



Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ

ELTE PPK Research Ethics Committee Guide for Colleagues and Students

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Research Ethics Applications

In what cases is it necessary to submit an application for research ethics approval?

According to Dean's Instruction No. 1/2018 (XI.30.), any research activity involving the analysis of data obtained from or about human participants may only be conducted after prior ethical approval has been obtained.

If the research clearly falls within the fields of psychology, educational science, or another discipline that does not involve healthcare-related issues, ethical approval is issued by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (KEB).

If the planned research also involves medical or health-related aspects (for example, if the target population consists of individuals with a clinical diagnosis, if the research is conducted in a healthcare institution, or if the study involves an invasive procedure, such as blood sampling, or the use of medical devices, such as an MRI scanner), the application must be submitted to the Scientific and Research Ethics Committee of the Medical Research Council (ETT-TUKEB).

Research ethics approval is not required if a study is limited exclusively to a review of the scientific literature or involves a systematic review and/or meta-analysis. Similarly, ethical approval is not required for the analysis of publicly available materials, such as website content or public social media posts.

However, if the research involves the analysis of documents containing personal data (for example, historical or archival records that include names or other personal information), an ethics application must be submitted.

How long before the start of a study should an ethics application be submitted?

Applications are reviewed on a continuous basis during the academic year (between 10 September and 10 June), with a typical processing time of approximately 2–4 weeks. If additional information or documentation is required, the approval process may take longer. This should be taken into consideration when planning the timeline of a research project. The Faculty Research Ethics Committee (KEB) does not issue ethical approval retroactively for studies that are already underway.

It is advisable to submit an application at least one month before the planned start of the research, as this generally allows sufficient time for the review process, including any requested revisions. Data collection may not begin before the application has received formal approval. The KEB meets on the last Friday of each month. In addition to other agenda items, the Committee discusses ethics applications that require a decision by the full Committee or that raise additional issues requiring consideration during the initial review process.

What constitutes personal data (and when must the “Privacy Notice” document be completed)?

The new online system automatically generates a **Privacy Notice** for use in the research project based on the relevant sections of the research ethics application form when the approval is issued. The corresponding section appears only if the applicant indicates that personal data will be processed.

Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (“data subject”). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, number, location data, or an online identifier, or by reference to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural, or social identity of that natural person. Consequently, gender, age (as opposed to the exact date of birth), type of residence (as opposed to the exact residential address), or type of employment/position do not in themselves constitute personal data, unless, for example, a specific position at a specific organization is identified. If participants are contacted via email or telephone, this involves the processing of personal data. Similarly, image recordings and audio recordings are considered personal data in and of themselves.

If principal investigators request any information from participants via email, they must also ensure that such data and any sensitive correspondence are deleted once the research project has been completed.

The use of publicly available and accessible information (e.g., official publicly available email addresses, public social media posts, or comments) is not considered the processing of personal data.

Can personal data be collected through a shared Qualtrics account used by a research group?

Personal data may not be collected through a shared Qualtrics account (e.g., a research-group account). Such data may only be collected through the individual Qualtrics account of the supervisor(s) or the specifically designated data processor.

This ensures that personal data are collected within the Qualtrics system but are stored separately from the research data. Access to these personal data is restricted solely to the data

controller and/or data processor identified in the Privacy Notice. Anonymous research data, however, may still be collected using shared Qualtrics accounts.

What information must be provided in the “Privacy Notice” document?

The new online system automatically generates a Privacy Notice for use in the research project based on the relevant sections of the research ethics application form when the approval is issued. The corresponding section appears only if the applicant indicates that personal data will be processed.

In the relevant section, applicants must indicate and list all types of data processed during the research (e.g., name, email address, audio recording, etc.).

Under the section concerning the data processor, applicants only need to specify the software or platform used for data collection and/or storage, as well as whether data processing is carried out by an external data processor independent of the organization, who processes personal data solely on behalf of the data controller.

Applicants must also specify the platforms, programs, or applications used to collect and/or store personal data (e.g., Qualtrics, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.).

Why is it necessary to provide both a Word/PDF version of an online questionnaire and its online link?

A Word or PDF version of the questionnaire is required so that reviewers can quickly and easily examine the individual questionnaire items without having to click through the entire online questionnaire item by item, including any conditional branching or skip logic that may be built into it.

In addition, the Word/PDF version is required for archival purposes, since the online link may eventually become inactive. At the same time, the online link must also be provided so that we can verify that the questionnaire distributed to participants is exactly the same as the version described in the application. The link also enables us to review the questionnaire settings (e.g., conditional questions), as well as any information provided to participants to address the use of deception in the study (i.e., the debriefing) and other relevant features.

