Ethics Pack for Research Students

Effective 2020 to Present

Student Regulations and Policies

uclan.ac.uk/studentcontract

1.0 Introduction

This pack contains all relevant information you, as a UCLan Research Degree Student, will need for the Ethics process here at UCLan.

Document A – Ethics Guidance notes for Research Degree Students
Please read these notes before completing any paperwork
https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/support/research/ethics.php

Document B – Ethics Checklist
Use this form if you are seeking 'Ethical Clearance'.
https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/assets/files/ethics-checklist.docx

Document C – Ethics Application Form
Use this form if you are seeking 'Ethical Approval'.
https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/assets/files/ethics-application-form.docx

Document D – Guidance Notes for completion of Ethics Application Form
Please refer to these notes for guidance on completion of the form.
https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/support/research/ethics.php

If you need any further information or advice either go to the Ethics page on the student portal at https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/research/ethics.php or email, EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk.

Training sessions are also available throughout the year for research degree students. The training sessions will explain the ethics system and how to complete your ethics application – for the next available 'Obtaining Ethical Approval at UCLan' session go to the Research Training Calendar (located at http://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/study/student_training.php) where you will be directed to Eventbrite to book a place.

2.0 Ethics Guidance notes for Research Degree Students (Document A)

Please read these notes before completing any paperwork. All research degree student projects, irrespective of the nature or activity involved, will need to be reviewed by their relevant Ethics Review Panel. A flow diagram explaining the process is given in Appendix 1.

Please note, that ethical clearance is distinctive from approval. Clearance is given as confirmation that ethical approval is not required.

Ethics Checklist

If on completion of the Ethics Checklist, Questions A), B) or C) are answered 'Yes' then refer to Full Approval notes below. If on completion of the Ethics Checklist, Questions A), B) and C) are answered 'No' then a copy of the student's approved RDSC2 (Application to Research Programme Approval) form along with the completed Ethics Checklist should be emailed to EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk (please prefix the subject line of the email with the appropriate Ethics Review Panel acronym).

Where Questions D) to G) have been answered 'Yes', please provide further details on the ethical implications specific to the proposed student project and submit along with the ethics checklist and a copy of the student's approved RDSC2 form.

The documentation will be reviewed and confirmation provided that the student's research programme approval proposal has been approved and that a Full Ethical Approval application is not required (unless changes are subsequently made to the study and therefore the student/Director of Studies should revisit the Ethics Checklist and, if appropriate, submit an ethics application form).

The Ethics Panel Chair may however feel that there are ethical issues to be addressed and as such will advise the Director of Studies/student that an application for Full Approval (see below) will be required at the appropriate time and before commencing data collection.

External approval by the Health Research Authority (HRA)

In cases where student projects require approval by an external NHS ethics committee, please submit all the paperwork relating to that application to IRASSponsor@uclan.ac.uk. This paperwork will include the completed IRAS (Integrated Research Application System) application form and final versions of all supporting documentation, such as information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, etc.) The documentation will be reviewed by the sponsor reviewers and sponsorship will be confirmed by the sponsor approver. There is no need to complete the UCLan ethics application form. Once sponsor approval is received the project can be submitted for external REC review.

Where only HRA approval is to be granted (i.e. the project is exempt from NHS REC review), then a full review will be required by the relevant UCLan Ethics Review Panel prior to submission to HRA for approval.

Other forms of external approval

Other examples of external ethical approvals are BioBanks (such as BTNW), NOMS – National Offender Management Service (for projects involving prisons) – now called Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), County Councils and other universities. Applications which require approval by any external organisation need to be approved by UCLan ethics before submission to the external body.

Any project which involve research being conducted in a low or lower-middle income country as defined by the World Bank the Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings (GCC) must be applied. All such application should be submitted for approval by UCLan ethics before applying for local ethical approval.

http://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Global-Code-of-Conduct-Brochure.pdf

Full Approval

Where the need for Full Approval has been identified, either on completion of the ethics checklist or notification from UCLan Ethics Review Panel then, the student's fieldwork/data collection can only commence once full ethical approval has been granted. In some cases, it may be necessary to make separate proposal applications for different stages of the project,

especially if the design of the later stages is highly dependent on the findings from the earlier stages.

For projects involving micro-organisms, or genetically modified micro-organisms (GMOs), initial advice and/or review/approval by the Biological Safety Committee is required before submitting to the relevant Ethics Review Panel to be dealt with via Chairs Action.

For projects involving vertebrate animals (other than humans) or cephalopods, please contact the AWERB Reporting Officer, via EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk email address, for a copy of the relevant application form and submission deadlines.

