



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

Research Ethics Framework

Ethical Approval: Policy, Principles and Process

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1 Introduction

This document sets out the policy, principles and processes which govern ethical approval of all research studies undertaken by staff or students of the University of the Highlands and Islands and the UHI Academic Partnership. The UHI Research Ethics Framework has been designed to support a fair balance between a researcher's right to unrestricted academic enquiry whilst ensuring adherence to appropriate and robust ethical standards to ensure the protection of all those participating in research studies.

2 Definitions

The UHI Research Ethics Framework employs the following definitions:

'Research' is defined in the broadest sense as any gathering of data or facts to facilitate a contribution to the body of knowledge;

'Student' is used as the umbrella term for all UHI Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Research Students registered on UHI programmes;

'Staff' is used as the umbrella term for all staff members employed by the UHI and its partner colleges;

'Participant' is used to describe any person who, either as an individual or as a member of a sample group, is involved in a research study for the purposes of quantitative or qualitative data collection;

'REC' – Research Ethics Committee;

'AWEC' – Animal Welfare and Environment Committee;

'HSC' – Health Sub Committee;

'SNL' – Subject Network Leader.

3 Ethical policy

UHI requires all research undertaken by students and staff to be carried out to a high ethical standard.

The Research Ethics Framework applies equally to all research projects led or undertaken by UHI staff or students, as well as all research projects involving staff or students as a sample group. This includes activity which:

- is internally or externally funded or unfunded;
- involves paid or voluntary participants;
- is undertaken on UHI/Academic Partner property or at any other location;
- is undertaken in a laboratory or in the field;
- involves data collection undertaken in person or by any other means;
- involves research which is basic or applied, descriptive or experimental.

The UHI Research Ethics Framework is intended to ensure adherence to the Nolan Principles, and the [Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#) and should be read in the context of [UHI's Data Protection Policy](#) and [Freedom of Information Policy](#). It may also require to be read with other Professional Codes of Practice for research involving human participants, human data or material, in particular:

- Health-related research involving the National Health Service which will need to comply with NHS Research Ethics Guidelines.
- Any research involving children under the age of 18, which will need to refer to the [Protection of Children \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) and all other relevant applicable legislation.
- Research involving animals that comes under the Regulated procedures under the terms of the [Animals \(Scientific Procedures\) Act 1986](#) will be escalated to the AWEC for review. Applicants should also review the [Guiding Principles on good practice for Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies](#) prior to submitting their application.

The UHI Ethical policy should also be read alongside legislation giving protection to animal and plant species found in Scotland including the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) and [The Conservation \(Natural Habitats, &c.\) Regulations 1994](#). In many cases it is an offence to kill, capture or even disturb animals (including birds), or to uproot plants. Applicants should review the wild species protected under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) and the [Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#) for activities requiring a licence from [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) or from the [British Trust for Ornithology](#).

Some activities also require a license from [Marine Scotland](#) e.g. for work on the seabed, or for work on seals that comes under the Protection of seals under the [Marine Scotland Act 2010](#).

With regards to the releasing of plant material, seeds or animal species – this activity would come under section 14 of the [Wildlife and Countryside Act](#). The [non-native code of practice](#) outlines the responsibilities of researchers working in this area.

Applicants should review guidance applicable to their research with their project supervisor prior to applying for ethics approval.

The UHI Research Ethics Framework is developed in keeping with accepted norms and practices of research in other higher education institutions and professional bodies in the UK and abroad, including:

- consideration of the research risks - '*does not harm*';
- the need for informed and voluntary consent of participants;
- the need to respect confidentiality and the anonymity of participants.

It is the responsibility of all researchers to consider ethical issues from the outset of a research study and at all subsequent stages, from the design and execution of a research project through to dissemination of the research findings. It is the responsibility of all researchers to be aware of the UHI Research Ethics Review mechanism and to read this document before completing their application for ethical approval.

