

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Trinity College Dublin
Research Ethics Committee

Overview of the Research Ethics Review Process

The Research Ethics Committee (REC) conducts an ethical review of all research projects in the School involving human subjects. Ethics approval is required for all such research conducted either by staff members or students. Approval must be obtained prior to the commencement of data collection and cannot be applied for or granted retrospectively. Obtaining prior ethical approval for research involving human participants is an essential requirement for all dissertations.

The Committee meets at least once every term to consider applications for approval. Dates of submission deadlines and meetings are posted on the School website. The unanimous agreement of the Committee is required in order to grant approval for any project. Applicants may appeal a decision in writing to the Head of School. A decision may occasionally take longer where vulnerable participant groups are involved, where additional information is required by the Committee, or where consultation with other bodies is required.

An electronic version of your application, compiled as **a single PDF document**, must be submitted, by the advertised deadline (usually ten days or two weeks prior to a REC meeting), to the School of Linguistics Speech and Communication Sciences.

Please note that Declaration Section 7 of the application must be completed by the applicant and, if applicable, the applicant's supervisor. Research Supervisors are also required to send an email to the Research Ethics Committee confirming that they have reviewed the ethics application and that the proposed research project conforms to the School's Research Ethics Guidelines.

The email address for the School of Linguistics Speech and Communication Sciences Research Ethics Committee is: slscs@tcd.ie .

Decisions of the REC may take one of three forms: (1) Ethical approval is granted; (2) Ethical approval will be granted subject to satisfactory completion of revisions; (3) A full resubmission is required. In the case of applications from students, the decision letter is copied to the supervisor.

All decisions of the REC will be communicated to applicants by email, and this will normally be within 4 weeks of the submission deadline.

All applications for ethical approval are assessed according to the same criteria. If a staff member obtains ethics approval for a research programme, which includes a particular student's project, that student does not need to obtain separate ethics approval.

In the case of certain ongoing research programmes (e.g. those in the Phonetics Lab which involve audio recording of participants from time to time over an extended period), ethics approval for the programme as a whole for a period not exceeding three years may be sought from the REC by the supervisor/principal investigator.

In cases where students in a course/module are required to carry out very similar research projects, a single application may be made by the instructor covering all course projects. If projects for a particular course stay substantially the same from year to year, a single application may be made to cover a three year period.

The obligation to be fully informed about the research ethics review process and about ethical issues in particular areas of research rests entirely with the applicant. In the case of students, it is the responsibility of supervisors and course coordinators to ensure that ethical issues are fully understood and that the information in the application form and supporting documentation is accurate and complete. Students should have application materials assembled in sufficient time to allow their supervisor to review and approve them. Preparing the research ethics application can be a useful exercise in itself which contributes to the development of a dissertation proposal.