RESEARCH ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

ORYX UNIVERSITY

In Partnership with Liverpool John Moores University

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Version History

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Date
Version 1.0	Dr. Maher Salem	Created the first version	12 Feb 2026

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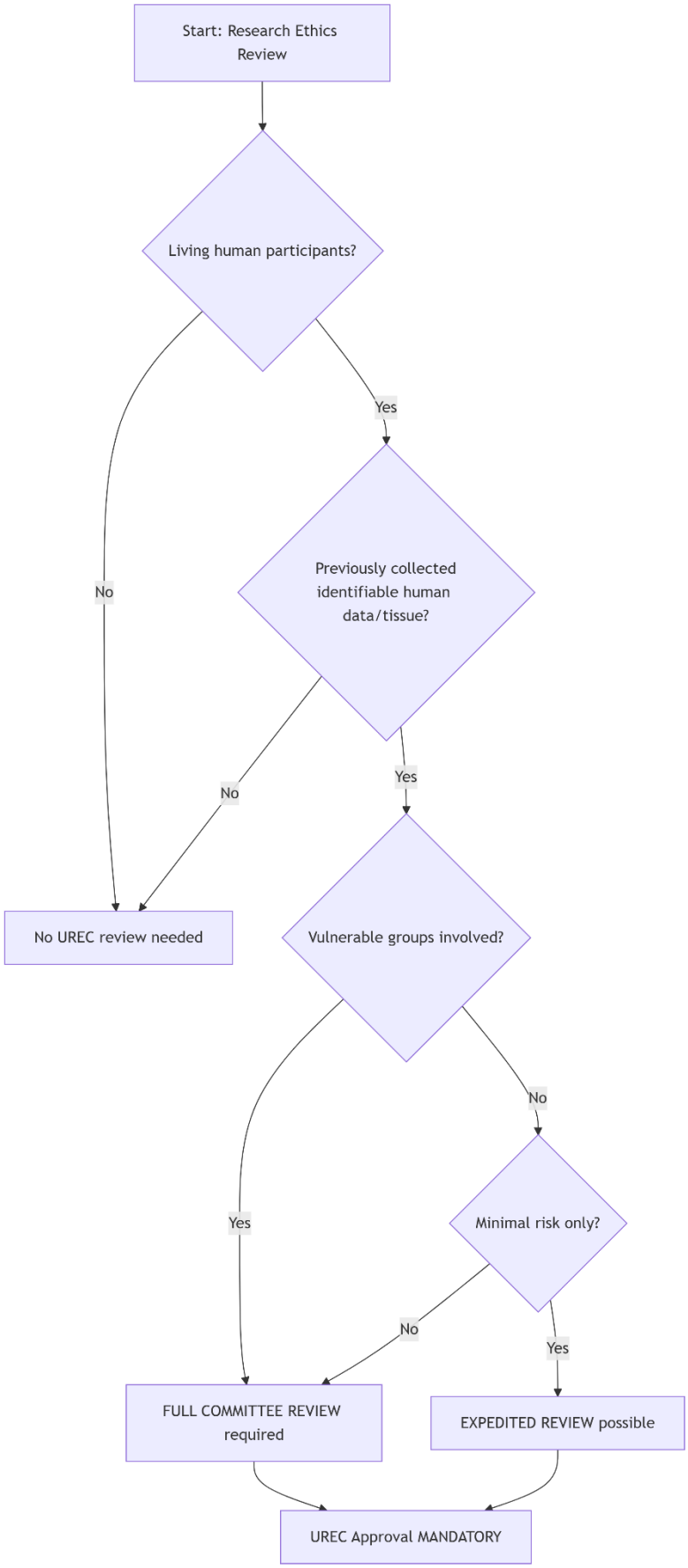
1 Do I Need Ethics Approval?