4 Ethical principles

These principles are intended to ensure that all research is designed and undertaken with integrity:

- I. All researchers and participants must be fully informed of the nature of the research being undertaken. In particular, participants must be informed of what their participation entails and of any risks that may be incurred.
- II. Participants must give their consent voluntarily, free from any coercion.
- III. Any data and information gathered must be treated confidentially and the anonymity of participants respected.
- IV. Harm to participants must be avoided.
- V. Research must be carried out transparently and impartially and any potential conflicts of interest declared.
- VI. Researchers should give cognisance to any cultural, religious, gender or other variances in a research population.

The University also works to improve animal welfare and to minimise animal suffering through implementation of the “3Rs”. These are:

- Replacement of animals, wherever possible, with alternative systems with which to conduct research.
- Reduction of the number of animals used to the minimum consistent with the desired outcome (e.g. through careful review of the literature, careful experimental design and rigorous statistical testing).
- Refinement of procedures so that the least possible harm is done in collecting the scientific information.

5 Process of ethical approval

The UHI Research Ethics Framework supports a robust process for ethical approval of all research that a UHI staff member or student proposes to undertake. **No research may be allowed to go ahead without ethical approval having been first gained as part of this process.** The UHI Research Ethics Committee (REC), Animal Welfare and Environment Committee (AWEC) and Health Sub Committee (HSC) are actively involved in ensuring that appropriate decisions regarding ethical approval are taken.

Ethical approval for student research lies initially with the student’s lead project supervisor, who is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in the ethical review.

A student will discuss the proposed research project with his/her supervisor, covering such areas as topic understanding, research questions, data requirements, existing sources and possible new sources of information.

Prior to endorsing applications, supervisors / line managers **must have completed** the Ethics Reflection and Practice module. For access to the module please contact <mailto:fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk>

The processes for ethical approval of research studies proposed by both staff and students employ the same stages.

There are 7 different categories of applications as follows:

	Category
1.	Undergraduate, Taught postgraduate / Masters students (including non-*clinical postgraduate taught from The School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences)
2.	Undergraduate, Taught postgraduate / Masters and PhD *clinical students
3.	PhD research students (excluding *clinical)
4.	UHI School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences staff projects
5.	UHI sponsored staff health projects
6.	UHI non-health staff projects
7.	UHI non-funded staff projects (excluding *clinical)

** Where the word 'clinical' is used it means 'involving or relating to the direct medical treatment or testing of participants in the research'*

It is essential that applicants read the undernoted summary of the processes in pages 8 to 16 of this framework.

6 Applications for ethical approval flowchart

Applicant submits an online application for ethical approval using [this link](#) (see Student/Staff start your application here).

The applicant's supervisor / line manager will see the application in their list in the [portal](#) (see Supervisors use the supervisor search here) after which they should review it.

Application incomplete.

Supervisor / line manager to use the supervisor / line manager comments box in the application to request that the applicant update their application with any outstanding information. The applicant will see this comment when they review their application which they can access through the [portal](#) (see Student/staff view your current applications here).

Having read the comments left by their supervisor / line manager the applicant must update their application and email their supervisor / line manager to advise that they have done so.

Supervisor / line manager to further review the application which they can access through the [portal](#).

Once the supervisor / line manager is satisfied that the application is complete they endorse it by clicking the 'approve' button in the 'feedback to student' section. For applications in category 1 they must also select the relevant SNL from the drop-down list.

The application will be further reviewed by SNLs, REC, AWEC or the HSC who will access the application through the [portal](#). See appendix II for meeting dates.

The SNL or clerk to the REC, AWEC or HSC will update the application with the committee's decision. The applicant will see the new status of their application when they view it through the [portal](#).

Application complete (supporting documentation in addition to the project proposal is attached to the application).

Application complete (straightforward application with no supporting documentation required except the proposal).

Supervisor / line manager accesses the application through the [portal](#). Once they are satisfied that the application is complete they endorse it by clicking the 'approve' button in the feedback to student' section of the application.

REC administrator will update the application status to 'approved'. The applicant will see the new status of their application when they view it through the [portal](#).

7 A step by step guide to the application process for category 1 (undergraduate, taught postgraduate / masters students (including non-clinical postgraduate taught from The School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences) applications

See Appendix I – table of application statuses; this provides a list of statuses which will help you understand what stage your application is at.

