

ECS PhD Induction: Ethics & Diversity

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Chair of FEPS Ethics Committee

8th October 2026

Why should we care about this?

What are the consequences of not doing so?



RESEARCH 'FACTS'

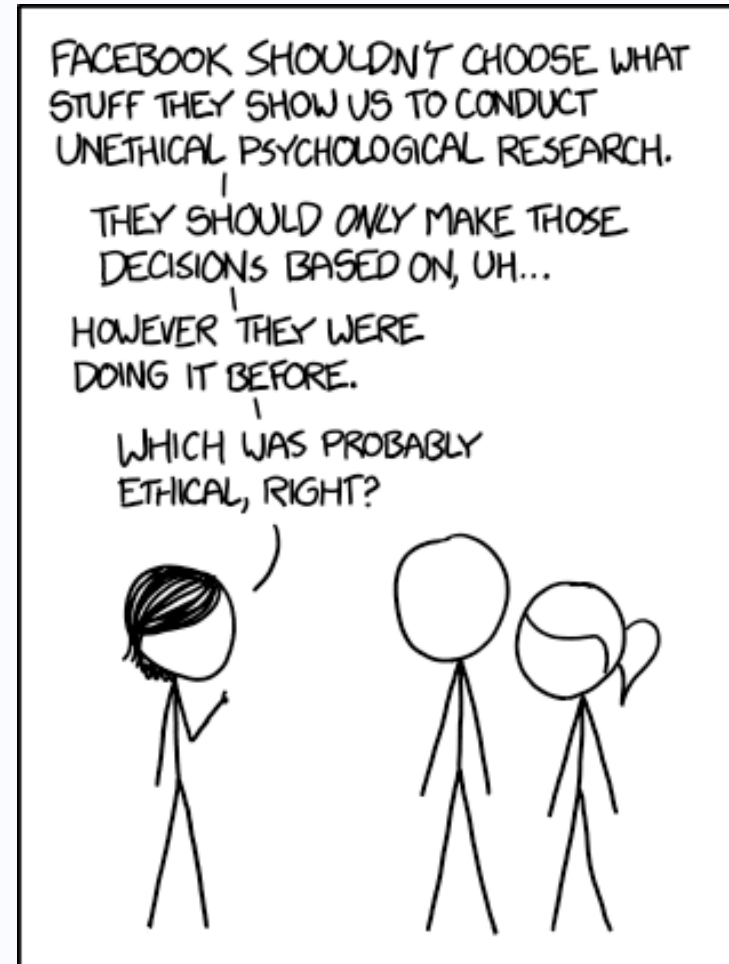
ERRANTSCIENCE.COM

THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF
CLINICAL TRIALS FAILING ETHICS
APPLICATIONS IS UNEXPLAINED
BLOOD STAINS ON THE
DOCUMENTATION

...AND THE FREQUENCY OF SUSPICIOUS
ABSENCES IN THE ETHICS
DEPARTMENT

Unethical Research Examples

- Tuskegee syphilis experiment
 - US, 1932-1972
 - Deliberate spread of misinformation (and consequently a dangerous disease)
 - Ultimately led to deaths due to participants misbelieving they were receiving free treatment
- Facebook Secret 'mood' study
 - Web-based, 2012
 - Manipulated users' news feeds (without consent or knowledge) to test whether exposure to more positive or negative posts influenced the emotional tone of users' own posts.



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Ethical Research & Planning

- Ethical Research
 - Intrinsic concern for the human Good
 - Professionalism as researchers
 - Public / External relations
 - Funder requirements
 - Journal and editorial policy
 - Professional bodies – Code of Conduct
 - Policy of the University of Southampton
 - Legal requirement (Data Protection)
 - Required for Insurance
- Data Management Plans
- Ethics Application



This image was created by [Scriberia](#) for The Turing Way community and is used under a CC-BY licence.

Ethical Commitments

- **Research integrity** refers to the adherence to ethical principles and professional standards throughout the research process. It underpins trust in research and ensures that research is conducted responsibly and transparently - <https://ukrio.org/research-integrity/what-is-research-integrity/>
- **Responsible Research & Innovation** - RRI is a framework that ensures scientific research and innovation are conducted in ways that are ethically acceptable, socially desirable, and sustainable. It emphasizes the alignment of research outcomes with societal values, needs, and expectations - <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/framework-for-responsible-innovation/>



This is our commitment to the (research) community at large – to share data with them, so that they can build on what we have done...

