# Research Ethics Checklist – Step 1

The Political Science Ethics committee conducts an ethical assessment of projects which fall outside the remit of the [Faculty of Social Science Ethics committee](https://socialsciences.ku.dk/research/ethic-committee/application/Guidelines-SAMF-ethics-committee-v8.pdf). The SAMF committee reviews the ethics of research proposals in which the release of externally awarded grant funding is contingent on an ethical review – for example, European Research Council projects.

The Political Science Ethics Committee deals with other ethics reviews, such as where scientific journals require documentation from an Institutional Review Board (IRB), including an ethical IRB approval. Along with a preregistration plan, such an approval is often required to be submitted as documentation for articles sent to review.

Researchers employed at the Department of Political Science of the University of Copenhagen, i.e. PhD students and Postdocs as well as Assistant -, Associate - and Full Professors, who wish to obtain an ethical approval from the department’s ethics committee should – as a first step – go through this ethics checklist.

The checklist is designed to support researchers in thinking about the ethical dimensions of their research project as well as give guidance to the Ethics Committee at the Department of Political Science whether an approval can be granted without further details, or whether more background information is needed for the Committee to decide.

The Committee expects most cases to be straightforward, where ethical approval can be swiftly granted, typically within one week of acknowledgement of submission. A fully completed checklist will aid the committee’s ability to act quickly to approve submissions.

Therefore, as a first step to obtain approval, the principal investigator (PI) should complete this research ethics checklist below. The answers to this checklist will be reviewed by a member of the Ethics Committee at the Department of Political Science. Assuming the answers meet our requirements, approval will be granted rapidly after the checklist has been reviewed.

If further information is deemed required, the PI will receive an extended application form with additional questions. This extended application will be reviewed again by the Ethics Committee.

Please note that the Ethics Committee at the Department of Political Science cannot assess projects that involve biological samples, medical treatments, etc. Please seek advice on approval of these types of projects from the appropriate KU ethical bodies (see, for example, the [Science and Health Ethics Committee](https://kunet.ku.dk/work-areas/research/rcr/research-ethics-committees/research-ethics-committee-of-science-and-health/Pages/default.aspx) (KUnet link).

In principle the Ethics Committee cannot handle any `ex-post’ review of projects, i.e. projects for which the data collection process or the data analysis has already started.

**Please complete the below form and mail it to the** Ethics Committee Secretary

Date (dd/mm/yyyy):

| **About the Project:**  |
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| Project title: |       |
| Project start-date:  |       | Anticipated end-date: |       |
| Principal Investigator(s): |       | Email address(es): |       |
| Supervisor(if PI is a PhD student): |       | Email address(es): |       |
| Others researchers that participate in the project | Name:       | Email:       |
| What is your subjective judgment about the ethical concerns in your project based on common criteria of harm, consent, deception ect? | **[ ]** No apparent ethical concerns **[ ]**  Minor potential ethical concerns **[ ]**  Major potential ethical concerns  |
| What best describes the project you need approval for? | [ ] Study planned in pre-registration for later publication [ ] Study planned for publication [ ] Pilot study not planned for publication [ ] Study outlined in grant application [ ] Other (please specify):       |
| Project description and research design:(including potential data collection procedure) | **Please describe your research design/data collection procedure in 300-800 words**:(understandable for researchers outside your discipline)      |
| Funding body (if relevant): |       |
| Has your project been preregistered? | Yes:       No:       No, but will be prior to data collection: Registration number:      Location:       (please provide a link) |
| Why does your project need ethical approval?  |  |
| Have you received an ethical approval from another institution?  | Yes:       No:        |
| Data collection method: | Data collection: (please tick at least one box. If you tick “other”, please explain your data collection in details ) [ ] Interviews [ ] Questionnaire [ ]  Survey Experiment [ ]  Field Experiment [ ] Secondary data [ ] Observation [ ]  Other (please specify):        |

