

Hints, tips and common mistakes

The following list contains some hints and tips, based on what makes life easier for SERB. (And if things are easier, our review can be quicker.) It also contains some advice based on recently submitted applications to SERB.

1. Please proof-read your documents thoroughly, and ensure consistency between documents. For example, how long will you be retaining participants' data? This cannot be 10yrs in one document, and 6yrs in another.

It is, of course, perfectly legitimate to keep different data for different lengths of time (e.g. to keep audio-recordings only until they are transcribed, but to keep the transcriptions for several years), as long as this is clearly explained.

2. Participants cannot give informed consent if they are not adequately informed. Don't ask for participant consent for anything which is:
 - a. Not in the Protocol, and/or
 - b. Not in the PIS.

For example, if the protocol states that interviews will be audio-recorded, don't ask for consent for video.

3. Please limit the documents submitted to SERB to those required for the specific project that we are being asked to review. For example:
 - a. If there's a survey plus participant interviews, then of course we need to see documents relating to both. Whereas, if your overall project has a systematic literature review and then a survey, we don't need to see the protocol, or any other documents, relating to the review.
 - b. We don't need to see PhD timelines or Gantt charts unless they are directly relevant.
 - c. Please don't just copy and paste stuff from your grant application. We don't need to see your overall budget and justification of costs.
 - d. Some documents (e.g. researchers' GCP and/or Research Integrity certificates) can be combined into a single file.

4. Please upload single copies of each document. If you make a mistake and upload a draft, and wish to replace it, either make it very clear that the original document has been superseded (correct version control should do this) or delete the incorrect version. This can be done until you submit the application, after which it's locked for editing.

To accompany this document, we recommend that you also read:

- SERB – Guidance Document 2 Guidance for applicants
- SERB – Guidance Document 3 Hints, tips and common mistakes