide a decision regarding my research? *DHSV will aim to have the process completed within 4-5 weeks, however at times when there are complexities within the project, the process may take longer. If this is the case the RRG secretariat will keep the researcher informed along the way.*	
My project has been approved, how will I be expected to handle patient files? *It is the responsibility of all DSHV employees, researchers and students to manage records in accordance with the Health Records Act 2001 and DHSV's Records Management Policy and Procedure. Compliance with these policies ensures the privacy of and respectful management of patient information. It is a breach of policy to remove dental records from the RDHM building and records must not be stored within University grounds or levels within the RDHM building (such as level 5 or level 6 at RDHM).* *Researchers will be required to advise Health Information Services of the specific location in which records will be stored and the names of any other party who may request records as part of the project. Records must be tracked to each location and remain readily accessible to DHSV staff at all times for use at appointments, referrals or administrative purposes.* *A maximum of 30 records can be provided per week unless otherwise agreed to by the Health Information Services Team Leader.* *Researchers should be mindful that it is standard practice once a patient finishes treatment and has no planned appointments in the hospital computer system and no active waitlist or referral entries their record may be transferred offsite after a certain period of time. Whilst the hospital has a system for tracking patient files researchers should also keep tracking records on the files they have taken. Files should be collected and returned at the agreed time and be made available to RDHM on request.*	**Records Management Policy and Procedure** **Privacy Policy and Procedure**
As a researcher can I send a letter of invitation to RDHM patients to participate in my research? *DHSV privacy policy requires that only DHSV staff contact patients, on behalf of the researcher, to invite their participation in your project. The distribution of a letter of invitation will incur administration costs. If approval has been received through the DHSV research review process, researchers are able to invite patients to take part in the research whilst they are attending their regular RDHM appointments at no cost. It is always important to consider RDHM patient and staff privacy and welfare during this process.*	**Records Management Policy and Procedure**
I want to access patient files at RDHM. Will there be a cost?	**Records**

This will depend on whether the files you require are held at RDHM. Files that are stored on site would be made available at no cost. RDHM incurs a cost for the access and retrieval of patient files stored off-site. This cost will be transferred to the researcher and should be considered in your research budget. As a guide, the research budget should consider a cost for retrieval and return of records to offsite storage of $3.36 per file excluding GST. An estimated cost for records retrieval will be provided by the RRG during the review process with confirmation from the principal investigator that the costs will be covered before approval is provided.	**Management Policy and Procedure**
I want to bring my own instruments/equipment into RDHM when I conduct my research. Is this a problem? *Any clinician intending to demonstrate or introduce new equipment (i.e. equipment not currently approved for use in DHSV services) must gain approval from the DHSV Product Evaluation & Technology Assessment Group (PE&TAG) and the PE&TAG will advise the Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice Committee if specific credentials or experience is required to use the equipment. Please provide information regarding the instruments/equipment that you want to use as part of your research in your DHSV research application. This request will be considered in the research review process. Please be aware that this may delay the research approval process.*	**Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice** **Product Evaluation and Technology Assessment Committee** **CSSD New, Specialised, Trial and Loan Reusable Medical Devices Procedure**
I want to collect blood, tissue, saliva or extract teeth. Is there anything I need to consider? *DHSV will require that your research protocol address the issues of consent, infection control, instrument requirements and procedural competency.* *Consent – patient must be provided an opportunity to consent (or withdraw consent) regarding the collection of biological material.* *Infection control – the procedure of collection of biological material should fulfil all DHSV requirements regarding infection control, occupational exposure and sharps injury.* *Instrument requirements – approved through application to PE&TAC* *Procedural competency – approval required through application to the Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice.*	**Occupational Exposure Involving Blood and Body Fluids Policy (Needle stick injuries)** **Management of Extracted Teeth** **Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice**
Credentialing *Within the DHSV research application process; unless you are a DHSV staff member or a University of Melbourne (UoM) post graduate student, in which case you will already be credentialed, you will undergo a credentialing process.*	**Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice**
Is it OK for other researchers to examine/treat patients? *All researchers examining/treating patients within RDHM as part of their research/training must be credentialed. If other researchers are providing administrative or research supervision and aren't providing any clinical input then they will only need to be listed on the application. You will also need to provide information on what their involvement will be in the DHSV research application.*	**Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice**

Your project has been approved, so where to from here?

When am I able to start my research? *You will be provided with a formal approval letter from the DHSV Research Review Group (RRG) secretariat. You **must not begin** any aspects of the research project at RDHM until you have received this formal notification.*	
Will I have specific dental chairs allocated to my project? *Dental chairs are under high demand at the RDHM and you will need to liaise closely with the unit manager in the department that you will be working in to find times to access chairs. It is important to consider the patient and staff needs and ensure chairs are cleaned to DHSV standards after use.*	
I want to make an amendment to my project what should I do? *Where amendments to the research occur following the DHSV RRG approval, the HREC approval email/letter for the amendment should be forwarded to the DHSV RRG secretariat. DHSV reserves the right to rescind approval where this notification is not provided or if the amendment does not align with DHSV/RDHM policies and procedures.*	
I'm finished my research what should I do? *Please provide a copy of the HREC final report to the DHSV RRG secretariat. The support received from DHSV must be acknowledged in all future publications emerging from this research. We would also be interested to hear about your research findings.*	
I'd like to present my findings to staff at DHSV, how do I go about this? *Please send a request via the RRG secretariat, they will advise the RRG of your request and provide you with an answer.*	
I haven't finished my project within the HREC timeframe, what should I do? *The principal investigator will need to provide the DHSV RRG secretariat a copy of the HREC letter approving the extension. DHSV reserves the right to rescind approval where this notification is not provided or where continuation of the research would cause undue cost to the organisation or impact on staff and/or patient welfare.*	
I want to work outside of office hours. Am I able to do this? *Working outside office hours can raise problems for the hospital e.g. health and safety. There is limited opportunity to conduct clinical research after hours due to chair, staff and health and safety issues. Details of your requirements should be included in the DHSV Research application*	
I want to place a flyer on an RDHM department noticeboard. How will I go about this? *Prepare the flyer and include it in both the DHSV Research and the HREC application detailing where it is likely to be used.*	
What do I do if I have an incident at RDHM? *You must report the incident or near miss to the manager of the department and the Head of Unit (if the incident occurs in a Specialist department). If you are uncertain about anything always ask the RDHM staff. The department manager and Head of Unit will assist you with completing a DHSV incident form (VHIMS).*	**Clinical Incident and Risk Management Procedure**
I would also like to conduct part of my research within public dental agencies do I need to apply to DHSV or to the agencies? *The DHSV research approval process relates to RDHM only. In order to conduct research within public dental agencies you will need to apply directly to the agency involved.*	