

For Undergraduate students

A short guide to Research Governance and Research Ethics

This short guidance note is an introduction to governance, ethics and the University's *Policy for the Governance of Research Involving Human Participants*.

The Policy and other documents are available via the Portal, under Research & Impact > Research Governance & Ethics.

Research Governance What is it?

Research governance is a process for managing and approving research at all levels, including undergraduate student projects. Its purpose is to ensure that the University's research is well-designed, led and conducted by suitably qualified and experienced people and complies with relevant policies and laws.

It applies to all human research, and to regulated research of any kind.

What does this mean in practice?

It means that if you want to do a research project involving human beings (for example, fellow students, staff, family or the wider community) you will need approval in advance from the University and possibly from other organisations.

We usually advise students - who have limited time and resources to carry out research projects - to go for straightforward and low risk studies. We particularly advise undergraduate students to avoid doing studies which require regulatory approval outside the University (for example in hospitals) because of the time it can take to get permission and get started.

You should refer to your course documentation and your lecturers for further guidance on appropriate study topics, applications and approval.

Please remember not to start any human research without permission. This could be a serious matter leading to disciplinary action.

Research Ethics What is it?

Research ethics is about ensuring that your research – especially if it involves human participants or subjects – is carried out appropriately. It is also about identifying and managing risks to participants and to you, the people carrying out the research. It usually involves review by a committee or other people not involved in the research project.

Ethical review is at the core of research governance, risk management and quality assurance in the health services and in universities. It is how we ensure that research carried out by you in association with the University is safe for all concerned.

I want to do research with human participants, so how does all of this affect me?

You are a student researcher and you want to carry out a study involving people, their tissues or their data (including surveys), so there are clear steps you must go through to ensure that you comply with the University's policies and relevant legislation.

First, you should note that you will not be the chief investigator on your study. This will probably be your project supervisor or similar. This is for reasons of experience and continuity.

Second, all research involving human participants must be submitted for peer and/or filter committee review, followed, where necessary, by submission to the University Research Ethics Committee (please see the flow diagrams below).

To support you, there are filter committees in all of the areas in which human research takes place. Contact details for these are available from your project supervisor.

You are encouraged to complete the University's short online course on Research Integrity (on Blackboard). In some cases your module co-ordinator or SCT might require it.

If your research requires the use of human tissue (including blood, saliva, urine etc), you must be trained in the requirements of the Human Tissue Act and adhere to the approval process set out under the appropriate policy and standard operating procedures (training events are held regularly).

If you intend to do a category C research study (NHS or HSC) please contact Research Governance for advice.

Further Information

Further information - including forms, contact details, answers to FAQs and other guidance, terms of reference, policies and procedures, tools and useful links - is available via the Portal under Research & Impact > Research Governance & Ethics.

The University's Research Categories

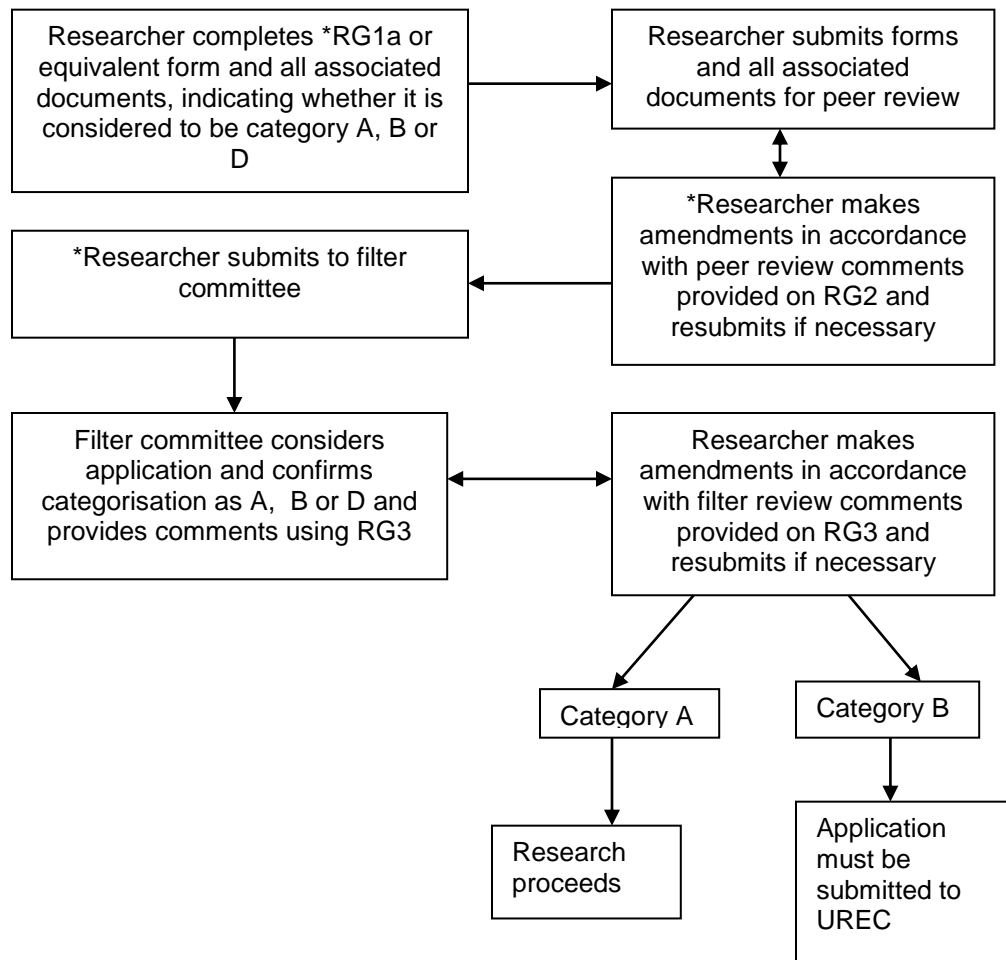
Please refer to the web pages for a full definition in each case.

Category A	Category B
No NHS/HSC involvement	No NHS/HSC involvement
Conducted by staff or students	Conducted by staff or students
No new methodologies	new methodologies
No vulnerable populations	includes vulnerable populations
No therapeutic interventions	therapeutic interventions
No evident risk to participants/researchers	possible risk to participants/researchers
Category C	Category D
NHS/HSC involvement	All research regulated by the Human
Conducted by staff or students	Tissue Act 2004

Sample timelines to approval:

Category A **between 2 and 6 weeks, subject to amendments**
Categories B & D **between 4 and 10 weeks, subject to amendments**

Categories A, B and D Research



***Please note that in practice filter committees will often have their own documentation and processes for the submission of undergraduate student applications. These reflect the nature and numbers of applications received.**

In such cases, filter committee procedures should be followed to ensure compliance with the requirements of your course.