...but more importantly, perhaps, is our commitment to everyone – research participants, field workers, colleagues, the broader academic community, and the common good

Ethics and ED&I

As diverse individuals...

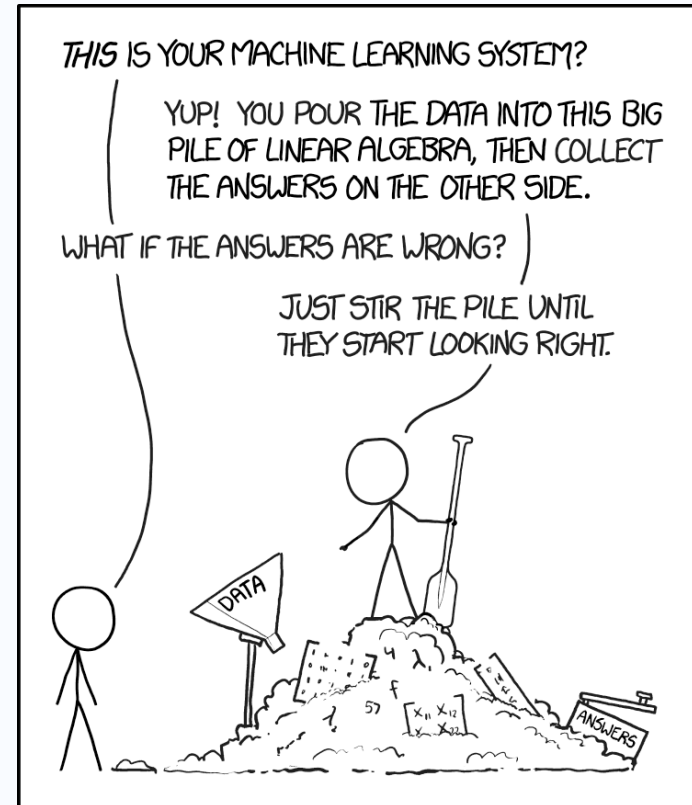
- we *expect* to be treated on our merits
- this applies just as much to our **research participants**
- and, of course, affects the **quality** of any **human-centred research**

This is why **ETHICS (PEER) REVIEW** is important

This is where **ETHICS** and **EDI** meet

Why we need ED&I in our research

- Biased systems
 - Facial recognition systems only trained on certain demographics
 - Medical trials run with certain demographics
 - Biased data leads to biased systems and a further perpetuation of this bias
 - **YOUR RESEARCH IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE DATA YOU FEED IT**



"Machine Learning" by XKCD is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.5](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.5/)

If we don't diversify our researchers and research participants, how can we ever expect to collect or produce diverse data?



