



# Ethics Online: FAQs

## **Where can I access Ethics Online?**

Ethics Online can be accessed from the ethics and governance homepage <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/>, as well as the staff portal under 'My Apps' and the student portal under 'Useful links'.

## **What is the Dashboard?**

The Dashboard gives you oversight of your ethics applications, and if applicable those application of which you are Reviewer, coordinator or supervisor. When you have an action to complete the application will be highlighted in pink on the Dashboard.

## **Where can I find out more about research ethics at Northumbria?**

You can find lots of information on the Ethics and Governance webpage <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/> particularly in the Guidance for Research Ethics document linked under Documentation and Guidance.

## **Guidance relating to the previous online Ethics System**

This system was closed to any new ethics approvals since March 2017. The Principal Investigator should submit a brand new record to the [Ethics Online system](#) where either:

- a submission wasn't completed and approved in the previous ethics system
- a submission was completed and approved in the previous ethics system, but requires revision

The link to the system is [here](#) under **Ethics Online – research ethics approval system**.

## **What if someone declines to review the submission?**

If a Reviewer is unable to review an application they must decline the request to review in the system, and then the DEL can assign another Reviewer. The DEL can then go into the Dashboard and click on that application and choose another Reviewer.

## **Who reviews low risk submissions?**

Staff low risk submissions are auto-approved by the system. PGR low risk submissions can be reviewed by DEL instead of Research Supervisor if the DEL wishes to do so.

## **How should I attach files to my application?**

When adding attachments under section G6 of the form, it is good practice to merge multiple files into one document. This can make the reviewing process quicker and easier so the Reviewer doesn't have to juggle multiple documents.

## **Can I save a submission to my U:drive?**

Not at present, but you can save the form as PDF to send it to your supervisor and/or retain a copy yourself.

## **Where is my ethical approval?**

Your approved ethics application will remain under the 'Created by me' section on your Ethics Online Dashboard.

## **Why are the form and Reviewer pane not displaying correctly? Where are the scroll bars?**

Your laptop screen may be at a resolution lower than that which the application is set up for. The solution is to zoom out one or two steps in the browser by pressing CTRL+ minus . You should then see the scroll bars.

**Do I need to complete all fields on the form?**

This will depend on your PI type e.g. Staff, Undergraduate etc. See the table below for further explanation.

	Module tutor	Supervisor
Staff	Not required (find button disabled)	Not required (find button disabled)
PGR	Not required (find button disabled)	Mandatory
PGT	Mandatory	Mandatory
UGT	Mandatory	Mandatory

**Can I create a PDF of my submission?**

Yes, there is a 'Create a PDF' button at the bottom of the application screen.

**Can a module tutor be the Coordinator?**

The module tutor will at times be the coordinator (for UGT/PGT Medium Risk where Dept DEL flag is off) so will therefore see them in the 'For me as Coordinator' section. The insertion of Module tutor is not applicable to Staff/PGR submissions. In the case of UGT/PGT Medium Risk where Dept DEL flag is ON, the module tutor will not be used – a DEL will coordinate instead so the tutor has no need to see the submission. We could in future add screen rules to stop insertion of module tutor in these cases.

**Can the end date of the project be amended?**

Yes, the system now has an 'amendment' function. See the section 'can you amend an application once it has been approved?' for more details.

**Can module tutors view all of their students forms?**

Yes, they will appear on your dashboard.

**Can PDFs be saved more than once?**

Yes, if the supervisor has asked for changes based on a pdf you can make the changes and then send them an updated PDF.

**How can the risk assessment be done in advance of the ethics form if the activities with 'risk' depend on how the initial work goes, for which I need the ethical approval?**

You would apply for ethics approval for the first part of the project and amend as necessary.

**Can you approve some sections of a form and reject or ask for revisions on another part?**

Yes, it is useful for PIs to know specifically which sections need work and which are appropriate. Be aware the if one section gets a 'revise' or 'reject' that will be the overall status of the review.

**Can you amend an application once it has been approved?**

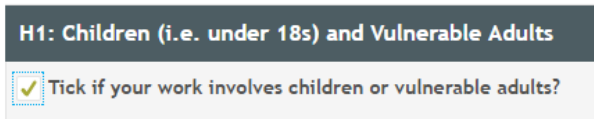
If the design of your research has changed in any way from the original approved submission, then you will need to submit an amendment. For information on how to do this please consult the appropriate User Guide:

For Staff and Postgraduate Researchers: click [here](#) (page 12)

For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students: click [here](#) (page 7)

**When I try and submit my application I am told I must complete a section which is not on the form. Why is this?**

This may happen when the PI has initially specified one risk level e.g. high risk, and ticked a box to indicate they must complete a particular section, as below



H1: Children (i.e. under 18s) and Vulnerable Adults

Tick if your work involves children or vulnerable adults?

then changed the submission to a lower risk level e.g. medium. When trying to submit the system detects a tick in the box and wants the rest of the section to be completed. To rectify this go into the submission , change risk to High, untick the box, change risk back to medium, submit the application.

**Why am I being reminded about reviewing an application when it has already been approved?**

This is an error that has been identified when the PI uses the 'back' button on their browser to change details and then submits. This causes two applications to be created under the one submission. A mechanism will be built in to a future release to stop this occurring, in the meantime IT will run daily checks to identify these submissions.

## FAQs for DELs /Coordinators

### What is the DEL role?

- Assigning Reviewers
- Overriding a Reviewers decision if they do not agree and have chosen a moderation stage. Currently the box to include a moderation stage in the review (where you will get to see the Reviewers comments before sending on to the PI) is automatically ticked. Untick this box if you do not want to see the case again.
- The DEL/Coordinator might be a Module Tutor for UG and PGT applications.
- The DEL can choose to reject an application before they assign Reviewers or during the moderation stage. If an application is rejected it must be started again from a scratch, a rejected from cannot be amended.

### As a DEL, how do I change Reviewer?

If a Reviewer is unable to review an application they must decline the request to review in the system, and then the DEL can assign another Reviewer.

If a Reviewer is on long term sick or on sabbatical, only Admin Users can re-assign a submission, having been notified by a Faculty Research Ethics Director (FRED) that a Reviewer needs to be replaced. The DEL/Coordinator should contact their FRED confirming the new Reviewer. The FRED is then responsible for confirming this to [ethicssupport@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:ethicssupport@northumbria.ac.uk) .

### As a DEL/Coordinator, how many Reviewers should I assign?

To standardised the number of Reviewers across the university it has been agreed that Low and Medium risk projects are reviewed by one Reviewer, and High risk projects are reviewed by two Reviewers.

### Can DELs/Coordinators see all self-certified low risk submissions?

Yes, they will appear on your Dashboard.

### Can a DEL/Coordinator also be a Reviewer?

If an application is low or medium risk, the DEL can assign themselves as the single Reviewer if they so wish.