

Submitting an ethics review application via the online submission system ('My Research')

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACADEMIC & RESEARCH STAFF*

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*** These instructions are for staff who need to submit an ethics review for their own research. There are separate instructions for supervisors and departmental approvers as to how to review applications. These can be found [here](#)**

Staff should also ensure they are familiar with the LSE Research Ethics Policy and procedures which can be found [here](#).

Overview

An ethics review must be completed for research involving ANY of the following:

- Interviews, surveys, focus groups, experiments with or 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

Using **My Research** platform researchers can:

- Submit an ethics review application
- Get confirmation in cases where ethics approval is *not* required
- Log in at any time to check the status of an application
- Receive automatic notifications by email when any action is required
- Provide details of any external ethics review that your project will or has undergone

Review/approval routes

1) Departmental¹ review

Applications that raise few ethical issues will be automatically routed to Departmental review/approval. Such applications will be reviewed by the Departmental/faculty ethics approver.²

2) Research Ethics Committee review

Applications for projects that include any of the following elements will require review/approval by the Research Ethics Committee: sensitive topics (which participants may find emotional or distressing); vulnerable groups; research that poses a risk (whether physical or emotional/psychological) to either the participant or the researcher beyond that normally encountered in their regular activities; deception or the withholding of information as to the true purpose of the research; where consent will not be obtained in writing (with an exception for the Anthropology department).

Such applications will be automatically routed directly to REC review process. You will be notified if any further information is required, or when your application has been approved.

¹ For reasons of simplicity the term 'Departmental' is used here to encompass research Centres and Institutes too.

² A list of all Department/centre faculty ethics approvers can be found on the webpage [here](#).

Timeframe

All researchers must ensure that they have ethics approval before they commence any data collection for their projects. Applications can be submitted at any time; however, researchers should allow for the following timeframes for the review/approval process:

- **Departmental review:** timeframe subject to the Departmental ethics approver
- **Research Ethics Committee review:** as a general rule researchers should **allow at least four weeks for the REC review process** ; however more complex applications could take up to 5-6 weeks.
- **Expedited review:** where there is a genuine case for urgency due to circumstances which could not have been anticipated and which are outside of the researcher's control,³ the Research Ethics Committee will expedite the review process as quickly as possible; researchers should email research.ethics@lse.ac.uk to request this. Please do not expect, however, that urgency will preempt the full extent of the review process.

What questions will the review form comprise?

The review questions are presented over a series of screens. So that researchers know what questions to expect on each screen, you can see all the questions [here](#).

What supporting documentation is required?

When you have answered the questions in the ethics review form you will then need to upload the following documentation:

- The **informed consent document(s)** you intend to use. This is required before you can submit the form. (There may be some circumstances in which a researcher will not be obtaining informed consent - for instance in some participant observation settings; in these cases there is a tick box where you can indicate that informed consent will not be obtained, and you will then be able to submit your ethics review application.)
- **Other supporting documentation** is not mandatory but may be helpful for the review, such as a more detailed description of the study if you have one. If your topic is quite sensitive you should also upload an outline of your planned interview questions/guide. You can add any further documentation that you think relevant.

How to submit an ethics review application

Logging in to 'My Research'

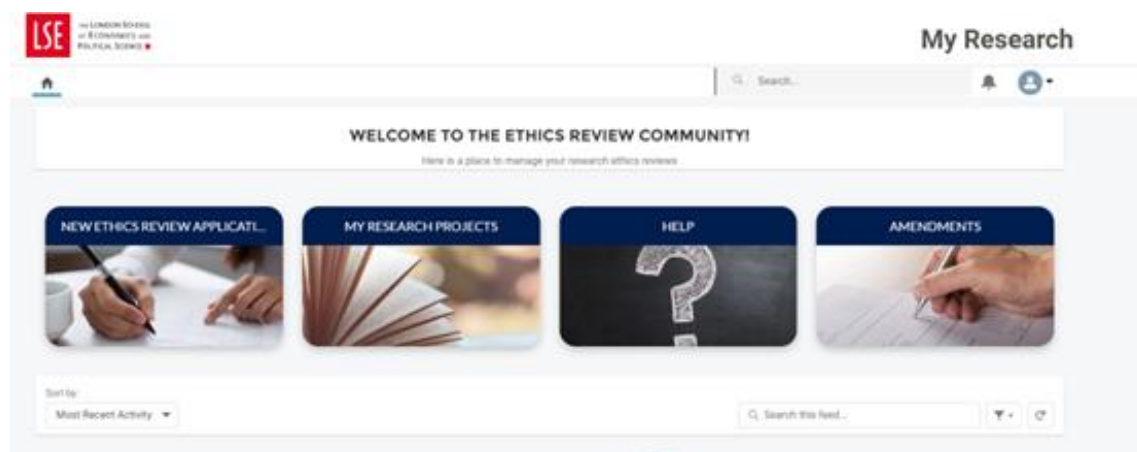
We recommend that researchers use **Google Chrome**⁴