For projects that involve human participants (including the use of their data or material), the process for an application for Full Approval requires a completed ethics application form. The completed ethics application form along with any supporting documentation (e.g. information sheet, consent form, questionnaire, etc.) should be emailed to EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk. A review by (at least) two members of the relevant Ethics Review Panel will then take place providing feedback on the application. The Ethics Panel Chair, after reviewing the paperwork and the reviewers' feedback/comments, will then provide a decision on the application.

Outcome / Decision

The Ethics Review Panels will make one of five decisions on an application:-

1. Outline approval or approval in principle (may include exemption from full review). This is not normally applicable to postgraduate research student projects
2. Approved either outright, or with suggested recommendations (recommendations are discretionary)
3. Approved subject to specified conditions being addressed (conditions are mandatory)
4. Re-submission required
5. Reject

All communications regarding research student ethics submissions will be sent to both the Director of Studies and the student.

Documentation

A copy of the ethics application form and ethics checklist can be downloaded from https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/support/research/ethics.php.

The RDSC2 (Application for Research Programme Approval or Application to Register) form is available to download, along with guidance notes, in the Research Document Library on the Student Portal.
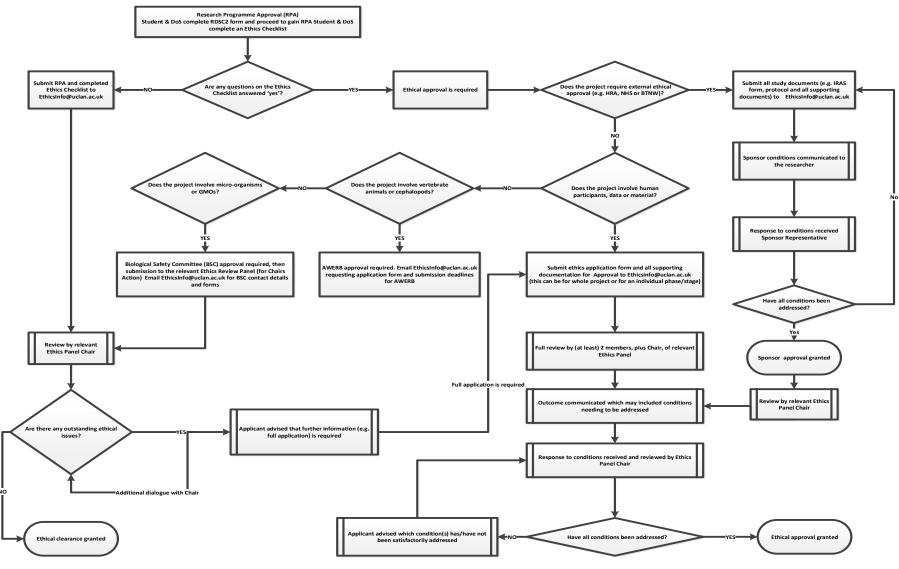
3.0 Research Integrity

The University recognises its responsibility to researchers and the wider community to ensure the highest standards of integrity and professionalism are observed in the conduct of research. The University recognises the importance of researchers taking responsibility for their own research, including topic and methodology, and the ethical and legal requirements placed on both researchers and the University itself.

Both [UCLan Ethical Principles for Teaching, Research, Consultancy, Knowledge Transfer & Related Activities](#) and [UCLan's Code of Conduct for Research](#) provide guiding principles and standards of good practice in research across all subject disciplines and fields of study in the University. These documents apply to all those undertaking research on and off the University's premises using its facilities, or on behalf of the University, including staff, students, visiting or emeritus staff, associates, honorary or clinical contract holders, contractors and consultants.

These principles of good practice underpin the University's commitment to effective research governance, the pursuit of excellence and the highest quality research. Failure to comply with these, or any actions taken that may be deemed to constitute research malpractice under the University's Code of Practice (CoP) for Investigating Allegations of Research Malpractice may be grounds for instigating proceedings under the appropriate University procedures. Where researchers are found to have committed research malpractice, referral to the appropriate funding agency and/or relevant regulatory body may also be required.

This Code of Practice is based in large part on the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) guidance for the administration of allegations of malpractice and is consistent with the principles of the UK Concordat to support Research Integrity, to which the University is a signatory.

Any malpractice in research is unacceptable and should be reported in the first instance to the University Officer for Ethics via email OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk. Allegations will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and in a timely manner, in accordance with this Code of Practice. All proceedings will be conducted under the presumption of innocence and carried out with sensitivity and confidentiality. Anyone wishing to raise concerns relating to malpractice in research may do so, and where raised in good faith, will be supported and not penalised.

Any researcher who is found not to have committed malpractice will be supported and appropriate steps taken to restore their reputation and that of any relevant research project(s).

Appendix 1. Flow diagram illustrating the process of Ethical Review, Clearance and Approval.