Psychology worktribe ethics system – guidance for reviewers

Version 1, March 2023

All academic staff are on a rota list to be selected as reviewers. When your name comes up, you will get an email request to review providing a link directly to the application. The nominal deadline to complete the review is one week, but please complete the review as promptly as possible.

If you will be unavailable to review applications (e.g. for annual leave), please email psych@abdn.ac.uk to let them know.

When reviewing, the first step should be to check the uploaded PEC self-assessment form and make sure you agree with the applicant’s self-assessment of risk. If the project has been designated as low-risk and you disagree, the application should be sent back to the applicant to be either revised or resubmitted as high risk.

If you agree with the risk assessment, read the application and all the attachments and when you submit your review and the system asks for a summary**,** state the disposition clearly as:

* APPROVE
* SEND BACK TO APPLICANT (Conditional)
* SEND BACK TO APPLICANT (Resubmit)
* REJECT

And add comments here to justify your decision. You can also add comments throughout the proposal by clicking on the little speech bubbles, but please use the review comments field for the main concerns. Be aware that the office staff will send the application back to you for clarification if the disposition is not clearly stated.

For consistency with our current ethical review process, there are two different "SEND BACK TO APPLICANT" outcomes: "SEND BACK TO APPLICANT (Conditional)" and "SEND BACK TO APPLICANT" (Resubmit). With the SEND BACK TO APPLICANT (Conditional) outcome, a revised application will be approved by the office staff once it has been re-submitted. We operate a trust system for the conditional review (although the Chair or triage members can check on the resubmission). With the SEND BACK TO APPLICANT (Resubmit) outcome, a revised application will go to the same reviewers.

The “REJECT” category means the application is irredeemably unethical, even with revisions. Once an application is rejected, it can no longer be edited, revised, or amended.

From the reviewer’s perspective the process for low and high risk applications is the same. For high-risk applications there will be five reviewers submitting comments instead of one, and the head of ethics will read and summarise the comments for the applicant.