

LAW ETHICS APPLICATION PROCESS: Frequently Asked Questions

When is human ethics approval needed?

You need ethics approval if you are a staff member or a postgraduate student and want to conduct certain research activities involving humans. In Law this includes, but is not restricted to:

- Gathering information about human beings (and organisations) through interviewing, surveying, questionnaires, observation of human behavior and audio/video taping.

Who approves human ethics research?

The Law Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG):

- conducts technical and ethical reviews of all projects emanating from the Law School;
- provides feedback to researchers on their research;
- approves Minimal Risk applications; and
- provides advice to the Human Ethics Sub Committee (HESC) on (higher risk) Project applications.

Which application type should I use?

There are two types of ethics applications which address different levels of possible risk involved in the research. **The Law HEAG recommends that researchers complete a Project Application.**

Minimal Risk application

Used for projects that present low risk according to a checklist of criteria. Applicants complete the risk checklist within the Themis online application form to determine whether this route may be appropriate. The ultimate decision as to whether the application is eligible for minimal risk review lies with the Law HEAG. HEAGs have delegated authority to approve Minimal Risk applications.

- [Creating a Minimal Risk application](#)

Project application

Used for projects that present more than low risk and often involve fieldwork carried out overseas. A Project application must be first reviewed by the HEAG before being submitted to the Human Ethics Sub Committee (HESC) for review and final approval.

- [Creating a Standard Project application](#)

How long will it take?

It is important to allow sufficient time for the review of your application as your research cannot commence until you have received ethics approval. For graduate research students it is important to plan your fieldwork and the ethics application early in your candidature - at the 6-month meeting is a good time. Most applications require a two-stage review process, and this should be accounted for when considering your project commencement date:

- *Minimal Risk applications* are reviewed and approved by the Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG). From submission of application, to review by the Law HEAG, completion of recommended revisions, resubmission for approval by the Chair, generation of final application, final signature by the Chair and the Dean the anticipated time-frame is: 3-4 weeks

- *Project applications* are first reviewed by the HEAG then forwarded to the Human Ethics Sub Committee for final approval. From submission of application, to review by the Law HEAG, completion of recommended revisions, resubmission for approval by the Chair, generation of final application and forwarding to Humanities and Applied Sciences Human Ethics Sub-Committee (HAPS HESC) for review, the anticipated time-frame is: 6-8 weeks

When are the submission due dates?

Law HEAG Review

Researchers should consult the [Law HEAG website](#) to identify submission dates for applications. Following assessment of the application, the HEAG may ask you to make certain changes ahead of approval or recommendation to the HESC. Also allow time for the sign off of all researchers and the endorsement of the Head of Department.

HESC review

- [Find HESC meeting dates and deadlines](#)

In the case of Project applications, the HESC review will follow HEAG approval. HESCs meet monthly during semester, with submission deadlines around 10 working days before each meeting. Arrange your project commencement date to account for any revisions that the HESC may ask for prior to approval. Such revisions may require resubmission to the next HESC meeting.

For more detailed information on research ethics and the application process please see [here](#).

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