

Coursework and Lab Work Human Research Ethics

What is a coursework/ lab work ethics application?

Unlike a standard ethics application undertaken by a specific researcher/s, a coursework/ lab work application is submitted by a coursework coordinator where multiple students are undertaking coursework/lab work related research activities. These activities should be clearly defined as 'negligible or low risk' and may include surveys, interviews, creative practice, ethnographic, observational, or social media research methods. Where the activities are assessed as more than low risk, the applicant will consult with HREC regarding ethics approval. The application can cover one or more research methods for either undergraduate or postgraduate courses. The coursework coordinator is responsible for the activities undertaken under a coursework ethics approval as well as RMIT requirements concerning the coursework ethics approval including submitting annual reports, submitting amendments to the approved protocols, and completing a final report within six months of the ethics approval expiry date. All coursework/lab work applications are reviewed by the relevant CHEAN.

Coursework ethics and Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

WIL is an umbrella term for activities that involve students interacting with organisations (industry, government and community) through discipline relevant projects and work placements. WIL activities align to course and program learning outcomes but may also require human research ethics approval if these activities involve humans and/or their data as defined by the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This may be covered by a coursework ethics application or may require a standard application depending on the activity and context. For more information on WIL, go to [Work integrated learning - RMIT University](#).

What does a coursework ethics approval include?

A coursework/ lab work ethics application includes:

- Ethics approval for activities undertaken by students within a defined coursework /lab work program.
- Single or multiple research methods defined as negligible or low risk within the coursework program.
- Recruitment and consent protocols that align with the National Statement.
- Data collection and data management protocols that align with RMIT policy and procedures.

Key things to remember when completing the application:

Details need to be provided for each research method selected throughout the application including data collection, recruitment, consent, and data management protocols.

- Participant information sheets and Participant information and consent forms need to be on RMIT approved templates.
- All documentation should be submitted for review including recruitment material, data management plans, interview and survey schedules.

What does a coursework ethics approval not include?

A coursework ethics approval does not include:

- Activities that are more than low risk (except by approval from HREC)
- Research undertaken by staff, including teaching staff
- Contract research activities
- Coursework/lab work research activities undertaken for other coursework/lab work programs not defined within the application.

How to apply for a coursework ethics application:

The coursework coordinator should:

1. Log in to the Research Ethics Platform:
<https://researchethics.rmit.edu.au>
2. Click on 'Create Project'.
3. Add a title and select 'Human Research Ethics' from the dropdown menu. This will create the sub form for the ethics application.
4. In the 'Risk Assessment' section of the sub-form, select 'Coursework ethics application' or 'Lab work application' and then work through the application form.

Amendments to coursework ethics approvals:

Any amendments to the approved application must be submitted as an amendment via the Research Ethics Platform for review and approval.

Amendments may include:

- Changes to the course coordinator or staff listed on the application
- Changes to research methods approved in the original application
- Changes to title, program title or course codes.

Further information

Further information can be found in the [RMIT Research Policy: Human Research Ethics Procedure](#).

For further advice on this topic or other human research ethics matters, please email humanethics@rmit.edu.au. A Research Governance and Ethics Coordinator will assist you and may connect you to one of the CHEAN or HREC members in your discipline who can offer expert ethics advice.