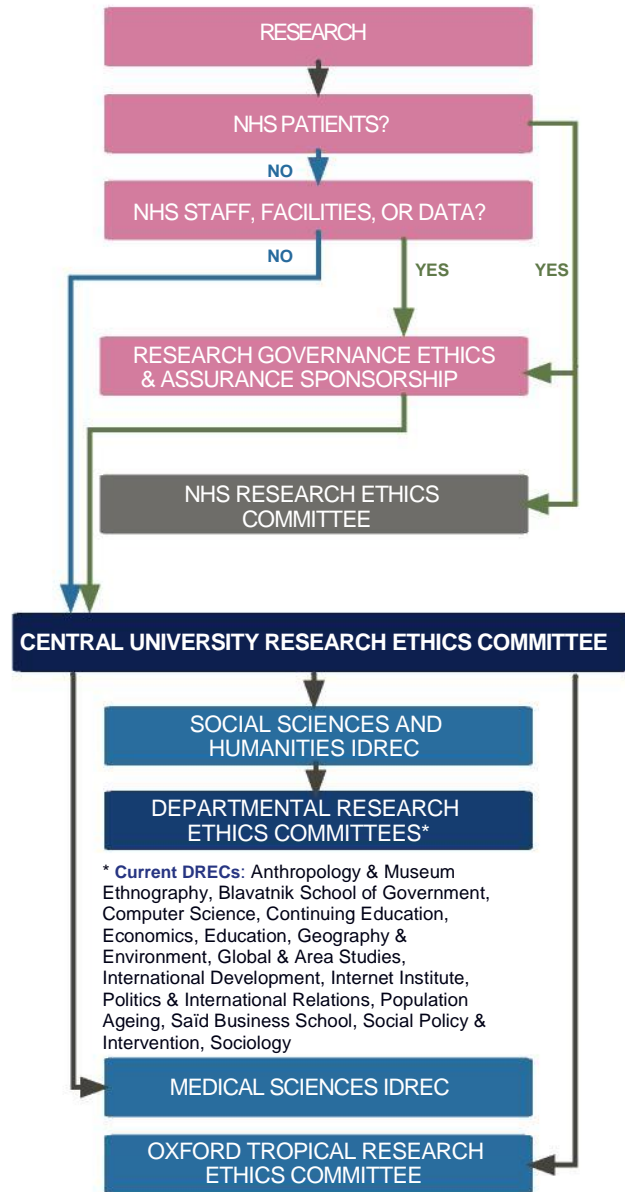


WHICH ETHICS COMMITTEE?



researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

General information about ethics and integrity at Oxford

researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics

Information about ethics review and University policy including training links, resources, templates, FAQs and best practice guidance.

Social Sciences and Humanities Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee (SSH IDREC)

researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/apply/sshidrec

Specific information about how to apply to the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC for ethics review, including details of Departmental Research Ethics Committees.

Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk

Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee (MS IDREC)

researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/apply/msidrec

Specific information about how to apply to the Medical Sciences IDREC for ethics review.

Email: ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk

Oxford Tropical Research Ethics Committee (OxTREC)

researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/apply/oxtrec

Specific information about how to apply to OxTREC for ethics review.

Email: oxtrec@admin.ox.ac.uk

Research Governance Ethics and Assurance - Sponsorship

researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/ctrq

Advice and support for research requiring NHS Research Ethics Committee review or Health Research Authority (HRA) approval

Email: rgea.sponsor@admin.ox.ac.uk

RESEARCH ETHICS AND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS



RESEARCH ETHICS AND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

An introduction to research ethics at Oxford



researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics

“While the primary purpose of medical research is to generate new knowledge, this goal can never take precedence over the rights and interests of individual research subjects.”

World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki – Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, 2013

What is research ethics?

Research involving **human participants**, **human tissue** and/ or **personal data** raises questions, such as:

- How will participants' safety and dignity be ensured?
- What data is needed and is it stored securely?
- Do the participants understand what is involved for them?
- What are the risks and benefits of the research?

Research ethics examines these kinds of question in detail by applying **moral principles** and **codes of professional conduct** to all stages of the research process—planning the project, collecting and analysing the data, and reporting on the results.

At the core of research ethics lies a commitment to **protect the individual**. There are certain rights that all human beings share—the right to privacy, confidentiality, and free choice, for example. By adhering to moral rules and professional codes in carrying out research, we are doing our best to ensure that individuals and their rights are protected.

What makes research ethical?

Research that is ethical will:

- maximise benefit—for both individuals and society
- minimise the risk of harm to participants and researchers
- treat participants with respect and dignity, making sure that participation is **voluntary** and **informed** and
- ensure that ethical issues associated with collecting, managing, storing and sharing personal data have been addressed.¹

What does this mean for me?

The University's Research Ethics policy states that all such research should be **subject to appropriate ethical review**. The purpose of the ethics review process is to ensure that the ethical issues associated with conducting the research have been identified and addressed. The review is proportionate to the risk of harm. In practice, this means that if you are planning a research project involving human participants or personal data, you will (in most cases²) need to apply for ethics review of your project to the appropriate research ethics committee.³ When planning your research make sure you allow enough time for the review to take place.

WHICH ETHICS COMMITTEE?

The **Central University Research Ethics Committee** (CUREC) delegates responsibility for the ethics review of research projects involving human participants, human tissue and personal data to three subcommittees:

- The **Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC** (Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee) reviews applications from researchers based in departments and faculties within the **Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions**, as well as from **Computer Science**.

Many departments in the Social Sciences Division have their own **Departmental Research Ethics Committees** (DRECs). Where a DREC exists, applications from that department should be submitted to the DREC rather than the IDREC in the first instance.

To check whether your department has its own DREC, please go to researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/committees/drecs. On this page, you can find a list of DREC contacts as well as further information on how to apply.

- The **Medical Sciences IDREC** (Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee) reviews applications from researchers based in departments within the **Medical Sciences and Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Divisions**, except for **Computer Science**.

** If your research involves **NHS patients** you will need to apply to an **NHS Research Ethics Committee** for review.

If your research involves **NHS staff, facilities** or **data**, you will need to obtain **HRA approval** or **NHS management permission** following review by the IDREC.

In these cases, you should initially contact the University's **RGEA** (Research Governance Ethics and Assurance) Sponsorship group for advice: rgea.sponsor@admin.ox.ac.uk

- **OxTREC** (the Oxford Tropical Research Ethics Committee) reviews (a) **medical and health-related research** taking place **outside the UK and EU**; and (b) research funded by **US federal funding agencies**.

As a signatory of the Universities UK [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), the University of Oxford is committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

¹ These points are derived from the Belmont Report (1979), which details ethical principles and guidelines for research involving human participants.

² Research using previously collected, fully anonymised data not traceable to individuals is not subject to ethics review.
³ Please note that reviews and approvals are not possible for work that has already been done.