



Frequently Asked Questions – Postgraduate Research Students

Do I need to apply for ethics approval?	3
I only want to interview one or two people. Do I need ethics approval?.....	3
I would like to ask volunteers to look at my questionnaire to determine whether or not I’m asking the right questions. Do I need ethics approval?	3
Do I need ethics approval for a pilot or feasibility study?	3
I only want to distribute an anonymous questionnaire. Do I need ethics approval?.....	4
Can I use a mailing list from the global address book in Outlook to recruit research participants?.....	4
My research involves NHS patients. Where do I apply for approval?	4
Where do I find the online ethics checklist?	5
Are there any guidelines I need to follow?	5
What documents should I attach to my ethics checklist?	5
I am completing the online ethics checklist and the name of my Supervisor is missing. What should I do?	5
Where can I find the online ethics training modules?	5
I have completed the online ethics modules (eLearning). Does this mean that I now have ethics approval and can go ahead with my data collection activities?	6
Who will approve my ethics checklist?.....	6
My checklist has been identified as high Risk. Will I need to attend a central Research Ethics Panel? 7	
How long will it take to get my ethics checklist approved?.....	7
How is risk identified?.....	8
What sort of questions will I be asked?	8
I am conducting my research in the UK but my checklist has been identified as high risk. Why?	8
How can I find out what the status of my ethics checklist is?	8
I submitted an incomplete ethics checklist in error, can I get it back?	9
I have submitted my ethics checklist but realised that I forgot to attach my participant information sheet and/or did not answer some of the questions correctly. How do I get it back so that I can edit it online?	9
I have created an ethics checklist but want to delete it. Can I?	9
I need to write a participant information and agreement. Are there any templates I can use?.....	10
I am editing my Participant Information Sheet and I need to include the name of the Deputy Dean for Research & Professional Practice (DDRPPs) in the complaints section but I don’t know who this is? 10	

I wish to use an online survey provider for my data collection, who can I ask to help with setting this up?	10
I think I need to use a Gatekeeper to help recruit my research participants but I am not sure.	10
I am recruiting research participants from overseas. Do I need to obtain permission from the country I am visiting?	11
I need to get a hard copy of my ethics checklist. Where can I get a copy?	11
I have not completed a risk assessment (checklist). Will this hold up the review of my ethics checklist?.....	11
I would like to compensate my research participants and would like to include a prize draw. How do I get this approved?	12
I have received an email 'research ethics' stating that my ethics checklist has not been approved and I need to make changes. What should I do?	12
I would like to make some changes to my research protocol and I have ethics approval. Do I need to submit a new checklist?	12
Can I get ethical clearance to use data I have already collected?	13
Who should I contact if I have a question?.....	13

Do I need to apply for ethics approval?

BU requires that all research is subject to appropriate ethical reflection, leading if necessary to formal approval via the [online ethics checklist](#). Ethics approval **must be** obtained prior to the commencement of research (normally data collection activities). 'Approval' includes internal ethics approval as well as external approval where necessary e.g. external approval from the Health Research Authority (HRA) if recruiting NHS patients as research participants.

Research Participants should not be asked to participate before ethics approval has been issued by the appropriate 'Approver'.

[Back](#)

I only want to interview one or two people. Do I need ethics approval?

Yes. All research involving human participants or identifiable personal information has ethical implications, such as data protection, confidentiality and anonymity. So **regardless** of whether your project is **low or high risk**, ethics approval **must be** obtained before you ask a research participant to take part in your research.

[Back](#)

I would like to ask volunteers to look at my questionnaire to determine whether or not I'm asking the right questions. Do I need ethics approval?

No. The reason being you are not actively recruiting these volunteers to participate in your research but rather they are acting as 'specialist advisers' or 'co-researchers', providing knowledge and expertise based on their experience. You can involve volunteers during any stage of the research cycle.

Once you have your research protocol ready and before starting the main research study, you need ethics approval.

[Back](#)

Do I need ethics approval for a pilot or feasibility study?

Yes. If you are collecting data to inform a larger study, you need ethics approval. If the findings of the pilot/feasibility study determine how the main study is managed, you may need to submit another ethics checklist for the main study, particularly if your methods have changed.

Ethics approval is not required for enlisting 'volunteers' to test your interview questions or questionnaire/survey. The aim of this activity is to find out whether or not your questions or planned research method is appropriate and/or suitable for the participants and inform your

research design. The volunteers are not research participants but rather specialist advisers or co-researchers and you are not collecting their data for research purposes.

[Back](#)

I only want to distribute an anonymous questionnaire. Do I need ethics approval?

Yes. All research involving human participants has ethical implications, such as data protection and confidentiality. So **regardless** of whether your project is **low or high risk**, ethics approval **must be** obtained before you ask a research participant to take part in your research.

