Introduction
Northumbria University seeks to ensure that ethical standards are maintained in research by and through the University. Schools, on behalf of the University, are responsible for ensuring all students and staff conducting research, and all research conducted on university staff, students, and premises is in accordance with the University ethical standards.

In order to help you determine the level of ethical scrutiny and risk for your research projects, we have devised a question and answer self-evaluation form to help your assessment and subsequently inform you about the level of ethical review required.

There are 3 levels of ethical and risk scrutiny.

- **Red**
  - High risk and requires high level of scrutiny
- **Amber**
  - Medium risk and requires internal review
- **Green**
  - Low risk, might not require internal review as long as compliant with school governance procedures

Begin your self-evaluation review here >>
ASSESSMENT: Ethical Scrutiny and Risk Level for Research Projects

ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH

Specifically, does your research involve one of the following:

- Medicinal Products
- Clinical Trial
- Animal subjects
- Children and vulnerable adults
- NHS staff, patients, premises or equipment
- Discomfort or safety concerns for the participants or researchers
- Sensitive subjects such as trauma
- Forensic issues

Example

You are planning to conduct a survey into the sexual health behaviours of teenagers in an economically deprived area. It would require you to gather sensitive data and approach marginalised young people.
Ethical Scrutiny and Risk Assessment for Research Projects

RESULT: Your Research Project Ethics Assessment

Your research involves one of the following: medical products, clinical trials, animal subjects, children, vulnerable adults, NHS staff, premises or equipment, touch on sensitive subjects, forensic issues or have safety concerns for researcher or participants.

Red
High risk and require high level of ethical scrutiny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Other consideration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Internal &amp; External</td>
<td>1. Indemnity arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. External legislations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. Sponsorship</td>
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</tbody>
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What to do next?
Your project proposal will require a high level of ethical scrutiny and possible external peer review. There may also be legislative requirements to comply with for example MHRA, NHS REC, Human Tissues Act and EudraCT. Indemnity arrangements will also need to be reviewed in light of the additional risk involved. If your School’s Research Ethics committee is unable to resolve the issues, the proposal will be reviewed by the University’s Research Ethics Committee.

You should contact your School Research Administrator for advice.

Click here for useful links>>
Full glossary list >>
ASSESSMENT: Ethical Scrutiny and Risk Level for Research Projects

Your research DOES NOT involve one of the following: medical products, clinical trials, animal subjects, children, vulnerable adults, NHS staff, premises or equipment, touch on sensitive subjects, forensic issues or have safety concerns for researcher or participants.

Example
You need to interview healthy members of the public relating to their eating habits in order to investigate their attitudes towards food.

ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH
Does your research involve any of these:
• Non-vulnerable adults
• Personal data referring to a living individual
• Environmental issues
• Commercially sensitive information
• Pharmacologically active substance

Yes  No
RESULT: Your Research Project Ethics Assessment

Your research involves either non-vulnerable adults, personal data of a living individual, environmental issues, commercially sensitive information or pharmacologically active substance. But DOES NOT involve medical products, clinical trials, animal subjects, children, vulnerable adults, NHS staff, premises or equipment, touch on sensitive subjects, forensic issues or have safety concerns for researcher or participants.

Amber
Medium risk, with some ethical concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Other considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>1. Informed consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Confidentiality</td>
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</table>

What to do next?
Your project proposal has some ethical implications and will be reviewed by an internal school research ethics committee. There are moderate risks involved. Some factors that you need to consider are obtaining informed consent forms from organisations and people involved, anonymity and confidentiality issues.

You should contact your School Research Administrator for advice.

Click here for useful links>>
Full glossary list >>
ASSESSMENT: Ethical Scrutiny and Risk Level for Research Projects

Your research DOES NOT involve one of the following: medical products, clinical trials, animal subjects, children, vulnerable adults, NHS staff, premises or equipment, touch on sensitive subjects, forensic issues or have safety concerns for researcher or participants.

Example
You are conducting a content analysis on the way news is reported by different networks in order to reveal any perceived bias.

Your research DOES NOT involve either non-vulnerable adults, personal data of a living individual, environmental issues, commercially sensitive information or pharmacologically active substance.

ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH
Is your research completely based on secondary data which has been previously published, is desk or lab based and does not involve people in data collection?

Yes

Full glossary list >>
RESULT: Your Research Project Ethics Assessment

Your research is completely based on secondary data which has been previously published, is desk or lab based and does not involve people in data collection.

Green
Low risk, might not require internal review as long as compliant with school governance procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Other requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Comply with school Governance procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What to do next?
Your project proposal will still need to be reviewed by your school's ethics committee. You need to be ethically aware and ensure that you have not breached plagiarism or copyright regulations and have adequately referenced your material. It is recommended that you refer to the Ethics in Research and Consultancy Policy Statement.

You should contact your School Research Administrator for advice.

Click here for useful links>>
Full glossary list >>