Note: Research involving human participants, their data, or their biological material requires ethics review. If your project is a standard pedagogical exercise (e.g., student evaluation of a course) and results are not published externally, it may be exempt. *Always consult the Research Ethics Policy if unsure.*

Question	Yes	No	Action
Does the project involve living human participants?	✓	**X**	Proceed to next step.
Does the project use previously collected identifiable human data/tissue?	✓	**X**	Proceed to next step.
Does the study involve vulnerable groups (children, patients, employees)?	✓	**X**	**FULL COMMITTEE REVIEW** required.
Does the study involve minimal risk (no greater than daily life)?	✓	**X**	**FAST-TRACK REVIEW** may be appropriate.
Conclusion			**If YES to any of the above, Ethics Approval (UREC) is mandatory.**


Start: Research Ethics Review
Living human participants?
No
Yes
Previously collected identifiable human data/tissue?
No
Yes
No UREC review needed
Vulnerable groups involved?
Yes
No
Minimal risk only?
No
Yes
FULL COMMITTEE REVIEW required
EXPEDITED REVIEW possible
UREC Approval MANDATORY

2 Ethics Application Quick Guide

Before You Apply

Step	Action	Timeline
1	Complete mandatory Research Ethics Training	Before submission
2	Discuss project with supervisor (students) or Research Office (staff)	2 weeks before
3	Download and review application form and guidance	1 week before
4	Prepare all supporting documents	1 week before
5	Have supervisor review and sign application (students)	Before submission

Application Checklist

All Applications Must Include:	✓	Include If Applicable:	When Required	✓
Completed Application Form (all sections)	☐	Recruitment materials (emails, posters, social media posts)	If recruiting participants	☐
Participant Information Sheet (PIS)	☐	Questionnaire/Survey instrument	If using surveys	☐
Consent Form	☐	Interview/Focus group topic guide	If conducting interviews/focus groups	☐
Data Management Plan (recommended)	☐	Debriefing sheet	If using deception	☐
		Parent/Guardian Information Sheet & Consent	If involving minors	☐
		Child Assent Form	If involving children who can assent (typically 7-17)	☐
		Gatekeeper letter/approval	If accessing participants through organizations	☐
		External ethics approval	If already obtained from another body	☐
		Risk assessment	If fieldwork or physical activities involved	☐
		DBS/Police clearance	If working with vulnerable populations	☐
		Collaboration agreement	If multi-institution research	☐
		Funder requirements documentation	If externally funded	☐

