The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology
Departmental Research Ethics Application Overview
Undergraduate Theses and Independent Studies

All undergraduate theses and IS projects are required to undergo ethics review by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. Applications should be submitted online. Each research ethics application should include the following:

A)   Online Application Form [Click for PSYC4007 or PSYC4008, PSYC4009 & PSYC4101]

      i)   Amendment Form
        For subsequent amendment of an **approved** project OR application for extension of ethical approval, please fill in an amendment form [click here].

B)   A Brief Summary of the Proposed Research
The proposal should include the purpose or objectives of the project, the hypotheses or research questions, the planned methods, and the planned analyses. The methods section should describe the procedure and materials in sufficient detail to determine that it adheres to ethical standards, and should include a justification of the sample size (power analysis). The analysis plan should describe of the statistical analyses that will be used to draw conclusions. The OSF preregistration template has information about the expected content of the sampling plan and analysis plan: https://osf.io/jea94/. You may include a few references if you wish.
==Please download the template for research proposals [click here] and provide the necessary information.==

C)   Informed Consent Form
Please refer to Point 16, 17 & 18 of the Operational Guidelines and Procedures of HRECNCF [http://www.rss.hku.hk/HREC/guidelines.pdf].

D)   Debriefing Form
Debriefing notes should be written in a very general way in clear prose without jargon. The debriefing is meant to inform your participants of why you undertook the study and what you hope to find. It is a good practice to include debriefing note explaining your study in more details to your participants as a token of appreciation at the end of their participation, even if your study does not involve deception.

E)   Checklist for Research Ethics Application (Embedded in the online form)

F)   A Full Set of Questionnaires (if any)

Sample of Consent and Related Forms
In the Informed Consent Form and Debriefing Form, please make sure there is **at least one HKU email address of either the student investigator or the research supervisor** since some participants might query the authenticity of the research if no official HKU contact information was included.

In addition, it is inappropriate to include the HREC contact information in the Informed Consent Form/Debriefing Form since all UG research ethics applications are approved by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. **Sample templates of Informed Consent Form (for Adults) and Debriefing Form is now available at the department website or the Moodle.** If your research projects need to use

other templates of Informed Consent Form (e.g for Parent, Principal), Student Assent Forms or Debriefing Forms at the HREC website, please (i) change the contact information from HREC to the Department Office of Psychology, HKU (3917-5867) and (ii) delete the line about "HREC Reference Number/HREC Approval Expiration Date".

Research Ethics

You may see the submission of your ethics approval as a challenge in effective communication. It gives you an opportunity to express yourself clearly and precisely to readers (reviewer plus participants) less informed than you about the work you are undertaking. You will not be marked for this, only approved or asked to resubmit if there is a problem about confidentiality or deception. Nonetheless, it is also an exercise in writing, in which we can all find grounds for improvement.

Application Deadline

- Application deadline is **two weeks after the presentation of research proposal**.
- For students who are approved to start their thesis / IS project in 2nd semester, they have to submit their application before **1st March**.

Failure to submit an ethics application will lead to a failure in the course.

Please note that researchers may be asked by the reviewer to revise the documents with track changes and re-submit their ethics application via the online system. Your supervisor and reviewer will review the documents again.
Normally the reviewing process should be completed within 2 - 3 weeks (from the date of first submission). This duration also applies to application for amendment.

Exemption

Students, applying for exemption from ethical approval, have to submit an application form [form] together with a one-page summary of the proposed research before the deadline of ethics application. The application will be submitted to the Chair of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee for consideration.

Approval

Each ethics application will be reviewed and endorsed by an Ethics Reviewer and finally approved by the Chair (or delegate) of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. For each approved ethics application, student investigator will receive an official notification about the ethics approval results. An approved ethics is valid for one year, unless an extension has been granted.

Flow Charts

1. Student ⟷ Supervisor
2. Student → Online submission → Supervisor
3. Supervisor (endorsement) → Ethics Reviewer
4. Ethics Reviewer ⟷ Student (c.c. Supervisor).
5. Student (revised / additional materials) → Online submission → Ethics Reviewer
6. Ethics Reviewer (endorsement) → Departmental Research Ethics Committee
7. Departmental Research Ethics Committee (approval) → Student