

Tool to Support Ethics Review of Policies

Review Elements	Example Considerations
<p>1. <i>As appropriate or needed</i>, based on the policy topic and the experience and expertise of ethics committee members: Pre-review preparation by a designated Ethics Committee member(s) who presents this info to the other reviewers and facilitates relevant discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research/gather information on the relevant policy topic(s)/ issue(s) ➤ Review related policies to help establish sense of national perspectives on key issues addressed in the policy 	<p>E.g., research existing literature regarding conflict of interest to support the ethics review of an updated version of this policy</p> <p>E.g., potentially review related policies, from comparable national health care organizations and relevant centers of research and practice excellence (such as those cited at the end of the policy under review)</p>
❖ ... (reviewers' comments)	
<p>2. Reflect (whole committee) on relevant values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal ➤ Professional ➤ Organizational 	<p>Which personal values and biases/influences are you bringing to this ethics review?</p> <p>Which health care professional values play a significant role in the policy, if applicable?</p> <p>Insert your health organization's core values (e.g., as a permanent component of the template)</p>
❖ ...	
<p>3. Identify and discuss the ethics principles and values that should inform the policy; which are the most important? ?</p>	<p>E.g., inclusiveness, collaboration, respect for persons/autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence (reduce harms), health equity, justice, transparency, accountability, sustainability ...</p>
❖ ...	

<p>4. Identify the policy's primary/key stakeholders, i.e., those who will be directly affected by the policy including members of disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups; how will these stakeholders be positively and/or negatively affected by the policy?</p>	<p>E.g., 'care receivers'/patients, front line health care providers and staff, health service managers, persons living with disability, mental illness, etc.</p> <p>E.g., implementation of policy 'as is' will increase barriers to participation of those who...</p> <p>E.g., this policy will help foster a safe working environment for...</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	
<p>5. Consider whether the policy's content is reflective of the best possible balancing of any identified competing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Legitimate stakeholder interests ➤ Obligations arising from application of the ethics principles and values identified in step 3. 	<p>E.g., the perspectives and interests of management seem to take precedence over those of front-line health care providers and patients?</p> <p>E.g., individual autonomy is unnecessarily privileged over relevant health equity and social justice considerations?</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	
<p>6. Identify and discuss the ethics-related strengths of the policy</p>	<p>E.g., respects cultural diversity, pays meaningful attention to power differentials, provide support for engaging in difficult discussions...</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	
<p>7. Identify and discuss the ethics-related weaknesses of the policy</p>	<p>E.g., Principles & Values section needs more clarity or is missing naming an identified key value, relevant ethics concepts not well articulated and/or applied, contains significant procedural inconsistencies that don't fit with the stated Principles & Values</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	
<p>8. Evaluate the appropriateness of the use of language as this relates to the policy's content, 'tone' and accessibility to end-users</p>	<p>E.g., too much 'ethics (and legal) speak' which requires ethics training and experience to understand; existing wording 'talks down' to end-users and/or is overly authoritative in tone given the stated purpose of the policy</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	

<p>9. Would a formal implementation or training plan be helpful for this policy?; if one is available, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p>E.g., given the new direction/approach proposed in this policy, a focus on education/training will be helpful; the proposed implementation plan (if provided) does not make strategic use of the organization’s health educators; the use of a policy education module and a ‘train the trainers’ approach could make good use of the organization’s limited resources</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	
<p>10. Develop and record suggestions and recommendations for revision of the policy draft on the basis of the identified ethics concerns/questions; specify your reasons/rationales for making these suggestions and recommendations</p>	<p>E.g., suggest incorporation of brief descriptions of the following relevant principles and values in the Principles and Values section; recommend making the policy more transparent and accountable in the following ways...; suggest substitution of this policy wording “...” for that “...” because...</p>
<p>❖ ...</p>	