3 Common Reasons for Application Delays

Top 10 Issues That Delay Approval

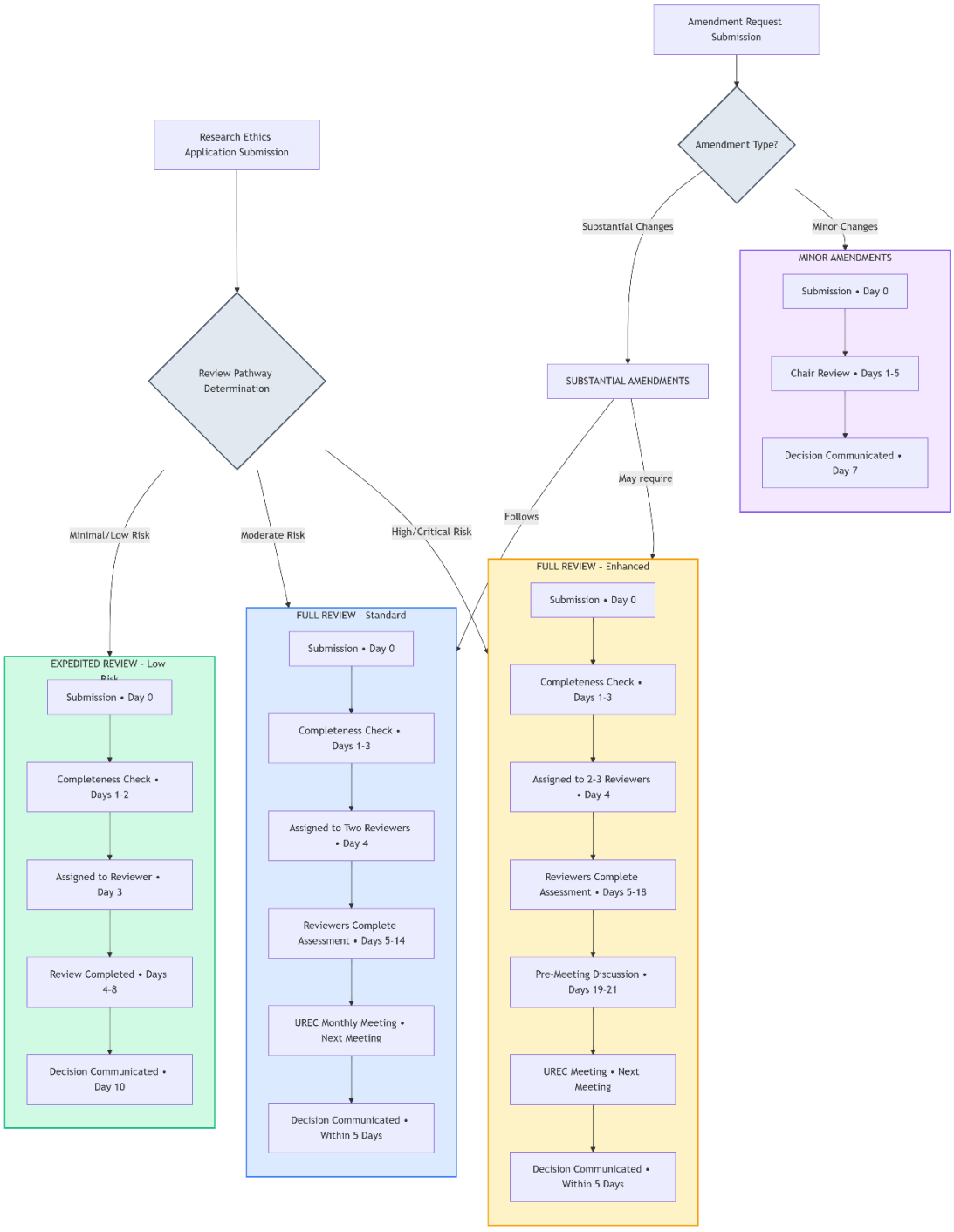
#	Issue	How to Avoid
1	Incomplete application	Use the checklist; answer **ALL** questions
2	Missing documents	Attach **ALL** required documents before submission
3	Participant Information Sheet too technical	Write in **plain language** (Year 8 reading level); avoid jargon
4	Consent process unclear	Clearly describe **how, when, and by whom** consent will be obtained
5	Inadequate risk assessment	Identify ALL potential risks, even minor ones, and explain **mitigation**
6	Data protection issues	Specify legal basis; explain **storage, access, retention, destruction**
7	Recruitment strategy unclear	Explain exactly how you will **identify and approach** participants
8	Withdrawal process not explained	Clarify how participants withdraw and what happens to their data
9	Confidentiality limits not stated	If there are limits (e.g., safeguarding disclosures), state them clearly
10	Supporting documents inconsistent	Ensure project title, dates, and details **match across all documents**

Quality Checklist Before Submission

Check	✓
Project title is identical on all documents	☐
Dates are realistic and consistent	☐
Contact details are correct and complete	☐
Participant Information Sheet is in plain language	☐
All acronyms are defined	☐
Consent form matches what's described in application	☐
Data retention period is specified (compliant with Qatar PDPL)	☐
Supervisor has reviewed and signed (students)	☐
Spell-check completed on all documents	☐
PDF versions are readable and properly formatted	☐

4 Review Timeline Guide

Standard Processing Times


Amendment Request Submission
Amendment Type?
Substantial Changes
Minor Changes
MINOR AMENDMENTS
Submission • Day 0
Chair Review • Days 1-5
Decision Communicated • Day 7
Research Ethics Application Submission
Review Pathway Determination
SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS
May require
Follows
Minimal/Low Risk
Moderate Risk
High/Critical Risk
EXPEDITED REVIEW - Low Risk
Submission • Day 0
Completeness Check • Days 1-2
Assigned to Reviewer • Day 3
Review Completed • Days 4-8
Decision Communicated • Day 10
FULL REVIEW - Standard
Submission • Day 0
Completeness Check • Days 1-3
Assigned to Two Reviewers • Day 4
Reviewers Complete Assessment • Days 5-14
UREC Monthly Meeting • Next Meeting
Decision Communicated • Within 5 Days
FULL REVIEW - Enhanced
Submission • Day 0
Completeness Check • Days 1-3
Assigned to 2-3 Reviewers • Day 4
Reviewers Complete Assessment • Days 5-18
Pre-Meeting Discussion • Days 19-21
UREC Meeting • Next Meeting
Decision Communicated • Within 5 Days

UREC Meeting Schedule 2026 (*Tentative*)

Month	Meeting Date	Submission Deadline
July	July 15, 2026	July 1, 2026
August	No meeting	-
September	September 16, 2026	September 2, 2026
October	October 14, 2026	September 30, 2026
November	November 11, 2026	October 28, 2026
December	December 9, 2026	November 25, 2026

Note: Submit applications at least 2 weeks before the submission deadline to allow time for completeness checks and any queries.

