



Did you know that you must apply for ethics clearance, or declare minimal risk, even if your research project does not involve supervising postgraduate students?

ETHICS IN RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Why is it necessary to apply for research ethics clearance or declare minimal risk?

- Good scholarship requires that researchers consider any potential harmful impacts of their research, treat their data sources with respect, and recognise the contributions of other scholars fairly. The minimal risk declaration (for research not involving human subjects) and research ethics application process (for research involving human subjects) are intended to facilitate this.
- All research undertaken by academic staff in EBE (as opposed to undertaken by supervised postgraduate students) requires evidence that research ethics issues have been considered.

When should research ethics clearance be applied for, or minimal risk declared?

- In the case of research not involving human subjects, minimal risk should be declared as soon as the research method is clear.
- In the case of research involving human subjects, ethics clearance should be applied for after survey instruments have been designed.

What information is necessary for minimal risk declaration?

- A covering note that: explains the purpose of the research to a non-expert in the field; identifies possible ethical issues; and describes how these issues will be addressed. Guidance on what ethical issues to consider can be found in the EBE EiR Handbook (downloadable from <http://www.ebe.uct.ac.za/ebe/research/ethics1>).

What information is necessary for research ethics applications?

- A covering note that: explains the purpose of the research to a non-expert in the field; identifies possible ethical issues; and describes how these issues will be addressed. Guidance on what ethical issues to consider can be found in the EBE EiR Handbook.
- A research proposal that identifies the research objectives and describes the method to be used in meeting these objectives.
- The survey instrument and the means of obtaining informed consent.
- An application form signed by the principal investigator. (The form is downloaded during the on-line submission process.)

How is a research ethics application submitted or minimal risk declared?

- Follow the on-line instructions provided on the EBE EiR webpage <http://www.ebe.uct.ac.za/ebe/research/ethics1>.

Who provides research ethics clearance?

- For all staff research involving human subjects, approval is provided by the Chair of the EBE EiR Committee.
- Additional approval is required from the Executive Directors of Student Affairs and Human Resources, respectively, when the human subjects in research are UCT students and staff.
- If the research involves clinical tests on humans or animals, approval is provided by the Health Sciences EiR and Animal Ethics Committees.