Helpful Information for Applicants

Important things to consider when writing an ethics application

General

1. Please consult the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Human Research Ethics Manual before preparing your application. They contain very useful information and will help you to prepare a sound application.

2. Please note that preparing an ethics application takes a lot of time. You should plan ahead and submit your application well before the commencement of your research. We would recommend submitting your application at least two months prior to the proposed start date.

3. Give your supervisor (and ADR if applicable) time to review your ethics application before it is due. Some faculties require your application approximately 7 to 10 days before the Committee's deadline (check with your Faculty for the exact dates).

4. If your application is written in poor English with typographical and grammatical errors, it will make it difficult to understand and the Committee is likely to seek clarification.

5. The Committee meets once a month. All meetings are usually held at the end of every month and all high risk applications are due two weeks prior to the meeting. You can find the Committee's meeting dates here: http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/ucresearch/integrityandethics/human-ethics/meeting-dates.

6. Low risk applications can be submitted at any time and will be assessed by the University's Low Risk Panel. Low risk applications will usually be assessed within two weeks. However, if a large number of low risk applications is submitted at the same time, it may take longer than two weeks.

7. Please note: the Committee and/or the Research Ethics & Integrity team cannot tell you how to answer questions. You are the person with the detailed knowledge of your research. The Committee's job is to evaluate whether you have considered and ensured the rights and welfare of participants. The Committee also assesses compliance with the National Statement to ensure that both the university and the researcher are protected.

The Application Form

8. All applications must be submitted via the Online Ethics Form. It can be found here: https://ethicsform.canberra.edu.au.

9. The online form is made up of the following sections:

    - Introduction – Notes for Applicants
    - Section 1 – About the Project
    - Section 2 – Place of Research
    - Section 3 – Personnel
    - Section 4 – Funding and Review
    - Section 5 – Research Design and Methodology
    - Section 6 – Participants, Risk and Consent
    - Section 7 – Data
    - Section 8 – Clinical Trials
    - Section 9 – Attachments
    - Section 10 – Declarations and Signatures

Sections 1 to 4: Administrative Information

10. Please provide all relevant information in relation to your project, including the title and type of your project, names, titles and contact details of all involved investigators, research expertise as well as the award to which the project is linked to (if relevant), i.e. Masters, PhD. If you are a student, please do not forget to provide your supervisor's details.

11. Under "Funding and review", please ensure to provide the Pure Award and Ethics Review IDs which were allocated to your project (if applicable). This will help the Funded Research team to quickly release any external funding.

12. Please note that the data collection start date must be at least two weeks after the date of submission.

13. If your proposed research has not been peer reviewed then please outline briefly why peer review has not been sought.

Section 5: Research Design and Methodology

14. This section was designed to provide members of the Committee with clear understanding about the need for the research and the approach adopted. Please use language that can be understood by those outside of your discipline or profession.

15. Please provide a justification for your research based on a literature review (include the references for your citations), the research aims, your approach, methods and instruments. Write it simply and clearly so that the Committee can understand what your research is about.

16. Please describe products which may be developed from your research (commercial and non-commercial) and any other benefits and impacts of your research.

Section 6: Participants, Risk and Consent

17. Please be clear and concise in this section. Outline in detail what participants will experience during your study.

18. Please consider whether selecting your primary participant groups could involve coincidental recruitment of other categories of participants and whether or not this is important for your research. Also, please consider whether you specifically can exclude certain participants.

19. Please describe in detail how you will select and recruit potential participants.

20. Think about and identify any risks for the participants and researchers, as well as other people who may not be directly involved in your study, and outline in detail how you will manage those risks.

21. If your research is being conducted in another country, please think about whether you will need an interpreter and whether there could be any language barriers. Also, please consider whether you need any approval from the authorities in the other country.

22. Please outline in detail any relationships with participants and any possible conflicts of interest.

Section 7: Data

23. It is important that privacy and respect are the principles underlying the collection, storage and use of data. Data should be reliable, retrievable and replicable if necessary.

24. Please consider the form of data you will collect, i.e. non-identifiable data (anonymous surveys), de-identified data (identifiers have been irreversibly removed) or re-identifiable data (identifiers have been replaced by a code), and outline in detail how you will protect the confidentiality and privacy of your participants. Please note that re-identifiable data may require special attention in relation to confidentiality and privacy issues.

25. Please provide details on how you will store the data and the period of retention. Please note that it is UC policy to store all data for a minimum of 5 years on secure UC premises (including password protected UC computers).

26. You should also provide details on access rights to the data and whether you anticipate using the data in future projects.

Tips

27. For IP related questions please check UC's IP policy or contact the Research Support office.

28. Make sure all your attachments (Participant Information and Consent Form, interview questions, surveys, advertisements etc.) are clearly labelled and attached.

29. There is an example template in the online system under the "Help" menu Participant Information Form available.

30. Make sure that your Participant Information and Consent forms include the current UC marketing logo. Also, please ensure that the forms are developed for the intended audience (i.e. consider likely reading levels/ages etc.) and free of typographical and grammatical errors.