

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

College of Arts Research Ethics - Guidelines for applicants and supervisors

During the year many students/researchers start research for dissertations and projects. If the research involves **human subjects** (1), **data not in the public domain** (2) then ethical approval must be applied for by the student, with the support of the supervisor.

(1) If the researcher is interviewing or observing participants then that counts as 'involving human subjects'. 'Interviewing' means that you are recording the person's words, by writing, taping or any other means, and using them in your work.

(2) 'Data not in the public domain' means data (or objects) which are still in copyright, or are in private collections, and for which written permission for use must be obtained.

Supervisors should make sure that students are aware of ethical issues and have read the College's Ethics Policy. See <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics>.

The University of Glasgow Research Ethics Committee has asked that all supervisors give careful consideration to undergraduate student research in sensitive areas (e.g. with children and other vulnerable subjects, on issues such as drug or alcohol use, criminality or sexuality etc.). Ethical scrutiny is particularly important if the research involves children (the University holds this to be under 18) or other vulnerable subjects. If a supervisor supports an undergraduate student's research in this kind of area then **a case must be made to the Ethics Committee** explaining why the topic is important to the student's learning and how it fits into their course.

A Checklist to help with the process

The application form includes a checklist (Part A) which helps you and the student to determine whether an application for ethical approval is necessary. If so, the completed application form should be submitted online through the University's Research Ethics System (login via the University's Business Systems: <https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/login/>).

The Application Process Step by Step:

1. Fill in the **Checklist** (Part A of application form. Supervisors should advise students).
2. Fill in the **Application Form** (Part B) paying special attention to section 12.
3. Include a copy of the **research proposal**, or a statement as to the overall purpose of the proposed research.

The following documentation may also be needed, depending on the nature of the research:

4. Submit one copy of the **information which will be given to any participants**.
5. Submit one copy of the participants' **consent form** to be used (if interviewing). There is a sample consent form linked from <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics/>.
6. Submit **questionnaire** (if interviewing) or describe content of questionnaire if creating it as part of the research.

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7. **Vulnerable Groups** – if any participants are under 18 and if the researcher will be in **sole** charge of them at any time, a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme membership must be obtained before the research starts (<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/humanresources/policies/p-z/protectionofvulnerablegroupsscheme/>). The PVG certificate should not be submitted with the ethics approval application but should be retained by the researcher.

Please note that you don't need to apply for PVG scheme membership as long as a supervising person that is either part of a relevant PVG scheme, or is a parent, or is a nominated adult for the parents, is present.

8. If the researcher is keeping details of participants which could identify them, e.g. names, addresses, email addresses etc, then the participants should be asked to complete a **data protection permission form**. See <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/dpfoioffice/a-ztopics/consent/research/>. This statement can be incorporated in the consent form.

9. A description of how **copyright permission** is to be sought (if relevant). See the guidance on copyright at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/copyright/thirdparty.htm>.

Once all the required documentation is ready, it should be submitted online through the University's Research Ethics System (login: <https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/login/>).

Ensure that the application for approval is submitted at least four weeks prior to the start of the research.

Class or Group Applications:

If the nature of research being undertaken by a number of students in an undergraduate class is similar, then the supervisor can make **one** application for ethical approval for the whole class. For instance, if all students in a class are interviewing people and using questionnaires, then **the methodology is the same**, so one class application can be submitted. The process is as above, except that we do not need to see the research proposal for each student, just one description for the class.

If students are doing individual work which is too varied to allow a class application then each student must apply for ethical approval and submit the documentation as described above. Note that it is the methods that the Ethics Committee is mainly interested in, not the content - unless sensitive issues are being addressed.

Supervisors should make sure that all the students are aware of ethical issues and have read the College's Ethics Policy. See <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics/> for full information.

Please contact the College Research Ethics Officer if you have any questions:

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