Go to the 'My Research' portal via <https://portal.lse.ac.uk/myresearch/login>.

Log in using your normal LSE login details. You will then be presented with the **My Research** homepage:

³ For example, in the case of fast-track funding to address global or national emergencies.

⁴ The system may not work well with some other browsers. If you have any problems with cookies please see the guidance [here](#)



From this screen you can either begin a new ethics review application, or you can view existing or previous applications you have submitted. (Any previous applications or applications you are in the process of completing will appear under the 'My Research projects' tab.)

Creating and submitting a new ethics review application

To begin, click on the box 'New ethics review application'. You will then be presented with the first screen of questions.

When completing the form, please note:

- All questions are mandatory (if any questions are not applicable you can enter N/A).
- Data is automatically saved once you progress beyond screen A.
- Your form cannot be submitted until you have completed all screens, uploaded any required documentation and submitted.

Note: Use of AI when completing the ethics review form

Please note that whilst use of AI may help give you some useful ideas of some of the ethics considerations to bear in mind and ways to mitigate any ethics concerns your study may give rise to, we strongly discourage researchers from copying responses from AI into the ethics form. Doing so is likely to result in the inclusion of generic information that is not relevant to your study or that contradicts information you provide elsewhere in the form or attachments. Where this is the case it is likely to delay the review of your ethics form.

In all, the screens are as follows⁵:

- A: About the study
- B: Researcher Details
- C: Does the study require research ethics approval?⁶
- D: LSE vs external research ethics review
- E: External research ethics review (*screen E will only appear if 'Yes' to any questions on Screen D*)

⁵ Remember, if you want to know what questions to expect on each screen, you can see all the questions [here](#)

⁶ If the study does not require ethics approval the form may end at the end of this screen. See further details about 'Approval Not Required' in section 3 below.

F: Type of ethics review

G: Ethics Review Questions (General)

H: Ethics Review Questions (Additional) *(Screen H only appears if certain elements flagged in Screen F)*

J: Previous experience and covering comments

At the end of the review form (Screen J), when you click Next you'll be taken to the Next Steps screen:

Next steps (attachments) screen

The top of the screen confirms the status and what next steps are required.

The screenshot shows the 'Next Steps' section of the ethics review interface. At the top, there is a header bar with the following information: 'Reference: 98394', 'Status: Pending Submission', 'Type: Departmental review' (highlighted in orange), and two buttons: 'Edit form' and 'Submit'. Below this, a box titled 'Next Steps:' contains the text: 'You now need to upload the required attachments below then click the **Submit** button when ready.'

If you want to go back to re-edit the application form click on 'Edit form'; if you want to download a pdf copy of your application form click on the 'Print form' button; otherwise, continue to the 'Attachments' section below.

