

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research Ethics Policy for Undergraduate Research Projects

Purpose of this Document

This policy applies to any research undertaken by undergraduate students at City, University of London that requires ethical approval. This policy supports City's Research Ethics Policy and all other policies and guidance that apply to the undertaking of research by City staff and students. The guidance for students, supervisors and ethics committees is set out below. An undergraduate research project is a specific project that one or several undergraduate students complete as part of their formal programme of study.

This policy applies to undergraduate student research projects that involve human participants, and personal data therefore must have ethical approval before they can proceed. Undergraduate student projects that are deemed high risk are not permitted. Definitions of what constitutes each risk level can be found within [this guidance document](#).

Ethical review of undergraduate research projects

Low risk:

In general, any research that is undertaken by Undergraduates should be of low ethical risk.

Low risk research ethics applications will be reviewed through Department or School level research ethics committees.

Medium risk:

In exceptional circumstances, undergraduates may undertake research that is considered 'medium risk' provided that the requirements below are met.

The research supervisor shall lead the research and be listed as the lead/primary investigator on the project. Any students working on the project should be listed as 'co-investigators'. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that medium risk projects involving students meet an acceptable academic and ethical standard.

To proceed, the supervisor for the project must ensure:

- The proposed research has academic merit and is written to an appropriate academic standard.
- Students receive appropriate training relevant to the conduct of the research
- That sufficient resources and time for completion within the assignment specification and that an appropriate length of time is allocated for ethical approval.

Applications shall be approved by medium risk local RECs, where available, otherwise by SREC. If SREC review is necessary, the Chair of the local REC (School/Department) shall be one of the reviewers (unless there is a conflict of interest).

High risk:

Very occasionally, undergraduates may work on research projects that are considered 'high risk' provided that the requirements below are met. Such projects require approval by the Senate Research Ethics Committee.

The primary investigator(s) shall be a City member of Staff who has designed and initiated the research project. The primary investigator must ensure that the specific aspects of the research project that the students are directly involved with are of a low or medium risk.

Additional Guidance for students:

You can only carry out an UG research project if your programme of studies specifically allows it and you have been allocated a supervisor who will take responsibility for the project. All such projects should normally be low risk.

Additional Guidance for supervisors:

The supervisor should only agree to applying for ethical approval once they feel the proposal provides a sound basis for a good dissertation and the benefits of undertaking the project outweigh the risks.