

Frequently Asked Questions – Staff

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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'.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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).

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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 contact Suzy Wignall, Clinical Governance Adviser for further advice by email to researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk.

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Where do I find the online ethics checklist?

The link to the checklist is <https://ethics.bournemouth.ac.uk>. Log on using your BU login credentials.

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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.

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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](#).

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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>

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Who will approve my ethics checklist?

All ethics checklist submitted by staff (academic or non-academic) are reviewed and approved by a central research ethics panel:

- I. Science, Technology & Health
- II. Social Sciences & Humanities

The review and approval is as follows:

- Low-risk projects – your checklist will be allocated to a member of an appropriate research ethics panel for review and feedback will be provided by email. You do not have to attend a physical panel meeting.
- High-risk projects – you will be invited to attend the panel meeting to answer any questions members may have. Feedback following panel will be provided by email.

Any questions you may have about your ethics checklist should be directed to researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk.

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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. Each Research Ethics Panel (REP) meets once every month 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). **We recommend that you do not leave it until the published deadline for applications to submit your checklist** in case your checklist is incomplete or there are missing supporting documents. Your checklist will be returned to you and your checklist may need to be deferred until the following month if it is not received in time to be included in the panel paperwork.

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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.

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

If your project has been identified as 'low risk', feedback should be provided within 5 working days, however, during busy periods (e.g. exam period) it may take longer, given the workloads of panel members.

Following Panel (high risk), 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) and you will receive confirmation of Panel's decision to approve your checklist, or the Panel Chair may ask for further clarification on points discussed.

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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.

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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.

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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.

Submitted Applies when you submit the checklist online.

No further changes can be made to the checklist once the status has changed to submitted.

Approved Applies when the checklist has been approved.

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

Please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk for advice.

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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?

Please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk for advice.

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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 research ethics panel, it will remain on your Dashboard.

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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!

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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

If you wish to run prize draw, you must put provide your research participants with prize draw terms & conditions. Please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk with details and they'll support you through this process.

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.

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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 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 back to the Reviewer (allocated member of the research ethics panel) for final review. If the application is complete, the checklist will be approved online.

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

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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 Research Ethics Panel who approved the original checklist. Your Amendment request will be reviewed by Chairs Action 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.

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.

I have already obtained ethics approval from another institution. Do I need to apply for BU ethics approval too?

If you have obtained ethics approval from another institution, for example you are transferring a project from a previous HEI, you will usually not be required to reapply for ethics approval. However, you need to email a copy of your original ethics approval (including any Amendments) to researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk. Your approval will be ratified by an appropriate research ethics panel.

During this period, if you are in the process of recruitment or have recruited and collected personal information which relates to an individual, you must provide your research participants with a copy of BU's [research participant privacy notice](#) as the Data Controller will now be BU.

I am collaborating with another organisation/multiple organisations – do I need BU ethics approval?

It depends on which organisation is responsible for ethics approval. If the collaborating partner is the lead organisation and responsible for ethics approval, BU ethics approval is not normally necessary where the standard ethics review is comparable with BU's review and approvals process. Approval documents must be sent to the central Research Ethics Panel via Research Development & Support (email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk) for review and ratification. If either Panel has concerns in relation to the project and what has been approved, you may be asked to complete an BU online ethics checklist and come along to Panel for discussions.

If you are unsure whether BU ethics is required, please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk for advice.

I am conducting my research overseas; do I need BU ethics approval if I have gained approval from my overseas partner?

It depends on whether your overseas partner is responsible for ethics approval.

In line with the BU [Research Ethics Code of Practice](#), where you are collaborating with an overseas partner and the partner organisation is responsible for the ethics approval, BU approval is not necessary where the ethics review is comparable with BU's review and approval process. An appropriate Research Ethics Panel (REP) must review and ratify the approval documents; approval documents should be emailed to researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk. If either REP has concerns in relation to the project and what has been approved, you may be asked to complete an BU online ethics checklist and come along to Panel for discussions.