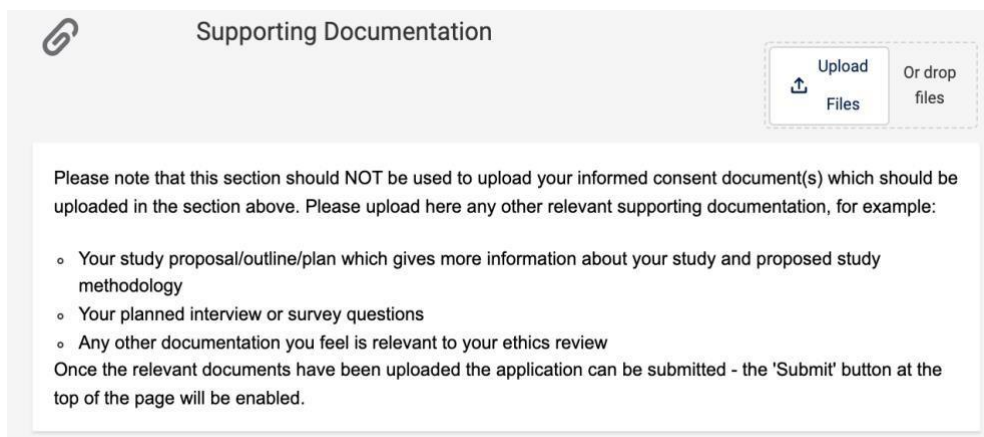
The attachments section consists of two parts:

i) Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form:

The screenshot shows the 'Attachments' section of the ethics review interface. At the top, there is a toggle switch labeled 'I am not obtaining informed consent'. Below this, a box titled 'Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form' is marked as 'REQUIRED' with a red asterisk. To the right of the title is an 'Upload Files' button and a dashed box labeled 'Or drop files'. The main content area contains several paragraphs of text providing guidance on informed consent, including sections for 'Written consent', 'Online surveys', 'Verbal consent', 'Participant observation / ethnography', and 'Use of deception'.

Please read the information on the page about informed consent and also refer to the LSE [informed consent guidance](#) (which includes sample templates). Then upload your informed consent document(s). If you will be using verbal consent you should upload the script that you will use. If you will not be obtaining consent at all (for instance, in cases of participant observation in public areas), then check the '*I am not obtaining informed consent*' button at the top of the Attachments section. If your study involves an element of deception you should also upload a participant de-brief document.

ii) Supporting Documentation:



Supporting Documentation

Please note that this section should NOT be used to upload your informed consent document(s) which should be uploaded in the section above. Please upload here any other relevant supporting documentation, for example:

- Your study proposal/outline/plan which gives more information about your study and proposed study methodology
- Your planned interview or survey questions
- Any other documentation you feel is relevant to your ethics review

Once the relevant documents have been uploaded the application can be submitted - the 'Submit' button at the top of the page will be enabled.

In the 'Supporting Documentation' section you can upload any other relevant documents, such as a fuller description of the study if you have one, your interview questions/guide, etc. These are not compulsory, however if your topic is sensitive then you should attach a copy of the outline of your interview/survey questions.

Submitting

Once you click the Submit button, your application will be automatically submitted to the relevant reviewer/approver. The page will update as follows:

Departmental review: the 'Ethics Review Status' near the top of the page will state 'With departmental approver'.

REC review: the 'Ethics Review Status' near the top of the page will state 'With REC'.

You will not be able to edit your ethics application form at this point, but if you wish to view the form you have submitted you can click the 'Review' button and then the 'Print form' button will appear which will allow you to download or print a pdf copy.

When you've finished

When you've finished you can either log out of My Research or you can click on the 'My Research Projects' tab. Here you will find a list of this and any other applications you have submitted for ethics review and **view their status**.

Data collection should not commence until your application has been approved.

You will receive an email notification once your application has been reviewed and/or approved.

The review process (and responding to reviewer comments)

1. Departmental review

The Departmental/faculty ethics approver will receive an automatic email notification when an application has been submitted. Once they have reviewed the application you will receive an email notification that:

- i) They have approved the application, OR
- ii) They request some further information

In the case of (ii), the email notification will show the supervisor's comments. It will also contain a blue button 'Update Application'; once you click on that button, you will see the Next Steps page. Here you can also view the supervisor's comments (if you click on 'Show comments') - see screenshot below.

The screenshot shows the LSE My Research interface for an ethics review. At the top, it says 'Test 2 - 28 July - Ethics Review'. Below this, there's a status bar with a green question mark icon, 'Reference: 247691', 'Status: Comments for researcher', 'Type: REC review required', and buttons for 'Edit form' and 'Submit'. The 'Next Steps' section instructs the user to review comments and add responses, with a link to 'Edit Form'. Below this is a text editor for 'J3. Latest Response to Reviewer's Comments' with a rich text toolbar. The response text reads: 'Dear Lyn, many thanks for your comments. I have uploaded a new version of my information sheet. Best wishes, Myriam'. At the bottom, there's a comment from 'Lyn Grove' dated '14/01/2025, 09:42' which says: 'Dear Myriam, your application looks well considered. However please can you simplify the participant information sheet so that it uses less academic terminology - it needs to be easily understood by your intended participants. Please re-submit once you have uploaded the new version. Thank you'. Below that is a comment from 'Myriam FELLOUS-SIGRIST' dated '10/01/2025, 12:38'.