On which platform should online questionnaires be created? Which platform can be used for conducting online interviews?

The Committee primarily recommends the Qualtrics platform for the creation and administration of online questionnaires.

For online communication and the recording of audio and/or video data, the university-supported and recommended platform is Microsoft Teams (MS Teams).

At the same time, the Committee does not prohibit the use of other platforms.

What should be considered when offering credits/course points as an incentive for participation in a study?

The applicant should clearly establish that, in cases where recruitment takes place through a course, refusing to participate in the research will not place students at a disadvantage. For example, it should be ensured that students can still obtain an appropriate grade without participating in the study. Similarly, in courses where research participation is part of the course requirements, students should have a sufficient range of alternative studies from which they can choose in order to earn the required credits or course points.

Does the KEB issue research ethics approvals exclusively to ELTE PPK teaching staff and researchers employed by the university or holding professor emeritus status?

If a researcher who is not affiliated with ELTE submits an ethics application because they serve as the supervisor of an ELTE PPK student, the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (KEB) will review the application.

In such cases, since the applicant is not employed by ELTE, by completing the research ethics application, they also consent to the processing of their personal data by the ELTE PPK Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Can the KEB review research conducted abroad? Can non-anonymous data collection be carried out in another country?

Data collection is considered to take place abroad if participant recruitment and/or data collection (e.g., an MS Teams interview), whether conducted in person or online, occurs outside the borders of Hungary.

In the case of research conducted abroad, the KEB is fully authorized to review and approve studies involving participants over the age of 18 who do not belong to vulnerable populations, as well as anonymous online studies that do not address sensitive topics. Applications for studies involving participants under the age of 18 and/or vulnerable populations are decided collectively by the members of the Committee during a committee meeting.

No additional ethics approval is required from the country in which the data collection takes place. The KEB is authorized to review and approve applications involving data collection conducted abroad within its own jurisdiction.

The application must provide a detailed description of any potential local risks associated with conducting research in the given country, as well as the measures that the principal investigator and the researchers conducting the study will take to mitigate those risks. In cases involving participants under the age of 18 and/or vulnerable populations, applicants are requested to conduct a detailed risk assessment and upload the corresponding document as part of the application.

Can the text of the “Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form” included in the ethics application template be modified?

The Committee’s position is that it is not necessary to adopt the text of the “Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form” contained in the application template word for word; it serves as a guide.

However, the following information must be included in the text: the name and email address of the principal investigator (ELTE PPK email address), the purpose of the research, the name of the person conducting the research, the procedure of the study (e.g., completing a questionnaire or evaluating images according to specified criteria), the duration of the study, whether remuneration is provided or not, a statement that participation in the study is voluntary, and information about the possibility of withdrawal/discontinuation.

With regard to the statement “are not receiving treatment for a neurological or psychiatric disorder”, the applicant must decide, taking into account the purpose of the research and the population to be studied, whether to retain or remove this sentence from the consent form.

What information must be included in the recruitment text?

The institution where the research is being conducted must already be indicated in the recruitment text. However, in the case of anonymous questionnaire-based research, it is not mandatory to include an email address in the recruitment text, since the link directs potential participants to the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, which contains the contact details of the principal investigator.

In the case of qualitative or offline studies, it is naturally important to provide official contact email address(es) already in the recruitment text. At the same time, these do not necessarily have to be personal email addresses; a shared research group email address may also be used, provided that it has an ELTE domain.

What is an umbrella application, and when is it advisable to submit one?

An umbrella application is an application that encompasses multiple studies within the same research area. For example, if an institute, department, or research group investigates a broader topic over several years with changing cohorts of students each semester, with students examining different subtopics within the broader research area, it may be worth considering the submission of an umbrella application.

The main principles regarding umbrella applications are as follows:

- For every umbrella application, supplementary, study-specific information must be submitted (e.g., the instruments used in the particular study, the characteristics of the participants, etc.), since without such information the application cannot be evaluated from an ethical perspective.
- An end date must be specified; the approval should not cover a period of several years.

- Applications must be renewed annually. If no changes have occurred, the principal investigator only needs to inform the KEB in a brief statement that the research is to continue under unchanged conditions and request an extension of the approval. In such cases, the application does not need to be resubmitted.

Is the ethical approval issued by the Unified Psychological Research Ethics Committee (EPKEB) also accepted for ELTE/PPK research projects?

Yes.

In what cases is it necessary to submit an extension request or an amendment request?

An extension request should be submitted when the currently valid approval has not yet expired and the researchers do not intend to modify any aspect of the study other than its end date. In such cases, the standard review procedure is not required, and the extension may be granted directly.

