

Online research ethics submission system:

Instructions for supervisors and Departmental Approvers

on reviewing applications

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Any questions about the ethics review process should be directed to research.ethics@lse.ac.uk

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

Overview

The online Research Ethics Submissions System allows researchers (whether students or staff) to submit their ethics applications for review/approval by the appropriate approver (supervisor¹, Departmental ethics approver, or Research Ethics Review Board²).

Researchers log in to the **My Research** platform from which they can:

- Submit an ethics review application
- Log in at any time to check the status of their application
- Receive automatic notifications by email when any action is required

¹ The term 'supervisor' is used throughout this guidance to encompass project/dissertation/thesis supervisor or academic mentor/advisor as appropriate.

² The Research Ethics Committee (REC) has now become the Research Ethics Review Board (RERB). Some parts of the online system, however, will still refer to the REC.

- Provide details of any external ethics review that the study will or has undergone

Review/approval routes

Ethics review applications are automatically categorised as requiring either Departmental review/approval or Research Ethics Review Board review/approval. This is determined by the researcher's answers to screen F of the form.

1) Departmental³ review

Applications that raise few ethical issues will be automatically routed to Departmental review/approval.

For staff, such applications are reviewed by the Departmental ethics approver⁴.

For students, such applications are reviewed by the appropriate supervisor⁵ (who the student will need to name in B7 of the form).

In addition, MSc student projects which are **not** for dissertations, and **all** undergraduate projects, are reviewed at Departmental level (unless the project supervisor has concerns and refers to the RERB), even where the project includes elements that would normally require review/approval by the Research Ethics Review Board.

2) Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) review

Applications for projects that include any of the following elements will be categorised as requiring review/approval by the Research Ethics Review Board:

- sensitive topics (which participants may find emotional or distressing);
- involvement of vulnerable groups as participants;
- 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 writing⁶;
- the collection of any biometric or physiological data.

Staff applications which require RERB review are submitted directly to the Research Ethics Review Board (they do not go to the Departmental ethics approver for review).

However, **all student applications will first be reviewed by the relevant supervisor** before being submitted (by the supervisor) to the RERB. (A supervisor cannot approve an application that requires Research Ethics Review Board review/approval).

Receiving/accessing an application

When a researcher (whether student or staff) submits an ethics review application, the relevant supervisor/approver will receive an automatic email notification that a review is required.

³ For reasons of simplicity the term 'Departmental' is used here to encompass research Centres and Institutes too.

⁴ A list of all Department/centre faculty ethics approvers can be found on the webpage [here](#).

⁵ Hereafter in this guidance the word 'supervisor' is used to encompass project/dissertation/thesis supervisor (or academic mentor/advisor) as appropriate.

⁶ There is an exception to this for staff/students in the Anthropology department

The email will include a link to access the application directly.

Alternatively, supervisors/approvers can log into the Salesforce Research Ethics app at any time to view the list of applications pending their review (or to view any previously actioned reviews).

The system can be accessed by going to:

<https://lse360.lightning.force.com/> (we recommend using **Google Chrome**⁷)

Log in with your usual LSE network credentials⁸

Once logged in, click on the ‘Research ethics’ box.

Viewing the ‘To action’ or other project lists

On opening the app, under the **Home tab**, supervisors/approvers they will see their ‘To Action’ list, which should look like this:

Request	Due Date	Requester	Project	Review Type
1 35837		Staff Researcher	Amanda_Anthro low risk	Low Risk Ethics Review
2 35841		Staff Researcher	TEST AB	Low Risk Ethics Review
3 35843		Staff Researcher	Testing E2 options	Low Risk Ethics Review

This is a list of all of the applications that require their review and action. Once they have completed the necessary review/action, the application will move to the “Completed” tab.

Supervisors/approvers can also click on the “Research Projects” tab at the top of the page , where:

- the “My Research Projects” list view will display only their own research ethics applications (where they are the actual researcher, rather than the reviewer);
- the “All – Submitted” list view, where supervisors can view all applications submitted by or to them, and Department Approvers can view all applications submitted by them, as well as all applications submitted by students or staff in their departments.

For information: **administrative staff** (such as programme managers) can request access to the system so that they can help monitor student submissions. They can view the list of submissions and see the application status. However they cannot open individual review forms.

Reviewing an application

⁷ If you experience any problems with cookies, please see the guidance [here](#)

⁸ If you presented with a choice of ‘University Email Address’ or ‘LSE Staff Login’, please use the LSE staff login

i) Reviewing the ethics form

To open a project/form to review, the supervisor/reviewer can either click on the link in the email notification they have received, or they can log into the system, as described above, and click on the 'Request' (i.e. reference) number.

The form will open as per the screenshot below.

The supervisor/reviewer can scroll up and down to read the form; the form view can be expanded/changed by using the 'All' button in the bottom LH corner to toggle between different views, and/or they can click on the circle/arrows button on the top right of the form to expand the view (however in the latter case the 'Attachments' tab will no longer be visible, until the button is clicked again).

