

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 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>
<p>❖ ... (reviewers' comments)</p>	
<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>❖ ...</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>❖ ...</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>	