7.1 Applicant to complete an online application by accessing [this link](#)

Care must be taken when completing the application; please ensure it is fully completed and all relevant supporting documentation is uploaded. See appendix III for guidance notes to assist with completing the application form.

Failure to complete the application in full will lead to a delay in it being processed. If you require assistance with completing the application please contact the Research Ethics Officer fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk (tel. 01463-279347)

7.2 Application is either saved or submitted

An applicant can save their application without submitting it and continue to work on it at a later date by clicking 'save draft' on the last page of the application. Applications can be accessed through the portal which can be accessed [here](#) (see Student/Staff - View your current applications here).

When you are satisfied that you have accurately completed your application and have attached all relevant supporting documentation submit your application by clicking 'submit for review' on the last page of the application.

7.3 Supervisor / line manager to review the application

It is essential that all supervisors / line managers undertake the module 'Ethics Reflection and Practice' before endorsing applications for ethical approval. The research they are being asked to endorse cannot commence until they have completed the module. If you are a supervisor and do not already have access to the module, which is hosted on Brightspace, please contact fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk and she will set your access up.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors / line managers to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Supervisors - Use the supervisor search here), on a regular basis to review applications that they have been listed as supervisor / line manager for. Supervisors / line managers should review the application within 10 working days of them being submitted. If supervisors / line managers plan to be on annual leave they should ensure that their staff and students are aware, in advance, so that if applications for ethical approval are submitted in their absence they will be aware of the possible delay in their review.

The supervisor / line manager has responsibility to ensure the application is absolutely complete and that all supporting documentation is full and accurate before they endorse it.

The supervisor / line manager must, once they have reviewed the application, complete the project supervisor authorisation section of the application form.

7.4 Supervisor / line manager to liaise with the applicant to gather outstanding information.

The supervisor / line manager must liaise with the applicant to gather any outstanding information; this should be done through updating the supervisor / line manager comments box in the application form and selecting the 'place on hold' option. If you need a student to update their application please ask them to do so by putting a note in the 'feedback to student' field detailing what updates are required. It is vital that you ask them to click the 'Save as Draft' button once they have updated their application; them using the 'Save as Draft' button will ensure that the application doesn't go back to the initial stages.

7.5 Applicant to review their application

It is the applicant's responsibility to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Student/Staff - view your current applications here), on a regular basis to see the status of their application/s and to respond to any requests for further information that appear in the supervisor / line manager comments box in their application form. Applicants should update their application as required and email their supervisor / line manager to advise when they have done so. It is vital that you click the 'Save as Draft' button once you have updated your application; using the 'Save as Draft' button will ensure that the application doesn't go back to the initial stages.

7.6 Supervisor / line manager to further review applications

It is the responsibility of all supervisors / line managers to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Supervisors - Use the supervisor search here), on a regular basis to further review applications that they have been listed as supervisor / line manager for, for which they requested further information.

7.7 Supervisor / line manager to update the project supervisor / line manager authorisation section of the application form

The supervisor / line manager must, once they have reviewed the application, complete the project supervisor authorisation section of the application form. When they are satisfied that the application is complete and ready for further review they should endorse the application.

It is essential that supervisors / line managers do not endorse incomplete applications as that will delay the research commencing!

7.8 SNLs or administrator to review applications

When the supervisor / line manager has endorsed a category 1 application, the application will then be visible to the relevant SNL or administrator (for applications that have no supporting documentation other than the research proposal) in the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see SNL view your forms here).

The SNL or administrator has responsibility to ensure the application is absolutely complete and that all supporting documentation is full and accurate.

The SNL or administrator should review the application within 10 days of it being endorsed, and liaise with the applicant to obtain any outstanding information (for which they must use the 'feedback to student' box in the application form) after which they will approve the application (once they are satisfied that all relevant information is included in the application) by clicking 'approve' in the 'feedback to student' section of the application.

7.9 SNL or administrator to liaise with the applicant to gather outstanding information

The SNL or administrator must liaise with the applicant to gather any outstanding information; this should be done through the 'feedback to student' section of the application form after which the pink 'save and close' button should be selected.