Our [quick guide 'Ethics review considerations'](#) summarises the key elements to consider when completing (and reviewing) an ethics review application.

The screenshot shows a web-based application for reviewing ethics applications. At the top, there is a header with a 'Request 07334' button, a '+ Follow' button, and an 'Edit' button. Below the header, there are two tabs: 'History' (which is selected) and 'Attachments'. The main content area is divided into sections:

- Scorecard:** Shows a 'Low Risk Ethics Approver' status and a 'Decision' button.
- Comments:** A text box containing a covering comment: "Dear Dr Jones, further to our discussion last week I have decided to include some interviews with employers as well as employees. I hope that makes sense".
- A1. Title of research project /study:** The input field contains "Harassment Behaviour in the Service Industry".
- A2. Is this study funded?** The input field contains "No".
- Who is/are the funder(s)?** The input field contains "Please select...".
- Please add the funder(s) below:** An empty input field.
- A3. Abstract:** A text area with the instruction "Your abstract should outline in non-technical language the purpose of the research (Approx. 150-200 words)".

At the bottom left, there is a 'All' button with a document icon. The bottom right corner of the interface has a 'Follow' and 'Edit' button.

ii) Reviewing attachments

Click on the 'Attachments' tab to review the supporting documentation that the researcher has uploaded. This will normally comprise the participant information sheet/consent form, but may also include other supporting documents (e.g. a research outline, interview topic guide, etc.). **It is important that supervisors/reviewers check the informed consent document(s), and that these are in keeping with the [LSE informed consent guidance](#)/suggested templates. In particular, please check that what the researcher states in the consent form is consistent with what they state in the information sheet and in the ethics form** (for example, relating to anonymity).

iii) Decision options

Having reviewed the form and attachments, the supervisor/approver needs to select/submit their decision.

In the 'Scorecard' section on the left, click on the down arrow under the 'Decision' button – this will display the decision options. These are slightly different depending on whether the application has been categorised as Departmental Review, RERB review, or 'Approval not required':

Departmental reviews:

For Departmental reviews there are two decision options: to approve, or to request changes from the researcher.

(For MSc student projects which are not for dissertations, and all UG projects, there is also an *optional* third decision to 'Refer to RERB' – see below)

i) If you have comments for the researcher to respond to: select 'Changes required', and then in the box below add the comments and/or the requested changes. (Note that the box can be expanded by dragging from the bottom right corner.)

The screenshot shows a 'Scorecard' interface for 'Departmental Review'. At the top, it says 'Scorecard' and 'Departmental Review'. Below that is a dark blue bar with the word 'Decision'. Underneath is a section with a red box around the 'Changes required' option. The 'Changes required' option is selected. Below this section is a red 'Submit Review' button.

Once you have entered your comments, click the 'Submit' button. The researcher will receive an automated email notification that further action is required. The email will contain the supervisor/departmental approver's comments. The researcher will be able to re-edit their application and/or supporting documents and re-submit. Once the researcher re-submits their revised application, the supervisor/approver will then receive another email notification. They can approve (or request yet further changes).

ii) To approve: If the supervisor/departmental approver is happy to approve the application they can select the 'Approved' option, enter a comment, and then click 'Submit review'. The researcher will then receive an automated email notification confirming that their ethics review has been approved.

iii) UG and MSc research projects: MSc student projects which are *not* for dissertations, and all undergraduate projects, are exempted from RERB review even if they include some elements which would normally require RERB review (as per the elements described on p.2, §2). Supervisors are expected to discuss any ethical issues with the student and agree appropriate safeguards before opting to approve. Should the supervisor have any serious concerns that have not been resolved after discussion with the student there is an *optional decision to 'Refer to RERB'*.

Applications categorised as requiring RERB review/approval:

For applications categorised as requiring RERB review⁹ there are two decision options:

- i) To request further information or changes: to request further information/changes from the researcher (in the same way as for Departmental review applications above), or
- ii) to refer to the RERB.

Supervisors/Departmental approvers do not have the option to approve applications which have been categorised as requiring RERB review.

To refer to RERB: if the supervisor is happy with the application they should select the 'Send to RERB' decision option. **Please provide a few comments to indicate your support of the application and/or any concerns.** Then click 'Submit'. The application is then assigned to the RERB for review/approval.

Where the Committee have comments for a student to respond to, the supervisor will receive a copy of these.

iv) 'Approval not required'

Screen C determines whether or not ethics approval is required. If the student has answered NO to both questions C1 (a-d) and C2, the application will be categorised as 'Approval not required' (pending confirmation).

The form will automatically be sent to the project supervisor (for students)/ethics approver (for staff) who should review the details (for instance, checking that the data collection described in A4 is consistent with the answers given in C1/C2).

The supervisor/ethics approver will have two decision options:

- i) to confirm that approval is not required, or
- ii) that changes to the form are required.

Once the decision is submitted the researcher will receive the corresponding email notification.

⁹ Reminder that applications submitted by staff (academic or research) which require RERB review will go directly to the RERB for review, they will not go to the Departmental ethics approver.