

Research ethics review in a nutshell!

Ethics review is **required** for any study involving:

- Interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations of people, etc.
- User generated data (e.g. from discussion forums, social media platforms, vlogs or blogs, comments on posts or articles)
- The collection of any personal data/identifiable information (e.g. names, email addresses, IP addresses, social media profiles or meta-data, visual material, etc.), or use of any secondary data that include any personal data/identifiable information
- Any other information that could identify (or potentially lead to the identification of) a living individual. For example, where information from micro datasets, if combined, could lead to the identification of individuals, or where an online search for particular wording could lead to the identification of an individual.
- The potential that findings/conclusions/publication may have damaging repercussions for any individuals (reputation, stigma, bullying) or groups with protected characteristics
- Any other reason why the research might raise ethical issues

You must obtain approval of your ethics review before you commence any data collection

Covid19: we recommend you conduct your research remotely/online wherever possible. Please see our guidance on [conducting primary research online](#). Further information is available on the main [research ethics webpage](#).

Informed consent is very important. Think about how you will handle this. See the [LSE guidance on Informed consent](#) which includes two sample templates you can use.

If you plan to use **publicly available** data, note that *legal* use is not the same as *ethical* use (more info [here](#))

If you plan to use **social media data** please see the one-page guidance/link to resources [here](#).

How to complete your ethics review online

1. Read the instructions on the [research ethics submission webpage](#)
2. Complete the ethics review form using the link for researchers (student or staff)

Remember to: - reflect on the questions and answer honestly

- discuss any questions or concerns with your supervisor, or email research.ethics@lse.ac.uk

Approval of your ethics review

'Low risk': Your supervisor will automatically receive your review form once you submit it. They will review it and (if appropriate) approve it. You will receive an automatic notification if they have any comments and/or once it is approved. Or....

'High risk': If your research will involve any of the features below, your ethics review form will be submitted by your supervisor to the **Research Ethics Committee** (REC) for review/approval. (REC review typically takes up to 4 weeks from submission by the supervisor.)

REC review/approval is required for any research that:

- Involves deception of participants or is conducted without their full consent at the time the data are gathered
- Might have negative repercussions for any individuals or groups
- Will obtain consent verbally but not in writing
- Will involve vulnerable groups or sensitive topics
- Involves any risks (whether emotional, physical or reputational) to either the participants or the researcher(s)

Data Management Plans: We strongly recommend that you complete a DMP as these are important to ensure you comply with data protection regulations. Please see the guidance [here](#)

For further guidance: see [research ethics webpage](#)

Contacts: [Lyn Grove](#) (research ethics), [Data librarian](#) (data management, data protection, data agreements)