| **Risk of harm. Please answer the following questions:**  | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Do the funders have a role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript? | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| If yes, describe the role of the funder? (max 100 words)      |
| Does your sample include children (aged below 18), mentally incapacitated persons, patients, and members of ethnic minorities, individuals who are in custody or care arrangement such as pupils or students at school or in a professional or client relationship with the researchers involved in this project? | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| If yes, describe their role in the study and why it is important to sample them (max 100 words)      |
| Does the proposed research involve processing of sensitive personal data (e.g., location, health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, and political conviction such as party choice or membership, religious or philosophical conviction)?  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| If yes, please explain how this data is elicited, why it is needed for the purpose of the study and how it is treated (max 100 words)      |
| Does the study cause a general risk, harm or negative consequences on the participants, such as (but not exclusively) a potential for psychological, social, economic, or legal harm to the participant? | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Does the proposed research involve imposing pain, more than mild discomfort, or induce psychological stress or anxiety on the participants? | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Does the proposed research involve deception? [[1]](#footnote-1)If yes, how will you inform participants of this at the end of the study? Briefly describe your de-briefing strategy | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Does the research pose any harm to the researcher (s)? | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Are any of the participants in a dependent relationship with the investigator?  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Does the research rely on an internet platform where respondents’ data may be monitored by a third party (Google forms, Amazon MTurk, eBay, …) or is any information from the study likely to be passed on to external companies or organizations in the course of the research?  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| If yes, please explain in more detail (max 100 words)      |  |
| Do you compensate participants for the participation in your study (e.g., monetary, voucher or a gift)? | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| If yes, please explain how you compensate them (max 100 words)      |

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| **Informed Consent:**  |
| Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and informed consent at the time? Yes:       No:        |
| **What type of consent will be obtained from study participants?** [ ]  Oral consent[ ]  Written consent [ ]  Anonymous questionnaire (cover letter required, no consent form needed) **[ ]**  Other (please specify):       |
| **If you do not intend to secure written consent, please explain why:**  |
| Informed consent form | **Please attach your informed consent form:****[ ]  Informed consent form is attached** |

| **Handling of data:** |
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| **Which type of personal data will be collected?** **[ ]  Sensitive data** e.g. ethnical background, political, religious or philosophical orientation, union membership, fingerprints, sexual orientation etc. [ ]  **Normal personal information** e.g. names, addresses, job position, education, economic situation etc.[ ]  **Payment information** e.g. CPR-numbers and names[ ]  **Other** (please specify):       |
| **How will you store the data? Specifically, what precautions will be taken to safeguard identifiable records of individuals and to protect their private information?** This is of particular relevance in a national (DK) context if CPR numbers, sensitive information or other personal information are collected.**Please describe (100 words):** |
| **Are external data processors involved?** **[ ]  No, only persons who are KU staff are to process personal data****[ ]  Yes, personal data will be processed by persons who are not KU staff, and/or other external parties (including IT systems such as Qualtrics, SurveyXact, etc.)**If external persons/parties are to process personal data, a data processing agreement must be signed before the processing begins. |
| **Name, position and contact information for the data controller in the research project**  |  |

**ETHICAL STATEMENT**

Please provide a clear, concise statement of the ethical issues raised by this project and provide details of how you will address these issues. This section should also provide full details of what type of data you will be collecting (anonymous, coded, attributable) and how you will handle/store and retain/destroy data. (approx. 300 words)

| **Ethical Statement** |
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**Next Steps**

Thank you for completing this Research Ethics Checklist.

Please send your completed checklist, any supplementary material (links to funding scheme ethics rubric) and existing ethics approvals from other (project partner) institutions to the Ethics Committee Secretary.

A member of the Department’s ethics committee will review your answers; you will be contacted afterwards with either a simple approval or by a request for further details.

The answers to your checklist and any further correspondence will naturally be confidential.

If you have any questions, please write to the Ethics Committee Secretary.

1. Deception means lying, misleading or wrongly informing participants about the true nature of a situation. In other words, there is no deception if anything you tell subjects in an experiment is true. Note that withholding information does not necessarily constitute deception, but this is a grey area. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)