5 Participant Information Sheet Writing Guide

The Participant Information Sheet Writing Guide provides researchers with clear instructions on how to prepare participant information sheets for research studies, ensuring that potential participants receive transparent, accurate, and easily understandable information about the study before providing consent.

It outlines the key elements that must be included, such as the purpose of the research, participation procedures, potential risks or benefits, confidentiality, and contact details for further information. Researchers should prepare their participant information sheets in accordance with the guidance provided and refer to the official template **`RKEO-TMP-Participant Information Sheet Template-V1.0`** to ensure consistency and compliance with institutional research ethics requirements.

Structure Template

Section	Purpose	Tips
Title	Identify the study	Use plain language; avoid acronyms
Invitation paragraph	Explain this is an invitation	Emphasize voluntary nature
Purpose	Why the research is being done	2-3 sentences maximum
Why me?	Why this person was selected	Be specific but not intrusive
Voluntary participation	Emphasize choice	Include right to withdraw at any time
What's involved	Describe procedures	Step-by-step; include time commitment (e.g., "30 minutes")
Risks and benefits	Honest assessment	Don't overstate benefits; detail potential emotional/social risks

Confidentiality	How data is protected	Be specific about measures (e.g., "data will be anonymized")
Data use	What happens to information	Include **retention period** and **storage location (Qatar PDPL)**
Results	How findings will be shared	Offer summary if appropriate (e.g., website link)
Ethics approval	Provide assurance	Include UREC reference number
Contact details	Who to contact	Researcher AND independent contact (Supervisor/UREC Secretary)

Language Guidelines

Do's	Example	Don'ts	Instead
Use simple words	"use" not "utilize"	Jargon	Plain language
Use short sentences	Maximum 20 words per sentence	Acronyms (unexplained)	Spell out first use
Use active voice	"We will ask you" not "You will be asked"	Passive voice	Active voice
Define technical terms	"MRI (a type of brain scan)"	Long paragraphs	Short paragraphs (3-4 sentences)
Use bullet points	For lists of procedures	Vague timeframes	Specific durations
Be specific about time	"approximately 30 minutes"	Coercive language	Neutral, informative tone

Readability Check

Before finalizing your Participant Information Sheet:

- Read it aloud - Does it sound natural?
- Ask a non-expert - Can someone outside your field understand it?
- Check reading level - **Aim for Year 8/Grade 8 level (age 13-14)**
- Use readability tools - **Flesch-Kincaid score of 60+ recommended**

6 Consent Form Quick Reference

The Consent Form Writing Guide provides researchers with guidance on preparing clear and ethically compliant consent forms that enable participants to provide informed and voluntary agreement to take part in research.

The guide explains the essential information that must be included, such as confirmation of voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, confidentiality arrangements, and acknowledgement that participants have understood the study information.

Researchers should ensure that consent forms are prepared in line with these requirements and should refer to the official template **`RKEO-TMP-Consent Form Template-V1.0`** to maintain consistency and compliance with institutional research ethics standards.

