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Where do I find LU ethics documents?
All documents are available on the RSO website, including flowcharts summarising the procedures
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/research/lancaster/ethics.html

My project doesn’t fit your standard procedures, what do I do?
It is recognised that there is considerable diversity in research involving human participants. Procedures are
adapted on a case by case basis as necessary to meet the needs of the individual project/researcher and
ensure the University meets its obligations. Either complete the stage 1 self assessment form Parts A and B
using part B to explain the particular circumstances of the project or contact RSO for advice.

My project is only at the proposal stage at the moment, do I have to
complete the Stage 1 Self-Assessment Form now?
You can wait until the funding is confirmed before completing the Stage 1 Self-Assessment Form, but please
remember to allow sufficient time for the review process and be aware that your project may be referred
to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for review.

What documents do I submit with a Stage 1 Self-Assessment Form Part B?
If you are conducting research with human participants (including interviews, questionnaires, focus groups)
then any documents relating to informed consent should be provided, eg participant information sheets (or
information given on screen at the start of online questionnaires etc) and consent forms. It may also be
helpful to provide copies of questionnaires or interview schedules where applicable and any other
documents provided for participants, particularly if the research involves sensitive topics or vulnerable
participants. If informed consent documents are not applicable for your project please provide a clear
explanation of why this is the case in the relevant section of Part B.

Informed consent documents will be prepared part way through the
project as the earlier stages of the research will have a bearing on these
documents. How do I get ethical approval to start the project?
Complete the Stage 1 Self-Assessment Parts A and B clearly explaining in Part B the nature of the project
and at what stage informed consent documentation will be available. If the information provided does not
raise any concerns or require clarification approval will be given for the research to proceed. This will be on
the understanding that the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) has sight of the
documents and gives final sign off before the phase of research involving human participants commences.

Informed consent documents will be prepared by the researcher once they
are in post. How do I get ethical approval to start the project?
Complete the Stage 1 Self-Assessment Parts A and B clearly explaining in Part B the nature of the project
and at what stage informed consent documentation will be available. If the information provided does not
raise any concerns or require clarification approval will be given for the research to proceed. This will be on
the understanding that the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) has sight of the
documents and gives final sign off before the phase of research involving human participants commences.

My research will use secondary data, do I need to complete the Stage 1 Self-Assessment Part B?
The Stage 1 Self-Assessment Part B should be completed clearly explaining the use of secondary data and
whether it is in the public domain (specify if this is the internet), from a recognised data source, from
previous research etc. Where applicable, state whether the original consent covered the use of data in
future research.

Will I hear if my documents have been approved?
If your research does not involve human participants and there are no other potential risk factors then you
will not hear anything further once you have submitted a fully completed Stage 1 Self-Assessment Part A. If
you have completed Stage 1 Self-Assessment Parts A and B then you will either receive confirmation of the
approval or be asked for further information/clarification.

Which forms should my research student complete?
You should help your research student complete a Stage 1 Self-Assessment form and a Project Information
and Ethics Questionnaire. There are versions of the forms specifically for students on the RSO website
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/research/lancaster/ethics.html with space for both the student and
supervisor to sign.

Informed consent

Do I need to provide written information prior to telephone interviews?
Participants should usually have access to written information about the study, whether this is posted to
them in advance of the interview or e-mailed before or after the initial telephone conversation. There
should be a method for recording the participants’ consent.

What information should be included in a participant information sheet?
There will be a wide variety of information sheets depending on the nature of the research and the
participants involved. Below are some essentials that are required in most participant information sheets.

Presentation essentials :

- Printed on Lancaster University headed paper (or incorporate Lancaster University header)
- Clear, easy to read layout (eg information broken into short paragraphs with clear headings)
- Language clear and easy to understand
Content essentials

- What is the research about (subject)?
- What is the purpose of the study (eg part of degree, to improve services etc)?
- What will be expected of participants if they agree to take part, how long will it take?
- Clear explanation that participation is voluntary and how to withdraw
- How will the results be used (publications etc)?
- What about confidentiality and anonymity?
- Contact details for the researcher
- Second point of contact in case of complaints or concerns about the research (this should be someone who won’t have direct contact with participants as part of the research and could be Head of Department, supervisor etc)

Other information that it may be useful or appropriate to include:

- Why has the participant been invited to take part?
- What happens if the participant wants to stop part way through the study?
- What is the procedure for withdrawing after participation?
- What will happen to the data (storage, destruction etc)?
- Will the anonymised data be lodged with a data archive? See http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/Consent-to-data-archiving-or-data-sharing-90
- Will you want to use the data for future research?
- Any benefits, risks or disadvantages of taking place?
- Circumstances where it may be necessary to breach confidentiality (eg risk of harm, illegal activity)
- Details of any expenses that can be claimed?
- Not participating or withdrawing will have no bearing on the participant’s education/health care etc (as appropriate)
- Who is funding the research?
- Who has reviewed the project?
- Contact in case of serious complaint eg ‘This study has been approved by Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee, if you have any complaints please contact [Head of Department concerned, phone number for HoD or central switchboard phone number, link to university website]’

Where can I find examples of consent forms?

Examples of consent forms are available here: http://www.lancs.ac.uk/researchethics/1-4-samples.html
NHS ethics applications (and others that use IRAS)

What is a Sponsor?
Under the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care, the Sponsor is the organisation that takes responsibility for the conduct of the research including its management and monitoring.

How do I get approval for the University to act as Sponsor for my project?
E-mail a near final draft of the application to the Research Support Office (ethics@lancaster.ac.uk). RSO will carry out some preliminary checks and then pass the application to the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). You will receive feedback via RSO, which is likely to fall into one of the following categories:
- approved
- approved but minor administrative details require amending
- approved subject to minor amendments
- amendments or further information required before University will accept role as sponsor

What documents do I need to provide?
Please provide a full set of project data from the IRAS system (as a PDF) and supporting documents such as participant information sheets, consent forms, letters to participants, interview schedules, questionnaires etc.

Who is the contact on behalf of the sponsor?
The contact is Debbie Knight:
Research Ethics Officer
Research Support Office,
B58 Bowland Main,
Lancaster University,
LA1 4YT
Email: ethics@lancaster.ac.uk
Telephone: 01524 592605

What do I write in the section of the form that asks about indemnity and insurance arrangements?
Where the sponsor is required to provide cover please enter ‘Lancaster University legal liability cover will apply’. Please contact RSO as soon as possible if the project involves clinical trials.
**How do I obtain evidence of indemnity?**

When your application has been signed you will be e-mailed with copies of the University’s insurance details.

**What is the process for getting the NHS REC form signed?**

Once you have agreement in principle for the University to act as Sponsor, and your application is finalised you can make arrangements to book it in with an NHS committee. It is a good idea to contact RSO first to check the availability of signatories as once the application is booked with the NHS you will have a limited period to collect signatures and submit.

A copy of the final, locked, REC form should be e-mailed to ethics@lancaster.ac.uk and if you need the R&D form signing this should also be attached. The final REC from will show your reference number in the centre of the header on each page and a version control number on the right hand side of the footer (and will no longer have a ‘DRAFT’ watermark); if any of the numbers do not appear, check you have completed the process correctly. If you have been asked to amend any supporting documents (eg participant information sheet) then the final version should also be attached to your e-mail.

RSO will arrange for your form(s) to be signed on behalf of the Sponsor, along with a letter confirming Sponsorship. In parallel you can collect the other signatures on the master copy of your application. You will be notified by e-mail when the signature page(s) is ready to collect from the Research Support Office and provided with copies of insurance details.