White University of York logo

**Department of Environment and Geography, University of York**

**Choosing the correct Research Ethics Approval Forms**

# **Read this first**

## **Who should apply?**

You should apply if you are carrying out any research activity or consultancy project through the Department of Environment and Geography, University of York: This includes:

1. Members of academic, research and SEIY staff
2. Honorary members of staff associated with the Department.
3. Research degree students (masters and PhD).
4. Undergraduate students and taught postgraduate students who are doing research projects.

**Can I begin work before the project is ethically approved?**

NO primary data collection can begin until you have approval from one of the following:

1. The Departmental Ethics Committee
2. An External Research Ethics Committee (NHS Research Ethics Committee, Lead Partner University etc) and communication of such to the departmental ethics committee

**What will happen if I proceed without approval or falsely self-certify research ethics approval?**

1. Collecting primary data in the absence of ethical approval or falsely self-certifying the level of risk associated with a project will constitute a disciplinary offence. This will result in:

* + - 1. Student – Disciplinary action resulting in immediate failure in any module or project associated with the research and potentially dismissal from the University.
    1. Staff - Disciplinary action which may potentially lead to dismissal.

If you do not have ethical approval, the University’s insurers will not cover you for legal action or claims for injury. In addition, you may face debarment from membership of some professional or statutory bodies and excluded from applying for some types of employment or research funding opportunities. You may not be able to publish your research.

You should consider the following codes of ethical practice and conduct relevant to your project before completing your form:

[The University’s Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance](https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/research-policies/ethics-code/)

[The University’s Research Data Management Policy](https://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/information-services/information-policy/index/research-data-management-policy/)

**Which form should I complete?**

**Use Ethics approval form 1 - Desk-based research using publicly available data or laboratory work not involving human or animal subjects or materials**

**If** your project involvesdesk-research using only secondary or published sources; Laboratory work not involving human or animal subjects or materials

**Use** **Ethics approval form 2 – Research involving human subjects/participants or using related data not publicly available**

**If** your project involves collection and/or analysis of primary, unpublished data from, or about, identifiable, living human beings (either in laboratory or in non-laboratory settings),

**Or** your project involves collection and/or analysis of data about the behaviour of human beings, in situations where they might reasonably expect their behaviour not to be observed or recorded

**Or** your project involves collection and/or analysis of primary, unpublished data from, or about people who have recently died

**Or** your project involves collection and/or analysis of primary, unpublished data from, or about, existing agencies or organisations

**Use Ethics approval form 3 – Research involving animal subjects/participants or using related data not publicly available**

**If** your project involves the investigation of any animal species in its natural habitat

**Or** your project involves research with invertebrates, other than *Octopus vulgaris*, other than in their natural settings

**Or** your project involves research with vertebrates or octopuses, other than in their natural settings.

**Or** your project involves research with human tissues or body fluids

Please Contact the Departmental Ethics Committee for advice (<environment-ethics@york.ac.uk>) if your research involves access to NHS patients, staff, facilities or which requires access to participants who are mentally incapacitated.

You may find the following codes of ethical practice and conduct relevant to your project and useful before you begin the process:

[Information of Data protection](https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/)

[Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) code of ethics](http://www.setac.org/?page=SETACEthics)

[Guidelines for the Treatment of Animals in Behavioural Research and Teaching](http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/ethics/guidelines.php)