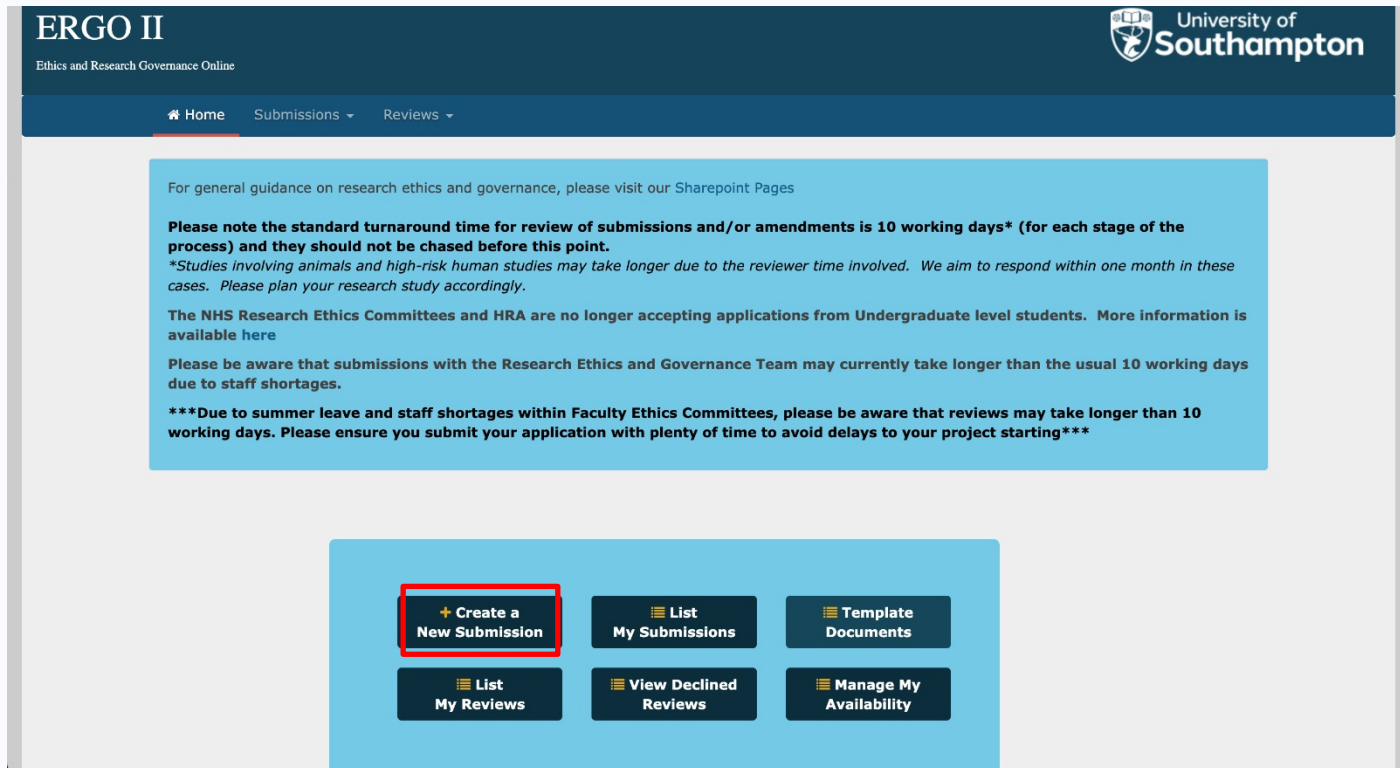
When to get ethics approval

- Research that requires ethics approval
 - Research that involves human participants? (either by primary data collection or secondary data analysis): e.g. their data, cells/tissue, themselves, their possessions
- Research that doesn't require ethics approval
 - Analysis of anonymised aggregated data on individuals or organisations (e.g. GDP, labour force participation rates, fertility rates);
 - Meta-analyses (i.e. the analysis of studies);
 - Literature reviews or reviews/analyses of reports, policies, documents, meeting minutes, newspaper articles, films.

**Retrospective approval is
NOT possible**



Where/How do I submit?



The screenshot shows the ERGO II portal interface. At the top, the header includes the University of Southampton logo and the text 'ERGO II Ethics and Research Governance Online'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Submissions', and 'Reviews'. A large blue box contains important information about submission turnaround times and NHS Research Ethics Committees. At the bottom, a grid of buttons is displayed, with the 'Create a New Submission' button highlighted by a red rectangle.

ERGO II
Ethics and Research Governance Online

Home Submissions Reviews

For general guidance on research ethics and governance, please visit our Sharepoint Pages

Please note the standard turnaround time for review of submissions and/or amendments is 10 working days* (for each stage of the process) and they should not be chased before this point.
*Studies involving animals and high-risk human studies may take longer due to the reviewer time involved. We aim to respond within one month in these cases. Please plan your research study accordingly.

The NHS Research Ethics Committees and HRA are no longer accepting applications from Undergraduate level students. More information is available [here](#)

Please be aware that submissions with the Research Ethics and Governance Team may currently take longer than the usual 10 working days due to staff shortages.