An amendment request may also only be submitted while the approval is still valid. Unlike an extension request, an amendment is subject to the standard review process.

If the approval for the study has already expired, only a new application may be submitted, as the validity period of an expired approval cannot be extended.

Technical Information

- The start date of the study cannot be earlier than the date on which the application is submitted.
- The principal investigator's email address/contact details must be included in all recruitment materials, including the recruitment letter or study invitation, as well as in the participant information sheet and informed consent form.
- The participant information sheet and informed consent form must provide research participants with a genuine choice regarding participation in the study. Therefore, both "Yes" and "No" response options must be included.
- The application must contain a detailed list of references for all questionnaires, tests, interviews, and other measurement instruments to be used in the study, both in their original language and in Hungarian (or the language used in the study). In addition, information regarding the translation of any new foreign-language measurement instruments must also be provided.

What information should be provided in the application for a quantitative study? (What questions should researchers consider when preparing a quantitative research proposal?)

- Where and how will participants be recruited, and what exactly will the recruitment materials or recruitment text contain?
- What inclusion and exclusion criteria will be used to determine participant eligibility?
- What methodology will be used?
- Where will the data collection take place?
- Will data collection be anonymous, or will personal data also be processed? If personal data are collected, confidentiality must be ensured. (Anonymous and confidential data handling are not the same. Anonymous data collection means that participants cannot be identified at all. Confidential data handling means that the researcher can identify the participant, but the research data collected, such as questionnaire responses, heart rate measurements, reaction time data, etc., are stored separately from personal data. Instead, a code may be assigned to the participant, while the code key is stored separately and securely, for example in a locked location or a password-protected file.)
- If personal data are collected, a Data Processing Information Notice must also be provided. This document must specify how long the personal data will be retained.
- Researchers should carefully consider whether participants may be identifiable from data collected anonymously. For example, if it is known that a participant is the director of a specific institution, the participant may still be identifiable even if the questionnaire is completed anonymously. In such cases, participant information and data protection procedures must reflect this fact, and the data must be treated confidentially.
- Will any incentives (e.g. monetary compensation, course credits) be offered? Are there any benefits associated with participation?
- Does the study involve deception? If so, how will the deception be resolved following data collection? In the case of online studies, can the debriefing information also be provided to participants who withdraw before completing the study?
- How long does participation in the study take for each participant?
- For online questionnaire studies, the questionnaire link must be provided. In addition, an archived copy of the complete questionnaire must be attached, as links may become inactive over time.
- For offline questionnaire studies, the questions/questionnaires must also be attached.
- References for all questionnaires used (both the original version and the Hungarian version) must be included in the application. If the questionnaire is the researcher's own translation, this should be clearly indicated.
- If relevant, stimulus materials must be presented. Videos, images, audio files, and other materials should be attached. In studies using cognitive paradigms, the stimulus

materials must also be described, and in the case of a newly developed paradigm, the stimulus materials must be presented and attached.

- The participant information sheet and informed consent form should be tailored to the specific study. If the research is conducted within an institution (e.g. a school), an information sheet intended for the head of the institution should also be attached.
- Does participation in the study involve any risks for participants? If so, how will these risks be managed?
- How and where will the data be stored?
- Who will be involved in data collection? Where relevant, considering the aims and methodology of the study, what qualifications, expertise, or training do the researchers and data collectors possess?
- Will the research address topics for which participants should receive follow-up information after participation? For example, at the end of a gambling-related questionnaire, participants may be provided with information about problem gambling and where to seek help if needed.
- Will the research generate data relating to the participant's health status that may have medical or psychopathological significance (e.g. suicidal ideation, epileptiform EEG patterns)? If so, appropriate procedures should be in place to inform the participant of such findings and, where necessary, recommend further professional assessment.

What information should be provided in the application for a qualitative study? (What questions should researchers consider when designing a qualitative study?)

- Where relevant, which qualitative research paradigm is being used (e.g. descriptive, post-positivist, interpretive, critical)?
- Where and how will participants be recruited, and what exactly will the recruitment materials or recruitment text contain?
- What inclusion and exclusion criteria will be used to determine participant eligibility?
- What method will be used (e.g. interview, observation, questionnaire, focus group)?
- In the case of interviews or questionnaires, what specific questions will be asked, and how were these questions developed? What theoretical framework, conceptual approach, or empirical work informed their design? Has the interview guide or questionnaire been attached to the application? In the case of observations, what will be recorded, and how will the observations be coded?
- Where will the data collection take place?
- Will audio or video recordings be made? How will these recordings be captured, and what equipment or software will be used? Have participants been informed about the recordings in the Participant Information Sheet? Has their consent been obtained for

audio/video recording? In the case of online interviews, how will informed consent be obtained?