If an SNL needs a student to update their application they should ask them to do so by putting a note in the 'feedback to student' field detailing what updates are required. It is vital that the applicant is asked to click the 'Save as Draft' button once they have updated their application; then using the 'Save as Draft' button will ensure that the application doesn't go back to the initial stages. The SNL or administrator should then exit the form by clicking conditionally approve, save or close.

7.10 Applicant to review their application

It is the applicant's responsibility to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Student/Staff - View your current applications here), on a regular basis to see the status of their application/s and to respond to any requests for further information that appear in the supervisor / line manager comments box in the application form. Applicants should update their application as required and email the SNL / administrator to advise when they have done so. It is vital that applicants click the 'Save as Draft' button once they have updated your application; using the 'Save as Draft' button will ensure that the application doesn't go back to the initial stages.

7.11 Application approved

Once the SNL or administrator has approved the application the applicant will see that their application has been approved by viewing the application status of the application in the portal which can be accessed [here](#).

8 A step by step guide to the application process for categories 2-7 applications

See page 7 for the list of categories 2- 7.

See Appendix I – table of application statuses; this provides a list of statuses which will help you understand what stage your application is at.

8.1 Applicant to complete an online application by accessing [this link](#)

Care must be taken when completing the application; please ensure it is fully completed and all relevant supporting documentation is uploaded. See appendix III for guidance notes to assist with completing the application form.

Failure to complete the application in full will lead to a delay in it being processed.

If you require assistance with completing the application please contact the Research Ethics Officer fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk (tel. 01463-279347)

8.2 Application is either saved or submitted

An applicant can save their application without submitting it and continue to work on it at a later date by clicking 'save draft' on the last page of the application. Applications can be accessed through the portal which can be accessed [here](#) (see Student/Staff - View your current applications here).

When you are satisfied that you have accurately completed your application and have attached all relevant supporting documentation submit your application by clicking 'submit for review' on the last page of the application.

8.3 Supervisor / line manager to review the application

It is essential that all supervisors / line managers undertake the module 'Ethics Reflection and Practice' before endorsing applications for ethical approval. The research they are being asked to endorse cannot commence until they have completed the module. If you are a supervisor and do not already have access to the module, which is hosted on Brightspace, please contact fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk and she will set your access up.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors / line managers to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Supervisors - Use the supervisor search here), on a regular basis to review applications that they have been listed as supervisor / line manager for. Supervisors / line managers should review the application within 10 working days of it being submitted. If supervisors / line managers plan to be on annual leave they should ensure that their staff and students are aware, in advance, so that if applications for ethical approval are submitted in their

absence they will be aware of the delay in their review.

The supervisor / line manager has responsibility to ensure the application is absolutely complete and that all supporting documentation is full and accurate.

The supervisor / line manager must, once they have reviewed the application, complete the project supervisor authorisation section of the application form.

8.4 Supervisor / line manager to liaise with the applicant to gather outstanding information

The supervisor / line manager must liaise with the applicant to gather any outstanding information.

If the supervisor / line manager needs a student to update their application they should ask them to do so by putting a note in the 'feedback to student' field detailing what updates are required. It is vital that the applicant is asked to click the 'Save as Draft' button once they have updated their application; them using the 'Save as Draft' button will ensure that the application doesn't go back to the initial stages. The supervisor / line manager should then exit the form by clicking 'approve', 'reject' or 'place on hold'.

8.5 Applicant to review their application

It is the applicant's responsibility to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Student/Staff - View your current applications here), on a regular basis to see the status of their application/s and to respond to any requests for further information that appear in the supervisor / line manager comments box in the application form. Applicants should update their application as required and email their supervisor / line manager to advise when they have done so. After updating the application it is essential that the applicant uses the 'save draft' button to make sure the application doesn't go back to the start of the process

8.6 Supervisor / line manager to further review applications

It is the responsibility of all supervisors / line managers to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Supervisors - Use the supervisor search here), on a regular basis to further review applications that they have been listed as supervisor / line manager for, for which they requested further information

8.7 Supervisor / line manager to update the project supervisor / line manager authorisation section of the application form

The supervisor / line manager must, once they have reviewed the application, complete the project supervisor authorisation section of the application form. When they are satisfied that the application is complete and ready for further review they should endorse the application.