[Back](#)

Can I use a mailing list from the global address book in Outlook to recruit research participants?

No. Emails to mailings lists (e.g. mailing lists set up on the Global Address book in outlook) to send unsolicited requests for recruitment to research projects or for participation in research such as online questionnaire completion is not an acceptable use of BU internal electronic mailing lists. Such emails can only be sent to electronic mailing lists set up for the purpose of recruitment (participation in research).

[Back](#)

My research involves NHS patients. Where do I apply for approval?

If you intend to recruit patients and/or relatives or carers through the NHS, or access their medical records, or personal information, approval from the Health Research Authority (HRA) and in most cases NHS REC will be required.

Please visit the [HRA website](#) for more information on the HRA and NHS REC review/approval process and the additional specific instance in which either NHS REC or HRA approval will be required.

If you are unsure as to whether your research will require approval via the NHS REC or the HRA, please use the [HRA Decision Tool](#).

In all cases, will need to submit a [BU online ethics checklist](#), which provides a central record of your project. Please attach all correspondence from the HRA/NHS REC.

Please speak to your Supervisor in the first instance to make sure they are aware of your project and are happy to support your research involving NHS patients. If you have the support of your Supervisor, please contact Suzy Wignall, Clinical Governance Adviser by email to researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk.

[Back](#)

Where do I find the online ethics checklist?

The link to the checklist is <https://ethics.bournemouth.ac.uk>. You will also find a link to the ethics checklist at <https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/log-services>. Log on using your BU login credentials.

[Back](#)

Are there any guidelines I need to follow?

Before completing an online ethics checklist you should read the [Research Ethics Code of Practice](#) and [Code of Good Research Practice](#). Both are very useful documents, providing practical guidance and points you need to consider. There are other resources available via the [research ethics blog](#).

Most questions on the ethics checklist have an 'information' icon next to them . By clicking on this, a pop up help guide appears containing practical points to consider.

[Back](#)

What documents should I attach to my ethics checklist?

If you are involving human participants in your research you will be required to attach a participant information sheet and an agreement form. Copies of questionnaires, interview questions and any recruitment flyers must also be included.

Templates (Participant Information Sheet/Agreement Form) are available to download from the [research ethics blog](#).

[Back](#)

I am completing the online ethics checklist and the name of my Supervisor is missing. What should I do?

If the name of your Supervisor is missing from the drop-down list, please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk, so their name can be added to the system. Do not go ahead and select another name! The person you select here will receive your checklist for review, so they need to know who you are and what your project is about.

[Back](#)

Where can I find the online ethics training modules?

You have access to the following online modules programmes:

- Becoming an Ethical Researcher
- Research Ethics in Practice

You will need to set up an account on the system to access. Steps to follow to access the courses are as follows:

- Go to this link: <https://courses.epigeum.com/>
- Click on the user menu and “Register” by completing the form
- The token you should enter in the registration form is **02d34ae8** - IMPORTANT – your token is restricted to the email domain **@bournemouth.ac.uk**, which means you can only use this token if you register with this email domain.
- An activation link will be sent to the e-mail address you entered. You must activate the account by clicking on the activation link when you get the e-mail before you login. NOTE: If you do not receive this email, check your SPAM mail.
- Once registration is complete, you can log in by following this link: <https://courses.epigeum.com/login>

[Back](#)

I have completed the online ethics modules (eLearning). Does this mean that I now have ethics approval and can go ahead with my data collection activities?

No! The only way to obtain ethics approval is via the [online ethics checklist](#).

The two ethics modules “Becoming an Ethical Researcher” and “Research Ethics in Practice” are online learning modules available to provide a foundation in ethical principles. They are designed to complement the workshops available through the Doctoral College Researcher Development Programme. Certificates for completed modules cannot be used to demonstrate ethics approval. Only an approved online ethics checklist represents ethics approval.

[Back](#)

Who will approve my ethics checklist?

Who approves your checklist depends on the risk identified which informs the review ‘workflow’ process. How it works in practice:

All student checklists are submitted online for **REVIEW** to the named Supervisor:

- Low-risk projects - your checklist will be forwarded by your Supervisor to a departmental Ethics Champion
- High-risk projects - your checklist will be forwarded by your Supervisor to an appropriate central Research Ethics Panel.

Any questions you may have about your ethics checklist should be directed to your Supervisor in the first instance.

[Back](#)

My checklist has been identified as high Risk. Will I need to attend a central Research Ethics Panel?

If your project needs to be reviewed by an appropriate Research Ethics Panel (REP), it means that your research concerns particularly sensitive issues and therefore needs a more in-depth ethics review. It does not mean that your research has been badly planned or that it cannot go ahead.

In the majority of cases, you will be invited to attend Panel and you will be contacted by email. Your Supervisor must accompany you to the Panel meeting.