Responding to reviewer comments

You can respond to the supervisor's comments in box J3 ("Response to reviewers' comments" box)

Use the 'Edit form' button to make any necessary changes to the ethics form and/or attachments.

We recommend you include in J3 a note of which sections/attachments you have made changes to as this is helpful for the reviewers.

Once you have made the relevant changes you must click **Submit** to return the application to the supervisor. You will receive a further notification with your supervisor's response in due course.

2. Research Ethics Committee review

For higher risk applications the application will be submitted directly to the Research Ethics Committee for review/approval.

Once the REC has reviewed the application you will receive an email notification that:

- i) Your application has been approved, OR
- ii) Further information is requested

In the case of (ii), the process is the same as per (ii) above

Once an application has been approved by the REC, you will receive an email confirming this. If you require a formal letter of confirmation this can be provided.

3. 'Approval not required'

If you are confident that your study will not involve any of the types of data collection or issues listed at the top of p.2, you do not need to complete/submit an ethics review form. Thus the following is more for your information only.

If a you have answered NO to questions C1 (a-d) and C2, when you click 'Next' at the bottom of Screen C the form will end there and you will receive an email notification that approval may not be required. The form is automatically sent to the departmental ethics approver who will confirm that approval is not required (unless they consider any changes/corrections to the form are required). You will receive an email notification confirming whether or not any further action is required.

4. External ethics review

The School seeks to avoid duplication of ethics review where possible. If your project will undergo ethics review at another academic institution or equivalent organization, you may be able to request exemption from LSE review. You need to complete the ethics review form as far as screen E. At question E2 ('Will you also require LSE ethics review/approval?') you can answer 'No'. Once you submit, the form will be received by the Research Ethics Managers. The REM will assess whether or not the external review is appropriate/sufficient or whether the application should also go through the School's research ethics review/approval process. Examples of where external review would normally be considered appropriate/sufficient could include:

- Where the external organisation is another academic institution within the UK;
- Where the external organisation is an international academic institution operating in a country with equivalent ethical standards to the UK, and has a defined ethics review policy/ approval procedure⁷;
- Where the external organisation is a third-party organisation that can demonstrate the existence of an ethics approval process that aligns to the standards applicable to higher education institutions and /or is appropriate for the research in question (e.g. Health Research Authority/NHS REC, Social Care Research Ethics Committee, etc.).

The researcher will need to confirm that the external ethics review/approval will cover all research activities to be undertaken by themselves/any LSE researchers involved in the project, and to provide a copy of the external ethics approval once that has been obtained.

⁷ Some US Institutional Review Boards exempt low risk studies from requiring review/approval. Since the LSE ethics policy requires review for any study involving human participants or identifiable data, a US IRB *exemption* will not be accepted in lieu of LSE ethics review approval.

How to amend an application after approval

Ethics review forms cannot be edited once they have been approved. If you need to make amendments to a study that has already received ethics approval please follow these steps:

- Complete the [amendments form](#).⁸
- Send this to the research ethics team via research.ethics@lse.ac.uk
- The research ethics team will advise whether any further review of the proposed amendment is required (either by the Department or the Research Ethics Committee as appropriate) prior to approval.
- Once approval is confirmed, the research ethics team will upload a copy of the Amendments form to the researcher's original ethics application submission online.

For very minor amendments please email the [Research Ethics](#) team in the first instance to check if an amendments form is required.

Questions/support

If you have any questions relating to the ethics review process please contact the research ethics team via research.ethics@lse.ac.uk We aim to respond within 2 working days.

If you have any technical problems please contact Research.systems@lse.ac.uk

If you have any technical problems please contact Research.systems@lse.ac.uk

⁸ You can also find this form by going to 'My Research' via <https://portal.lse.ac.uk/myresearch/login> and log in using your normal LSE login details.