

Research Ethics Applications

Compulsory elements in a PGT
research ethics application

The basics

- Provide an overview of the essential information
- Update on policy and legal requirements
- Basics for good practice
- Where to go for further information and training

An ethics application should include

- A detailed, practical overview of how the research will be conducted including:
 - Lay overview of project
 - Who the participants are
 - How they will be approached and recruited
 - Anticipated harms (must think broadly): student and participant
 - Appropriate data security and GDPR
 - All documentation which meets the University's expectations

Risk

- There are seldom no risks involved in research:
- Consider: privacy (even with secondary data – online application)
- Distress (psychological and safe guarding)
- Safety of the student:
- A lone worker policy must be implemented for students collecting data
- High risk ethics applications must be discussed with the ethics committee: Scharr-rec@Sheffield.ac.uk

Data security and GDPR

You must inform your participants of the following...

- The **legal basis** for processing their data.
- Who the **Data Controller** is.
- Their right to contact the Data Protection Officer and Information Commission Office to **complain** regarding the use of their data.
- Detailed information on how their data will be used including:
 - who will have **access** to the data
 - where will it be **stored**
 - when will it be **destroyed**.

*The above information should be included in the online **ethics application form** and the **participant information sheet**.*

Legal requirement

- There is a 4% turnover fine for non-compliance.
- Will the data be **identifiable, anonymised or pseudonymised** and at which points in the research process will it take these forms.
- Who will have **access** to the data – state that members of the research team will have access and explain any collaborators who may have access.
- Where will the data be **stored** – in an access restricted folder in the University's Shared Networked Filestore.
- When will the data be **destroyed** – the data should be destroyed as soon as it is no longer required for the research.

Key Messages

- Use the **information sheet and consent form templates** on the ScHARR ethics webpages.
- **Consider the future uses of data** from the outset, consent must be given to contact the participant in the future, publish, use data in future research and be shared with others.
- **Anonymise or pseudonymise** the data as quickly as possible.
- As Supervisors, ensure your **students ethics applications** adhere to GDPR regulations.

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/scharr/research/ethicsgovernance>

Process

- Get your student to emphasise the practical and not the academic.
- Encourage your student to see this as a learning process and not a box ticking exercise.
- Treat as an iterative process. Your students work will be better for it.
- Students do not have approval until you have approved their application and they have the letter (they may even need you to approve an amendment).
- Remind your student that research ethics don't stop when they get the letter of approval.