If you/ BU is the project lead and the country has established ethical guidelines that must be adhered to, the country's ethics approval must be gained and approval documents sent to the relevant Research Ethics Panel

via RDS (email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk) as evidence for auditing purposes. BU ethics approval is also required and you should submit an online ethics checklist for review.

If you/ BU is the project lead and the country does not have established ethical guidelines, BU ethics approval is required and you should submit an [online ethics checklist](#) for review.

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.

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I have been awarded external funding and received an email from 'research ethics' instructing me to submit an online ethics checklist. Can an activity code be set up without ethics approval?

If your project is in the design phase (early beginnings), you do not need to submit an online ethics checklist. This automated email is issued from 'research ethics' when your project record on RED (Research Enterprise Database) is updated from 'pending' to 'awarded' by the Funding Development Officer/Project Delivery Officer. When your project evolves and meets one of the criteria detailed below, ethics approval is required and you should submit an online ethics checklist:

- You intend to start your data collection activity which involves:
 - Study involves human participants;
 - Study involves use of human tissue;
 - Medical research requiring NHS ethics/REC approval;
 - Study involves use of animals (or tissues/fluids derived from animals);
 - Study involves access to identifiable personal data for living individuals not already in the public domain;
 - Study involves increased danger of physical or psychological harm for researcher(s) or subject(s); or
 - The study raises any ethical issues associated with the use of genetically modified organisms.

If your project is in the design phase or you need funds to set up a network, travel to a conference, you do not need ethics approval in order for an Activity Code to be raised. Please speak to your [Project Delivery Officer](#) for further guidance.

It is important to have ethics approval in place before any data collection activities start e.g. interviews/focus group/lab testing/distribution of questionnaire/online survey.

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I am collaborating on a research project with BU colleagues, am I able to see the ethics checklist submitted for the research project?

Currently the online ethics checklist does not have the function to allow a checklist to be accessible to multiple users. If you would like to see a checklist submitted by the research team, then the Researcher (the person named on the research ethics checklist as Researcher) can download the checklist as a PDF and share

this with you via email. Any Amendments to the project have be requested by the person named on the ethics checklist as Researcher.

An ethics checklist can be transferred to another Researcher. Please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk for advice.

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I am due to leave BU and have an ongoing project(s); what will happen to my BU ethics approval? Do I need to seek ethics approval at the new institution for my research project?

This will depend on your new institution; they may accept BU's ethics approval or ask you to follow their own internal processes. Download and save a PDF copy of your ethics checklist (available from the [OEC Dashboard](#)).

In addition, you will need to think about the impact of your move in relation to your research data, in particular any personal, commercially sensitive or other confidential information (see question below).

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I am due to leave BU and have an on-going project(s); what do I need to with the research data I have collected while at BU?

If you are transferring research data to your new institution and this includes personal information, commercially sensitive or other confidential information, you should contact Legal Services (email: legalservices@bournemouth.ac.uk) for advice on whether you need to put in place any new agreements or amend any existing agreements to cover the transfer of the data (e.g. data sharing or confidentiality agreements).

If the data you are transferring includes personal information in identifiable form, you will need to provide your research participants with a copy of your new institution's research participant privacy notice, as BU will no longer be the Data Controller. If you have concerns about doing this, please contact Legal Services by email for advice.

If you do not need to take research data with you and it is not suitable/required for further research use, please make arrangements to delete/destroy the data before your leave. Otherwise please make appropriate arrangements for the storage and management of the data before you leave; this might include placing it in BORDaR and/or ensuring that an appropriate member of staff is aware of the location of the data and has responsibility for managing/destroying it in accordance with the data management plan for the project.

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Who should I contact if I have a question about my research ethics submission?

[Academic members](#) of the research ethics panels are available for informal discussions and are happy to take enquires. Alternatively, please email researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk.

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