*****Due to summer leave and staff shortages within Faculty Ethics Committees, please be aware that reviews may take longer than 10 working days. Please ensure you submit your application with plenty of time to avoid delays to your project starting*****

Create a New Submission

List My Submissions

Template Documents

List My Reviews

View Declined Reviews

Manage My Availability

<https://ergo2.soton.ac.uk/>

- ❑ Failure to obtain ethics approval or to follow approval conditions may constitute:
 - “***Major breach of Academic Integrity***” (student)
 - “Research Misconduct” (staff)

Submission Interface

- Fill in Submission Questionnaire
- Add Supporting Documents
- Add Coordinators or Supervisors
- Receive Feedback

98601 - Test Submission

Submission Overview

Submission Questionnaire

Attachments

History

Details

Status
Category

Awaiting Submission
Please complete Submission Questionnaire

Amendment History

 **Original Submission 98601** (Created 01/08/2024)

User Uploaded Documents 

no attachments

Checklist

Submission Questionnaire  (14 Errors)

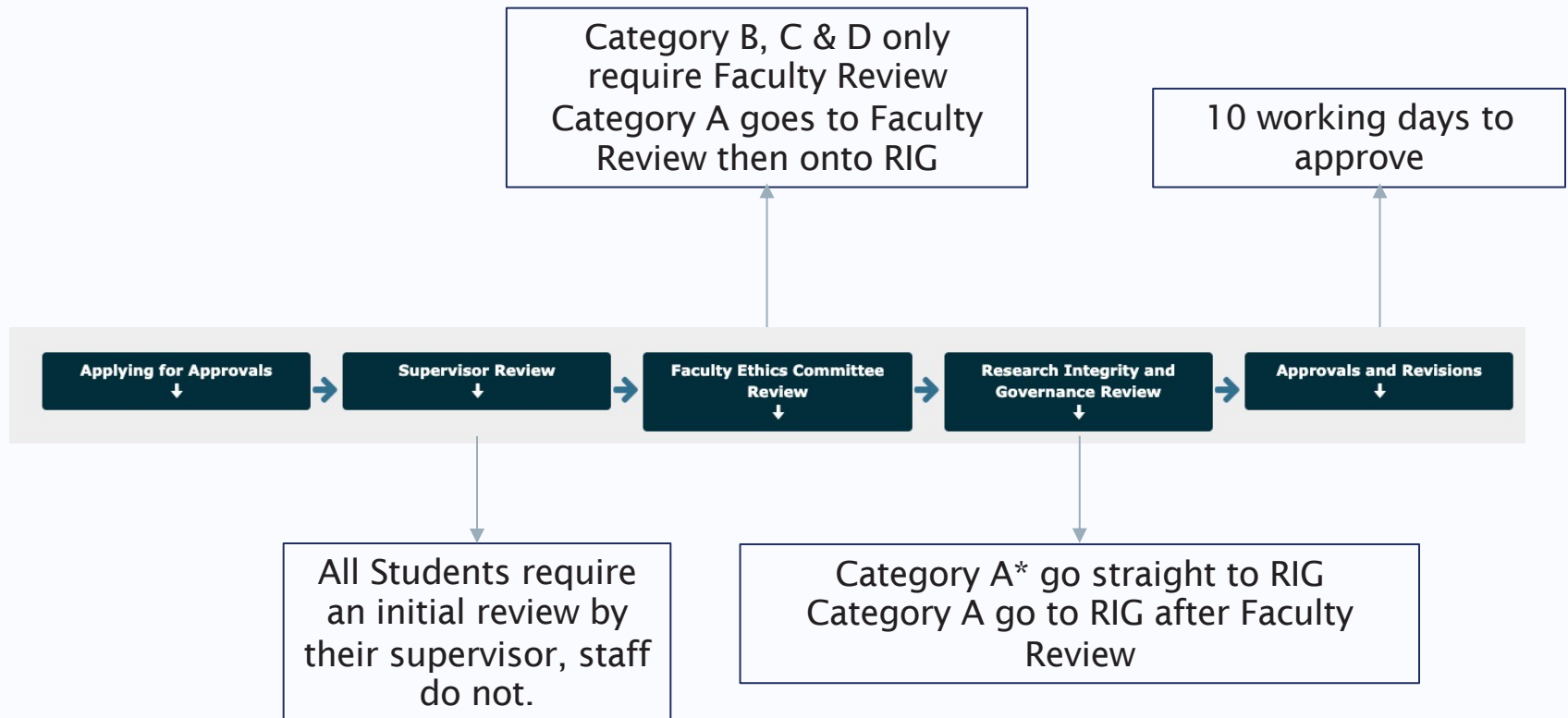
Coordinators

Samantha Pearman-Kanza (sk1r18 S.Pearman-Kanza@soton.ac.uk)

 Add a Coordinator

Proceed to Submit

Submission Process



What do I submit?