Essential Elements

Every consent form must include confirmation that the participant:

Element	Required	✓
Has read and understood the information sheet	Yes	☐
Has had opportunity to ask questions	Yes	☐
Understands participation is voluntary	Yes	☐
Understands they can withdraw without reason	Yes	☐
Understands who will access their data	Yes	☐
Agrees to take part	Yes	☐

Optional Elements (Include If Applicable)

Element	When to Include
Consent to audio/video recording	If recording
Consent to use of quotes	If using direct quotes in publications (anonymized or attributed)
Consent to future contact	If follow-up studies planned
Consent to data sharing	If sharing with other researchers/archives
Consent to long-term storage	If archiving data beyond the study completion
Consent for specific procedures	If multiple distinct activities are involved

Consent Form Types

Type	When to Use	Format
Written consent	Default for most research	Paper or electronic signature
Online consent	Anonymous online surveys	Checkbox + "I agree" button
Verbal consent	Telephone interviews; literacy concerns	Audio recorded; documented by researcher
Witnessed consent	Participants unable to sign (e.g., physical disability)	Third party witnesses and signs
Assent + Parental consent	Research with children (Under 18, Qatar law)	Both forms required

Consultee declaration	Adults lacking capacity	Consultee advises on participation

7 Data Management Quick Guide

Data Lifecycle Overview

- **PLAN:** What data, legal basis (PDPL), data type.
- **COLLECT:** Minimize data, ensure accuracy, obtain consent.
- **STORE:** Secure, encrypted, backed up, **compliant with Qatar PDPL**.
- **ANALYZE:** Access controls, audit trails, pseudonymization used.
- **SHARE:** Anonymize/pseudonymize, formal agreements required.
- **DESTROY:** Secure deletion, documented proof.

Data Security Requirements

Data Type	Minimum Security Requirements
Anonymous data	Password-protected storage; university systems
Pseudonymized data	**Encrypted storage**; key stored separately; access controls
Identifiable data	**Encrypted storage**; strict access controls; audit logs; secure transfer
Special category data	All above + enhanced encryption; minimal retention; **DPIA required**

Storage Location Requirements

Acceptable (Compliant with Qatar PDPL)	Not Acceptable
University secure servers (Qatar)	Personal devices (unencrypted)
University-approved cloud (encrypted, jurisdiction approved)	Consumer cloud services (Dropbox, Google Drive personal)
Encrypted external drives (for backup only)	Unencrypted USB drives or external hard drives
Locked filing cabinets (paper)	Unlocked offices/desks

Retention Periods

Data Type	Minimum Retention	Maximum Retention
Research data (general)	10 years from publication	As specified in consent
Clinical/health research	15 years minimum	Per regulatory requirements
Student projects (UG)	2 years after completion	5 years
Student projects (PGT)	3 years after completion	5 years
Consent forms	Duration of retention + 1 year	Same as data

Data Destruction Methods

Data Format	Acceptable Destruction Method
Paper documents	Cross-cut shredding; confidential waste service
Electronic files	Secure deletion software; IT Services assistance
Hard drives	Physical destruction; degaussing
Audio/video recordings	Secure deletion after transcription (if retained)
Cloud storage	Permanent deletion; verify removal from backups

8 Risk Assessment Matrix

How to Assess Risk Level

Severity \ Likelihood	LOW (Unlikely)	MEDIUM (Possible)	HIGH (Likely)
HIGH (Serious/Long-term)	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
MEDIUM (Moderate/Temporary)	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
LOW (Minor/Brief)	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM

RISK LEVEL ACTIONS:

- **LOW:** Standard procedures; FAST-TRACK review may be appropriate.
- **MEDIUM:** Enhanced safeguards required; full committee review.
- **HIGH:** Substantial justification needed; may require external expertise/oversight.

Common Risks and Mitigations

Risk Category	Potential Harms	Mitigation Strategies
Psychological	Distress, anxiety, embarrassment, re-traumatization	Sensitive questioning; right to skip questions; signposting to support services; trained researchers
Social	Damage to reputation, relationships, employment	Robust confidentiality; anonymization; secure data handling; pseudonyms for individuals/locations
Physical	Injury, fatigue, discomfort	Risk assessment; trained personnel; first aid available; appropriate facilities
Economic	Loss of time, employment, financial costs	Compensation for time; flexible scheduling; reimbursement of expenses
Legal	Disclosure of illegal activity; immigration issues	Clear confidentiality limits; legal advice; robust data protection (Qatar PDPL)

Privacy	Identification; data breach; unwanted contact	Anonymization; encryption; access controls; secure storage

Risk Assessment Template

Risk Identified	Likelihood (L/M/H)	Severity (L/M/H)	Overall Risk	Mitigation Measures	Residual Risk
Example: Participant distress during interview about difficult experiences	Medium	Medium	Medium	Trained interviewer; right to pause/stop; support service information provided; follow-up check	Low

