

The Melbourne Social Equity Institute is committed to the ethical and equitable engagement of people with lived expertise in participatory and community engaged research projects. The practice of compensating participants for their time and direct costs (e.g. travel/parking) is a common research practice. These guidelines seek to support the appropriate and consistent compensation of non-University of Melbourne / non-academic individuals who participate in research projects, as co-researchers, advisors or participants. The guidelines are broadly consistent with the National Health and Medical Research Council's 2019 [guidance](#) on payment of participants in research.

Guiding principles:

- Compensation offered should be equitable and proportionate to the burden of voluntary participation and must strike a balance between fair compensation and undue inducement. Financial compensation may be waived for those who are participating as part of their current work duties.
- Participants should not be out-of-pocket due to their involvement in research projects. Travel/parking expenses may need to be covered, and some individuals may have accessibility costs associated with their participation (e.g. providing a cab charge for a wheelchair accessible taxi, a paid inclusion support worker or carer, childcare).
- Should financial compensation be deemed appropriate, the table below provides a suggestion on equitable compensation for participants' involvement. The unique circumstances of the communities or individuals you are seeking to engage with (for example, children and young people or research conducted outside of Australia) should be taken into account to adjust these amounts.
- Payments may be made directly to participants' [bank accounts](#) or via the use of gift cards. Digital gift cards should be purchased via the [University's preferred supplier](#) however physical gift cards may be used in circumstances where English or digital literacy limit participants ability to utilise a digital card.

Level of Engagement	Suggested amount / hour
<b>CONSULT:</b> Research participant (e.g. participation in a focus group or workshop)	\$40.00
<b>CONSULT:</b> Research participant (e.g. one-on-one research interview)	\$50.00
<b>INVOLVE:</b> Research advisor (e.g. review and provision of feedback on a research application / proposal or output)	\$50.00
<b>COLLABORATE:</b> Research advisor (e.g. participation in a project reference group or advisory panel. Payment should include time for preparation / pre-reading)	\$55.00
<b>COPRODUCE:</b> Community / peer / co-researcher (e.g. employment on a project as a researcher should be established through the University's normal HR procedures)	N/A

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Responsible Officer

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Review: This policy is due to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Ridhay D'souza Manager, Workforce Compliance	19 September 2025	19 September 2025	
2	Jo Barraket	4 May 2026	4 May 2026	Information on payment methods

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