- Submission Form (Always)
- Ethics Form (for Primary Data Collection) or Secondary Data Analysis Form
- If Primary Data Collection
 - Data Gathering
 - Risk Assessment
 - Participant Information
 - Consent Form
 - Data Protection Act Plan
 - Debrief Plan (only where studies are intrusive, involves risk or harm or involves deception)



Top Tips for Ethics Applications

- Give yourself more time than you need!
- Be realistic with start and finish dates – allow for review and revision!
- CHECK SECONDARY DATA FOR CONSENT
- Be clear about your plans e.g. anonymising data
- Check with your supervisor
- Don't forget to attach questionnaires!
- Be consistent!
- Never assume the study is idiot proof!
- Take materials / remind participants
- If in doubt about whether a form is needed, add it in!
- Mass Mailing IS NOT PERMITTED! You may not use @soton.ac.uk email addresses for recruiting participants, and you may not use university wide distribution lists, there is a trial for using certain school / faculty mailing lists:



Image taken from a free eBook -
<http://www.ethicsmanagement.info/>

Useful Links

- **Ethics Sharepoint:**
[Welcome to Research Ethics and Governance](#)
- **ERGO2 Guidance:**
<https://ergo2.soton.ac.uk/TemplateDocument/Download?docId=16920134>
- **Template Documents:**
<https://ergo2.soton.ac.uk/TemplateDocument/TemplateDocumentsList>
- **Categories of Research:**
https://sotonac.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/teams/RIS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B9A6C3FF9-3E31-412C-B4C8-817E98406716%7D&file=ERGO-II-Category-Guidance-v2-FINAL-010221.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true
- **Using FEPS Mailing Lists for Human Participant Study Invitations**
<https://sotonac.sharepoint.com/teams/FEPS/SitePages/Old%20Pages%20Archive/Human-Participant-Study-Invitations-via-FEPS-Mailing-Lists.aspx?CT=1760093270329&OR=OWA-NT-Mail&CID=94e6e45a-84ed-ffc6-722f-3477d55e1585>
- **Guidelines for Supervisors**
<https://ergo2.soton.ac.uk/TemplateDocument/Download?docId=23715134>

Guidance

- [1. Ethics Application Form](#)
- [2. Ethics Application Form for Secondary Data Analysis](#)
- [3. Noise and Vibration Form](#)
- [4. Participant Information Sheet](#)
- [5. Consent Form](#)
- [6. Combined PIS & Consent Form for Anonymous Online Surveys](#)
- [7. Ethics Application Form for Social Media Analysis](#)
- [8. Submission Checklist for IRAS Applications](#)
- [9. PIS for HRA review and approval](#)
- [Audiology Experiment Example](#)
- [Complaints Guidance](#)
- [Consent: Information and Guidance for Researchers](#)
- [Data Protection Act Plan](#)
- [ERGO II Guidance for Applicants](#)
- [Ethics Application Form for Social Media - EXAMPLE](#)
- [Ethics Guidance for Researchers Utilising Third Party Platforms and AI Tools in Research](#)
- [FEPS Full Risk Assessment](#)
- [FEPS Simple Risk Assessment](#)
- [GDPR/DPIA Guidance](#)
- [Guidance for NHS Service Evaluation](#)
- [Guidance on determining ethics approval route - ERGO vs AREQA](#)
- [Guidance on the use of Secondary Data for research purposes](#)
- [Guidance: Gatekeeper Approval](#)
- [Guidance: Non-genuine Participation in Online Research](#)
- [Guidance: Use of Online and Social Media Data in Research](#)
- [Guidelines for Supervisors](#)
- [Prize Draw Sign-Up Template](#)
- [Secondary Data Example](#)
- [The Ethics of Public Engagement with Research: Key Considerations for Researchers](#)
- [UoS Guidance and best practice for conducting online surveys](#)

Thank you & Questions



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