- Participants must be informed about the period during which they may request the deletion of their recordings and withdraw from the study. For example, participants may be allowed to request the deletion of their audio recordings and withdraw from the study within one week following the recording session. After this period, recordings may be transcribed and all personal identifiers removed from the transcripts.
- Is it planned to use verbatim quotations from participants in publications or reports? If so, have participants given their consent for this?
- How will participant anonymity be preserved when reporting the results? How will researchers ensure that individuals cannot be identified even through direct quotations?
- Who will be involved in data collection? Where relevant, considering the aims and methodology of the study, what qualifications, expertise, or training do the researchers and data collectors possess? For example, in a trauma-related interview study, does the interviewer have the necessary knowledge and professional preparation to conduct such interviews appropriately?
- Is there a possibility that the researcher's position or role may influence the study, including data collection and/or analysis?
- Could the relationship between the researcher and the participant influence the study outcomes?
- Will any incentives (e.g. monetary compensation, course credits) be offered to participants? Are there any benefits associated with participation?
- How long does participation in the study take for each participant?
- The Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form should be tailored to the specific study. If the research is conducted through an institution (e.g. a school), an information sheet intended for the head of the institution should also be attached.
- Does participation involve any risks for participants? If so, how will these risks be managed within the study?
- How and where will the data be stored?
- Will the study address topics for which participants should be provided with follow-up information after their participation? For example, following an interview about gambling behaviour, participants may be given information about problem gambling and where to seek help if needed.
- Will the study generate information relating to a participant's health status that may have medical or psychopathological significance (e.g. suicidal ideation)? If so, appropriate procedures should be in place to ensure that the participant is informed of such findings with due care and, where necessary, advised to seek further professional assessment.

Frequently Asked Questions About Using the Online System

1. Who can initiate a new application, and who can submit it?

In the system, only the Principal Investigator is authorized to initiate a new application, and only the Principal Investigator may submit the final version of the application.

During the editing process, however, the Principal Investigator may transfer editing rights to another registered user, who can then view and modify the application content. Before the application can be finalized and submitted, editing rights must be returned to the Principal Investigator, as reviewing and submitting the application is always the responsibility of the Principal Investigator.

2. How does collaborative editing, transfer, and reassignment work?

After the Principal Investigator has initiated a new application, they may transfer editing rights to another researcher involved in the study who is registered in the system and has an active user account, including students and PhD students. The designated editor may then prepare the application by completing the required fields, uploading the necessary documents, and compiling the full submission package.

Once the application has been prepared, editing rights must be returned to the Principal Investigator, as only the Principal Investigator is authorized to submit the application.

3. Who may revise an application that has been returned for corrections?

An application that has been returned for revisions may only be corrected by the Principal Investigator, as responding to the reviewers' scientific and research ethics comments, questions, and requests for clarification is the responsibility of and falls within the competence of the Principal Investigator.

4. How can I save or archive my application?

At the end of the application form, a **Print View** option is available, which displays the complete application document. From this view, the application can be saved as a PDF, printed, or downloaded for archiving purposes.

This function is also available for previously approved applications.

5. The Submit button is not visible. What could be the reason?

If you are not the Principal Investigator, the system does not allow you to submit the application. Please return the editing rights to the Principal Investigator, as reviewing and submitting the application is solely the responsibility of the Principal Investigator.

If you are the Principal Investigator but cannot see the **Submit** button, the editing rights are currently assigned to another user. In this case, please ask the researcher (or student) to whom you delegated editing rights to return them, so that you can review and submit the application.

6. Why am I unable to start a new application?

Please check whether you have completed all required information in the **Profile** section located in the upper-right corner of the system.

A new application may only be initiated by a Principal Investigator who holds a doctoral (PhD) degree and is either a faculty member or researcher of ELTE PPK, or an external supervisor affiliated with the Faculty or one of its doctoral schools.

7. How does the amendment request process work?

Approved applications cannot be modified directly, as they are archived by the Research Ethics Committee. If an amendment is required, the system creates a clone of the original application and generates an editable version. This new version can be freely modified and submitted for review. The reviewers can clearly see which fields have been changed in the amended application, helping to ensure a faster and more efficient review process.

8. How can I request an extension?

For closed applications, the system provides an automatic extension option that may be used once. The extension function is available on the application record of closed applications, and an extension request must be submitted before the approval expires.

Any additional extension requests beyond the first automatic extension require separate approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC).