**RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST – UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN**

All academic staff, PGT, PGR, and UG students should consider the ethical dimensions of their research using the self-assessment checklist below and, where necessary, seek ethical review and approval. While some specific research types will need external/specialised review, others go through [**internal ethics** **review**](#_Internal_ethics_review)*.*

Further consideration must be exercised for any project that answers **YES** to any one or more of the questions on this page, and the appropriate process must be followed. The following advice covers the most common types of research activity, however researchers are encouraged to seek further advice from your [ethics board representatives](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/research-governance-10644.php#panel6494) on any aspect of ethical approval of research where they remain unsure.

| **Does the research involve the NHS and/or any type of clinical research?** | *For appropriate process see below* | Yes/No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project involves NHS staff, resources, facilities, patients, data, their carers, the administration of medicinal products or intervention with a medical device | Likely needs external review  Please contact [researchgovernance@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:researchgovernance@abdn.ac.uk) |  |

| **Does the research involve human participants or their remains (excluding clinical research)? (examples of the different types of research involving human participants are listed below)** | *For appropriate process see below* | Yes/No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project involves e.g. local council (for research in schools, or involving council resources, staff etc), prison service, armed forces, UK Social Care organisation | Might need [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) before an application is submitted to the appropriate external review process.  Contact the [Research Policy & Strategy Team](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/contact-us/contact-us-10570.php#faq9) for further guidance  If the research involves His Majesty’s Prison Service (England and Wales) then contact [researchgovernance@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:researchgovernance@abdn.ac.uk) for further guidance. |  |
| Project gathers data for University Business (not for publication as an academic output/outcome) | Data protection impact assessment may be required, but no internal ethics review (as this is **not** research activity)  Please contact [dpa@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:dpa@abdn.ac.uk) |  |
| Other projects involving human participants, human tissue or their remains (for publication as an academic output/outcome) | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Research within scope of [Safeguarding Policy](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/policy-zone-employment/SafeguardingPolicy.pdf) | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) and may require a safeguarding plan.  Contact the [Research Policy & Strategy Team](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/contact-us/contact-us-10570.php#faq9) for further guidance |  |

| **Does the research involve existing data from humans?** | *For appropriate process see below* | Yes/No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project includes [**personal**](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/data-protection-6958.php#panel11099)data that was collected for a different project | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Project accesses data from a public database  The data accessed from the public database is personal data | Permission may be required from the gatekeeper of the data  Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Project involves collecting data from websites or from social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) that can be attributed to a person | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Project uses data that raises ethical concerns due to the data’s   * provenance, * the original participants’ consent for future use of the data * access to sensitive data not already in the public domain * social profiling * potential adverse impact on a particular group or community | Contact your [Ethics Chair](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/ethical-review-10645.php#panel10594) for further guidance |  |

| **Does the project involve animals (or their tissue, or material derived from animal tissue e.g. cell lines)?** | *For appropriate process see below* | Yes/No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project involves non-human vertebrates or cephalopods, and procedures cause that animal a level of pain, suffering, distress, or lasting harm equivalent to, or higher than, that caused by inserting a hypodermic needle | Needs review by the AWERB and licensing |  |
| Project involves non-human vertebrates or cephalopods but lies under the threshold for licensing (e.g. observation) | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) with potential referral to the AWERB |  |
| Project involves husbandry or euthanasia of invertebrates other than cephalopods | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Project involves animal tissue that will be obtained from a commercial source (including e.g. a supermarket) | Does not require ethical review |  |
| Project involves animal tissue that will be obtained from a project that has already received ethical approval | Does not require ethical review |  |
| Project involves animal tissue that will be obtained from another source | May require ethics review. Please contact your [Ethics Chair](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/ethical-review-10645.php#panel10594) for further guidance. |  |

| **Other** **considerations** | *For appropriate process see below* | Yes/No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Does the research involve non-human genetic resources or their derivatives from outside the United Kingdom? | Needs consideration of Access and Benefit-Sharing regulations  Please contact [nagoyaprotocol@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:nagoyaprotocol@abdn.ac.uk) for further guidance |  |
| Is there any potential for conflict of interest between research funder, investigators and/or participants that may affect funding, dissemination, or other research outcomes? | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Does the project have the potential to cause environmental damage or harm (e.g. through pollutants, disturbing nature etc)  *This includes the natural environment but also buildings and structures created by people, especially ones of historical or archaeological importance.* | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Does the project give rise to a realistic risk to the national security of any country? (e.g. it has been commissioned by the military; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups (or could fall under the [Counter-terrorism and Security Act [Prevent duty])](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/legal-and-compliance-248.php#panel6427) | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Does the project have the potential to cause reputational damage to the researcher, research participants or the University? (e.g. made complicit to an illegal act, involves accessing materials that would normally be prohibited by the UoA’s computing regulations, research into activities that could be considered illegal) | Needs [internal ethics review](#_Internal_ethics_review) |  |
| Does the project involve dual-use research (i.e. where the research is intended to be beneficial, but which could be misapplied to do harm) | Contact the [Research Policy & Strategy Team](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/contact-us/contact-us-10570.php#faq9) for further guidance |  |

**If ethical review is NOT required for your project, it is recommended that you retain the completed checklist with your research records in the event of any future queries.**

# Internal ethics review

The University currently has six ethical review boards and committees: one for Arts, Social Sciences and Business; one for Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition; one for Physical Sciences and Engineering; one for Psychology; one for the Rowett Institute; one for the School of Biological Sciences. Before staff and students apply for ethical approval, they should consult the [guidance of their respective ethics board](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/ethical-review-10645.php), including standard operating procedures and ethics policies, as they include crucial information for planned applications.

**All staff and PGR students:**

The applicant and all members of the research team (who are affiliated to the University of Aberdeen) must complete the University’s mandatory [online Research Ethics & Governance training](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/research-governance-304.php#panel6321). Applications for ethical review are processed through the [Worktribe Ethics module](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/ethics-system-worktribe-14748.php).

**UG and PGT students:**

Please refer to the ethical review procedures outlined in your Project Guidelines or contact your Course/Programme Coordinator for further advice.