



Notes on the Application

Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Human Sciences (latest version: 06/2025)

Time Planning

Advice from the ethics committee can only be meaningful if data collection has not yet begun and possible comments and suggestions from the ethics committee can be taken into account. When planning your research project, therefore, allow sufficient time for the ethical review (approx. 2 months) and note that you can only start data collection after the consultation has been completed. Therefore, submit the application well in advance of the start of the research activities or before the deadlines of the funding organizations. It is the applicant's responsibility to initiate the review process with the Ethics Committee in a timely manner. Subsequent evaluation of research that has already been conducted is not possible.

Regular Application

Please use the application form provided for this purpose (see Downloads on the website: <https://www.hf.uni-koeln.de/39912>) and submit an ethics application with all relevant documents in one single PDF document. This document should also contain (clearly marked) the "General Participant Information", "Declaration of Consent" and other required attachments (e.g., if applicable, the associated grant application).

We also ask you to carefully check whether the enclosed "General participant information" and the associated "Declaration of consent" comply with the current standards of national ethics committees. If German speaking participants are to be recruited, these documents must be provided in the German language.

In the application form under "D. Are other researchers involved in the research project?" please list all researchers who are involved in the project (in the design, implementation, evaluation, etc.). This information is necessary to ensure that there is no immediate risk of bias in the selection of reviewers.

The name of the final application document should be structured as follows: **Year_Month_Day_Ethikantrag_Surname.pdf**. Day, month, and year should be the date of application. The surname refers to the principal investigator. Please send the complete application as a PDF document to the following email address: **humf-ethikantrag@uni-koeln.de** (for the attention of the acting director of the Ethics Committee Prof. Dr. Alexander L. Gerlach)

At the request of the applicant, an ethics application can be reviewed anonymously. If you wish, please submit a standard application (without anonymous information) and an additional anonymous version. The anonymized version is submitted to experts for ethical review. The standard version is required for formal processing by the staff of the ethics committee.

Ethics application for a DFG application (two-stage review procedure)

If you need a vote from the Ethics Committee in the context of a DFG application, you have the option of choosing an alternative two-stage review procedure: a possible advantage is that you do not have to submit all relevant documents (e.g. participant information, declaration of consent, flyer, etc.) at the time of application.

- Stage 1: In the first step, you simply submit the completed form for the first stage of a DFG project and the corresponding DFG proposal (in the final form as submitted to the DFG) and all documents that already have been completed in one searchable PDF document. The Ethics Committee will then examine the ethical clearance on the conceptual basis of your study and advise you on it.

- Stage 2: If you receive approval from the DFG for your project, the second step is to submit a regular application with all the necessary documents, which will then be reviewed according to the relevant criteria.

Please note: The first ethical vote after this procedure is linked to the formal requirement to submit a follow-up application and the vote loses its validity without subsequent submission of the documents missing for a complete evaluation of your project.

For the first application stage, please use the application form provided for this purpose (see website). If you choose to apply for the two-stage procedure, please note this in your email and name your application as follows: year_month_day_Ethikantrag_surname_DFG.pdf

Amendments to an already submitted and approved ethics application

If you intend to make changes to an ethics application that you have already submitted and approved, please submit an amendment to your corresponding ethics application. Please use the form provided for amendments (see website).

In doing so, please note the following:

- Name the ethics application (Year_Month_Day_Ethikantrag_Surname) as well as the ethics committee's identifier, as communicated to you in the committee's statement, so that the amendment can be clearly assigned.
- Explain what and why something should be changed (content and reason for the change).
- If necessary, attach adapted study information and consent forms as well as any other relevant information (e.g. additional stimuli used).

We explicitly state that all amendments must be communicated in advance. Post-hoc information of the ethics committee may lead to the withdrawal of the ethics committee's vote, which would mean that the entire review process would have to be gone through again. Depending on the scope of the proposed amendment, the processing time may take up to one month.

Ethics application for a study series

An ethics application for a study series is possible if the individual studies are sufficiently similar in their methodology and can be meaningfully presented together in the context of one application. Such an application must clearly show how the individual studies differ.

The stimuli presented to the study participants must be sufficiently described in the application. Study information and consent forms must already be submitted with the application (one version for each data collection method) and the passages at which the text differs for the individual studies must be highlighted (e.g. with regard to study title, duration, etc.).

An ethics application for a study series can also be supplemented on the basis of an amendment to include further types of samples, data collection methods or stimulus classes. If necessary, further information, such as an scientific justification of the sample size, etc., must be added for the additionally planned studies.

Special note regarding secondary data analyses

The Ethics Commission does not assess studies that involve only secondary analysis of previously collected (anonymized) datasets. This is because the justification for data collection must have already been evaluated to ensure a balanced relationship between research burden and potential knowledge gain for participants in the original studies.

Researchers may need to consult the data protection officer regarding the handling and sharing of data in compliance with data protection regulations. This consultation is not required for anonymized data.

We assume that researchers at the Faculty of Human Sciences will only analyze datasets where participants in the original studies provided informed consent, or where these studies were conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Criteria for the review of ethics applications

The Ethics Commission works on the basis of the applicable law and the relevant professional rules, including scientific and ethical standards. For example, it is guided by the ethical guidelines of the German Society for Psychology (DGPs), the Code of Ethics of the German Sociological Association (DGS) and the Declaration of Helsinki.

The relevant aspects of the ethical review of research projects can be found in the document “Questions & Answers on the Ethics Application”, which is available for download on the website.