9 Special Populations Quick Guide

Research with Children and Young People (Under 18)

Age Group	Consent Requirements	Additional Considerations
Under 12	Parent/guardian consent required; **child assent sought**	Age-appropriate information; shorter sessions; familiar environment
12-15	Parent/guardian consent required; **young person assent required**	Respect emerging autonomy; confidentiality within limits; simpler language
16-17	Young person can consent if competent; parental consent recommended	Assess competence; careful consideration of topic; check local laws
18+	Adult consent	Standard procedures

Safeguarding Requirements

Requirement	Details
Background checks	Researchers must have appropriate clearance (police check/DBS equivalent)
Training	Safeguarding training required before conducting research
Supervision	Avoid one-to-one situations where possible; appropriate adult present
Reporting	Know and follow university safeguarding procedures
Disclosure protocol	Clear procedure if child discloses abuse or risk

Research with Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable Group	Key Considerations
Adults lacking capacity	Consultee process; best interests; Mental Capacity Act equivalent
Patients/Service users	Avoid therapeutic misconception; independent from care; no pressure
Prisoners/Detainees	Truly voluntary consent; no coercion; independent oversight
Employees	Power dynamics; anonymity; no employment consequences

Students	Power dynamics; not own students; no academic consequences
Refugees/Asylum seekers	Language; trauma-informed; no immigration consequences; sensitivity to legal status
Elderly	Capacity assessment; accessibility; fatigue considerations

Research on Sensitive Topics

Topic	Additional Requirements
Illegal activities	Confidentiality limits; legal advice; data security
Sexual behaviour	Sensitivity; trained researchers; support services
Mental health	Distress protocols; exclusion criteria; professional support
Violence/Abuse	Trauma-informed approach; disclosure protocols; support services
Religious/Political views	Cultural sensitivity (especially in Qatar); neutrality; confidentiality
End of life	Sensitivity; appropriate timing; family involvement

10 Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Adverse Event	Any untoward occurrence affecting a participant during research
Amendment	A change to an approved research protocol
Anonymization	Removing all identifying information so individuals cannot be identified
Assent	Agreement to participate from someone unable to give legal consent (e.g., child)
Beneficence	Ethical principle requiring research to benefit participants/society
Capacity	Ability to understand information and make an informed decision
Confidentiality	Keeping participant information private and secure
Consent	Voluntary agreement to participate based on full information
Consultee	Person who advises on participation for someone lacking capacity
Data Controller	Organization determining purposes and means of data processing
Data Processor	Organization processing data on behalf of the controller
Data Subject	Individual whose personal data is processed
Debriefing	Providing full information to participants after the study
Deception	Withholding information or misleading participants
FAST-TRACK Review	Faster review process for low-risk research
Favourable Opinion	Approval from ethics committee to proceed
Gatekeeper	Person controlling access to potential participants

Governance Approval	Institutional authorization to conduct research (RGA)
Informed Consent	Consent given with full understanding of the research
Minimal Risk	Risk no greater than everyday life
Non-maleficence	Ethical principle requiring avoidance of harm
Personal Data	Information relating to an identifiable living individual
Principal Investigator (PI)	Lead researcher responsible for the study
Protocol	Detailed plan for conducting the research
Pseudonymization	Replacing identifiers with codes (reversible)
Research Governance	Systems ensuring research quality and safety
Research Integrity	Honest and ethical conduct of research
Research Misconduct	Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in research
Risk-Benefit Analysis	Assessment of whether benefits justify risks
Special Category Data	Sensitive personal data requiring extra protection (e.g., health, race)
Sponsor	Organization taking responsibility for research
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
Vulnerable Population	Groups requiring additional protections in research
Withdrawal	Participant's decision to stop participating

11 Contact Information Template

RESEARCH OFFICE
Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange
Email: rkeo@oryx.edu.aq
Phone: +XXX XXXX XXXX
Office:
Hours:
UREC CONTACTS
UREC Chair
Email: aaa@ oryx.edu.aq
FACULTY ETHICS REPRESENTATIVES
Faculty 1: [Name] - email@university.edu
Faculty 2: [Name] - email@university.edu

