

## **Information on submitting an application to the Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Cologne**

### **General information:**

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.

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.

## **Specific comments on checklist H:**

**H1 (Voluntarism):** Please check if you appropriately ensure that no disproportionate benefits are offered for participation: Specify if special rewards for participation, financial compensation, or other forms of incentives are used. If so, what are the consequences of this? Which ethical problems may arise and how do you plan to deal with them? Will you recruit participants through other institutions/gatekeepers? How will you demonstrate your relative independence from these? How will you ensure that participants from these institutions/gatekeepers are not treated differently from non-participants?

**H7 (Informed consent):** If no written consent is planned, please give the reasons for this (e.g. illegalised participants; illiterates etc.) and explain how consent will be obtained elsewhere. Which alternatives are chosen to guarantee respectful interaction?

**H15 (Dealing with relevant findings):** If findings relevant to the participant are likely to present themselves, consent to report these findings should be obtained prior to the study (if applicable, including parents, guardians or caregivers). If necessary, please explain in what manner this is planned to occur, and whether and how the participants will be supported in the evaluation of these relevant findings. If no feedback should or can be given, please give reasons for this.

**H17 (Anonymization or pseudonymization):** In the case of anonymisation, the possible identification of participants by third parties in video or sound recordings should also be considered. The provision of anonymity can also be at the expense of verifying your sources. Is this relevant to your case? If so, how will you deal with this tension? What will you do if they are public figures whose identity cannot be concealed?

**H19 (Deletion of personal data at the request of the participants):** An example of a replicable personal code is given on the web pages of the DGPs.

### **Special note regarding DFG applications:**

At the request of the DFG, we are offering a second alternative procedure for ethical advice on DFG applications: 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. In the first step, you simply submit the completed form of the ethics application, add your DFG application (in the form in which it will be submitted) and all documents that already have been completed in one PDF document. The ethics committee will then examine the ethical safety on the conceptual basis of your study (s) and advise you on it.

If you receive approval from the DFG for your project, you then need to submit all missing documents with the initial application in a second step, whereupon these documents will also be checked according to the relevant criteria. Please

note that the first expert opinion after this procedure is linked to the formal requirement to submit a follow-up application and that the vote loses its validity without subsequent submission of the documents missing for a complete evaluation of your project. If you choose to apply for the two-stage assessment, please note this in your email and name your application as follows:  
year\_month\_day\_Ethikantrag\_surname\_DFG.pdf