Each REP meets once every month and on set dates (apart from August); dates are published on the [research ethics blog](#). Your checklist needs to be submitted a week before the Panel meeting (deadlines are published). Please remember that your checklist is submitted to the named Supervisor in the first instance, so make sure you leave plenty of time for your Supervisor to look over your checklist. You will need to allow for this in your research timetable. **We strongly recommend that you do not leave it until the published deadline for applications to submit your checklist** because your Supervisor may need to send it back to you online if the checklist is incomplete or there are missing supporting documents. If your checklist is complete your Supervisor will forward your checklist onto the REP for review and approval.

If your Supervisor forwards a checklist that is incomplete, **it will be returned to you** and your checklist may have to be deferred until the following month.

[Back](#)

How long will it take to get my ethics checklist approved?

If your project has been identified as 'low risk' your supervisor will forward your checklist (and attached paperwork, if relevant) to a departmental Ethics Champion to review and issue final approval. It is hard to predict how long it will take for your checklist to be approved, given varying workloads and work patterns.

Please contact your Supervisor in the first instance for an update.

If your project has been identified as '[high risk](#)' your Supervisor will forward the submission to the Research Ethics Panel to review and issue final approval. You will be invited to attend Panel (together with your supervisor). Following Panel, feedback is normally issued within 5 working days. You respond to Panel feedback in your own time. The Panel Chair will review your responses via email (usually within 2 working days). Either you will receive confirmation of Panel's decision to approve your checklist, or the Chair may ask for further clarification on points discussed.

[Back](#)

How is risk identified?

You may find that the level of risk identified for your ethics checklist is 'high'. High risk is identified by the answers you give to certain questions when completing the ethics checklist. See ['what constitutes 'high risk'](#) for more details.

[Back](#)

What sort of questions will I be asked?

When you create a checklist, you will see a list of filter questions. Depending on the filter questions you select, the main questions you need to answer will only be those that relate to your project. See ['what to expect when completing an online ethics checklist'](#) for more details.

Before you go ahead and complete the checklist, you can download a copy of the questions to discuss with your Supervisor.

[Back](#)

I am conducting my research in the UK but my checklist has been identified as high risk. Why?

You need to have a look at the filter questions you have selected in Section 2 when completing your [online ethics checklist](#).

If you have ticked YES to the question "*Will your research study take place outside the UK and/or specifically target a country outside the UK?*", and then gone on to explain that your research is taking place within the UK, the system will identify your checklist has high risk as it is assumed you are collecting your research from outside the UK (or targeting research participants from another country). See ['what constitutes 'high risk'](#) for more details.

You need to **edit your checklist** and tick **No** to the question "*Will your research study take place outside the UK and/or specifically target a country outside the UK?*". The risk status will change to low risk.

[Back](#)

How can I find out what the status of my ethics checklist is?

You will find this detail listed on the online ethics checklist – see 'My Checklist Dashboard'.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Open | You can only edit your checklist when it is in this status, i.e. when you first create the checklist or when the checklist is returned to you online by your supervisor. |
| Submitted | Applies when you submit the checklist and it is with your Supervisor for REVIEW.

<i>No further changes can be made to the checklist once the status has changed to submitted.</i> |

Forwarded Applies when the checklist has been identified as 'high risk'. The checklist has been reviewed by the named supervisor and forwarded to the Research Ethics Panel for review and approval.

Reviewed Applies when the checklist has been identified as 'low risk'. The checklist has been reviewed by the named Supervisor and forwarded to the Ethics Champion for final review and approval.

Approved Applies when the checklist has been approved.

[Back](#)

I submitted an incomplete ethics checklist in error, can I get it back?

You should contact your Supervisor and if they have not processed your application, ask them to return the checklist to online.

[Back](#)

I have submitted my ethics checklist but realised that I forgot to attach my participant information sheet and/or did not answer some of the questions correctly. How do I get it back so that I can edit it online?

You should contact your Supervisor and if they have not processed your application, ask them to return the checklist to online.

[Back](#)

I have created an ethics checklist but want to delete it. Can I?

Checklists can only be deleted when first created and before it has been submitted. As long as you see this icon  on the 'My Checklist Dashboard', you can delete the checklist.

Once the checklist has been submitted, it cannot be deleted from the system. After submission, if it is no longer required and has been returned to you by the Reviewer (Supervisor or Ethics Programme Team), it will remain on your Dashboard.

[Back](#)

I need to write a participant information and agreement. Are there any templates I can use?

Yes. Templates are available via the [research ethics blog](#). Please make sure you download the latest versions that you can adapt to make them suitable for your project. Please follow the instructions provided!

[Back](#)

I am editing my Participant Information Sheet and I need to include the name of the Deputy Dean for Research & Professional Practice (DDRPPs) in the complaints section but I don't know who this is?