Faculty 3: [Name] - email@university.edu
OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS
Data Protection Officer: aaa@oryx.edu.aq
Legal Services: aaa@ oryx.edu.aq
IT Security: aaa@ oryx.edu.aq
Safeguarding Officer: aaa@ oryx.edu.aq
Whistleblowing: aaa@ oryx.edu.aq
PARTNER INSTITUTION
LJMU University Research Office
Email: ris@ljmu.ac.uk
Website: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/structure/professional-services/research-and-innovation-services

12 Annual Calendar: Key Dates

Research Ethics Calendar 2026-2027 (*Tentative*)

Month	Key Dates	Activities
July 2026	1st - Framework Launch, 15th - First UREC Meeting	Launch communications; Begin accepting applications
August 2026	No UREC meeting	Summer break; Support available for queries
September 2026	2nd - Submission deadline, 16th - UREC Meeting	New academic year; Faculty training refreshers
October 2026	30th - Submission deadline, 14th - UREC Meeting	Research Ethics Awareness Week
November 2026	28th - Submission deadline, 11th - UREC Meeting	Mid-semester review
December 2026	9th - UREC Meeting	Year-end review; Annual report preparation
January 2027	13th - UREC Meeting	Annual report submission; Policy review begins
February 2027	10th - UREC Meeting	Policy review consultation
March 2027	10th - UREC Meeting	Ramadan considerations
April 2027	14th - UREC Meeting	End of year planning
May 2027	12th - UREC Meeting	Annual training review
June 2027	9th - UREC Meeting, 30th - Annual Review Complete	First anniversary review; Updated policies approved

13 Research Ethics Training Program

The Research Ethics Training Program is still **under planning**. It is designed to ensure that researchers understand and apply ethical principles when conducting research involving human participants, data, or sensitive materials. The program provides guidance on key topics such as informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, risk management, and responsible research conduct. Completion of this training helps researchers comply with institutional policies and ethical standards, ensuring that research activities are conducted responsibly, transparently, and in accordance with applicable regulations.

Topic	Content	Duration
Module 1: Introduction to Research Ethics		
What is research ethics?	Definition; importance; historical context	30 minutes
Why does it matter?	Participant protection; research quality; reputation	
Key ethical principles	Respect, beneficence, justice, integrity	
Regulatory framework	GCC laws (esp. PDPL); international standards; university policy	
Module 2: The Ethics Review Process		
When is ethics approval needed?	Scope; exemptions; decision flowchart	45 minutes
Types of review	FAST-TRACK vs. full committee	
Application process	Step-by-step guide; common mistakes	
After approval	Amendments; reporting; completion	
Module 3: Informed Consent		
Principles of consent	Voluntary; informed; ongoing	45 minutes
Information provision	What participants need to know (PIS guide)	
Consent documentation	Forms; alternatives; special situations	
Capacity and consent	Children; vulnerable adults; cultural considerations	
Module 4: Data Protection in Research		
Legal framework	GCC data protection laws (Qatar PDPL)	45 minutes
Key principles	Lawfulness; minimization; security; storage residency	
Participant rights	Access; rectification; erasure	

Practical data management	Collection; storage; sharing; destruction (DMP)	
Module 5: Special Considerations		
Vulnerable populations	Children; patients; employees; cultural groups	30 minutes
Sensitive topics	Mental health; illegal activities; cultural sensitivity	
International research	Cross-border considerations; partner agreements	
Online research	Social media; online surveys; digital data risks	
Module 6: Research Integrity		
Standards of conduct	Honesty; rigour; transparency	30 minutes
Research misconduct	Fabrication; falsification; plagiarism	
Reporting concerns	How to raise issues; whistleblowing	
Good research practice	Record keeping; authorship; conflicts of interest	

Training Delivery Schedule

Audience	Required Modules	Delivery Method	Frequency
All academic staff	All 6 modules	Online + Workshop	On appointment; refresher every 3 years
PGT students (dissertation)	Modules 1-4	Online	Before dissertation begins
UG students (research projects)	Modules 1-3	Online	Before project begins
UREC members	All + Advanced	Workshop	On appointment; annual refresher
Research support staff	Modules 1-2, 4	Online	On appointment