The DDRPPs are as follows:

Faculty of Health & Social Sciences – Professor Vanora Hundley

Faculty of Science & Technology – Professor Tiantian Zhang

Faculty of Media & Communication – Dr Einar Thorsen

Faculty of Management – Professor Mike Silk

You should use the generic email address researchgovernance@bournemouth.ac.uk rather than include the DDRPP's BU email address.

[Back](#)

I wish to use an online survey provider for my data collection, who can I ask to help with setting this up?

The IT Skills Specialists within the IT Learning Centre manage and support Online Surveys (formerly Bristol Online Survey - BOS). If you need assistance, please email itlearningcentre@bournemouth.ac.uk.

The IT Learning Centre staff may be able to assist with other online survey providers – please contact them for advice.

[Back](#)

I think I need to use a Gatekeeper to help recruit my research participants but I am not sure.

A Gatekeeper is a person or organisation who has the overall responsibility within that organisation, and who can grant you access to participants or help you advertise your project via their members contact database (e.g. a Manager of a Care Home or Head Teacher who can grant access to residents or schoolchildren respectively). Gatekeepers cannot give consent on behalf of participants; their role is simply to help you access a particular group of people. They

should make no attempt to persuade or encourage participants to take part at any point in the process.

It is important to discuss with the Gatekeeper what role they will be taking in the recruitment process and to confirm in writing their (and your) role and responsibilities. Confirmation should be retained on the master project file; it does not need to be attached to your online ethics checklist.

[Back](#)

I am recruiting research participants from overseas. Do I need to obtain permission from the country I am visiting?

When planning research overseas, you should determine whether ethics approval is required in the country you are visiting. The [International Compilation of Human Research standards](#), provided by the US Office for Human Research Protections is a useful reference document which details Research Ethics Committees in over 100 countries (they focus on research involving humans). If a local ethics committee does not exist, advice/approval from the organisation or community where the research will be conducted should be sought.

In all cases, BU ethics approval must be obtained.

[Back](#)

I need to get a hard copy of my ethics checklist. Where can I get a copy?

Log on to the [online ethics checklist](#) and from the Dashboard, click on the PDF icon  to download a copy of the checklist.

[Back](#)

I have not completed a risk assessment (checklist). Will this hold up the review of my ethics checklist?

No. The assessment of the online risk assessment falls outside the remit of the ethics review. However, it is an important step and a risk assessment should be completed as soon as possible and before any data collection activities take place. The ethics review does take into account the safety of both the researcher and research participant but for the formal review process of the online ethics checklist is not dependent of the risk assessment being completed at the time the ethics checklist is submitted.

[Back](#)

I would like to compensate my research participants and would like to include a prize draw. How do I get this approved?

You should discuss running a prize draw with your supervisor in the first instance. If it is agreed that it would be appropriate for you to run a prize draw, email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk with details. As you will be collecting personal information (Research Participant name and contact details), it is also important that you follow data protection principles and keep this [information securely](#) but separately from the research data you collect.

[Back](#)

I have received an email 'research ethics' stating that my ethics checklist has not been approved and I need to make changes.

What should I do?

Within this email notification, there will be comments by the Reviewer (made by the Ethics Champion or Research Ethics Panel). You should log onto the [online ethics checklist](#) and depending on the recommendations, update the checklist and/or supporting participant documentation. Once you have amended the checklist, resubmit.

Low risk projects – the checklist will be sent online to your Named Supervisor who will make sure you have made all the necessary changes. If the changes are OK and your application is complete, your Supervisor will forward the checklist onto the Ethics Champion for approval.

High risk projects - the checklist will be sent online to the appropriate research ethics panel for final review. If all the changes have been incorporated, the checklist will be approved online.

[Back](#)

I would like to make some changes to my research protocol and I have ethics approval. Do I need to submit a new checklist?

No, but you will need to submit an [Amendment](#). In order to gain approval for the amendment, log onto the online ethics checklist where the approved checklist will appear on your Dashboard. Click on the clipboard icon  , which will generate an amendment request form. Once submitted, the amendment will be sent online to the person who approved the original checklist (Ethics Champion or Research Ethics Panel). Your Amendment request will be reviewed and if appropriate, approved; you will receive an email confirmation.

If the Amendment Request is outside the scope of your original ethics approval, you may be asked to complete a new online ethics checklist. Should this happen, your Amendment Request will be declined. You will receive an email confirmation.

[Back](#)

Can I get ethical clearance to use data I have already collected?

Retrospective approval of research protocols is only given in exceptional circumstances. If approval cannot be granted, any data collected cannot be used.

[Back](#)

Who should I contact if I have a question?

In the first instance you should contact your Supervisor.

[Back](#)