It is essential that supervisors / line managers do not endorse incomplete applications as that will delay the research commencing.

The application will then be reviewed by either the Research Ethics Committee, the Animal, Welfare and Environment Committee or the Health Sub Committee. See appendix II for meeting dates.

8.8 Application to be reviewed by the relevant Committee

Health applications that have ethical approval from another organisation

Health applications that have ethical approval from another organisation, will be passed to the Health Sub Committee for review. There are no set submission deadlines for the HSC. They aim to respond to applicants within 2 weeks of their submission and the outcome of their decision will be recorded in the application form.

Applications for which the applicant is also applying for NHS IRAS approval

Applications for which the applicant is also applying for NHS IRAS approval will be noted and the applicant advised accordingly when they submit their application. Receipt of NHS ethical approval automatically satisfies the UHI research ethics approval process

Animal, Welfare and Environment applications that have ethical approval from another organisation

Animal, Welfare and Environment applications that have ethical approval from another organisation will be passed to the Animal, Welfare and Environment Committee (AWEC) for review. The AWEC review applications on an on-going basis and the outcome of their decision will be recorded in the application form.

In vitro applications

In vitro applications will be passed to the Health Sub Committee for review. The Health Sub Committee meet on a fortnightly basis and the outcome of their decision will be recorded in the application form.

Applications containing animal or environment research

Applications containing animal or environment research will be passed to the AWEC for review. The AWEC review applications on an on-going basis and the outcome of their decision will be recorded in the application form.

Applications containing human research

Applications containing human research will be passed to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) for review. The REC meet every 2 months. See appendix II for REC meeting dates.

8.9 Post committee review update

Once the REC, AWEC or HSC have reviewed the application, the committee clerk will update the application status from the list below:

- Approved by REC
- Approved by AWEC
- Approved by HSC
- REC conditional approval
- AWEC conditional approval

HSC conditional approval
REC reject
AWEC reject
HSC reject
Research has been noted

It is the applicant's responsibility to check the portal, which can be accessed [here](#) (see Student/Staff - View your current applications here), on a regular basis to see the status of their application/s and to respond to any requests for further information that appear in the post review feedback section in the admin panel of the application form. Applicants should update their application as required and email the administrator on fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk to advise when they have done so.

9 Ethical approval mechanism

9.1 Student Projects/Dissertations

The student and the project supervisor should complete the online application form, as above.

It is essential that all supporting documentation (such as project outline/methodology, participant information sheet, questionnaires, gatekeeper approval and consent forms as appropriate) are uploaded to the application form.

9.2 Notes

A supervisor, line manager, SNL or administrator may request that the REC, AWEC or HSC review an application for ethical approval or may consult members of the committees at any time during the ethical approval process should this be deemed helpful.

Any subsequent significant¹ change in the question, design or conduct of the research throughout the duration of the research activity should be notified to the supervisor / line manager and may require the submission of a new application for ethical approval.

Following approval, the timeframe for completion of research projects will be as set out in the application. If the research project has not commenced during this time, then a new application for ethical approval should be lodged.

Receipt of NHS ethical approval automatically satisfies the UHI Research Ethics Approval process.

If applying to the BTO or SNH for a licence, this will need to be attached to the application before the research can gain final approval.

Internet Mediated Research (IMR) If your research project/ methodology involves use of online surveys (for which [Online Surveys](#) should be used, note that you must not use SurveyMonkey), questionnaires, use of social media e.g. Facebook, or on-line support groups, chat rooms, Skype

either for the recruitment of participants or the gathering of data then in addition to completing your online application you should read the [UHI IMR Guidance](#), complete an [IMR checklist](#) in consultation with your supervisor, and submit this with your application for ethical approval.

Complex IMR projects may be referred to [UHI's Information Security Officer](#) for consultation and advice.

If the research project depends upon the successful submission of a grant application to an external funding body, ethical approval need not have been secured at the time of application, however the ethical approval process should be initiated immediately following the submission.

Following completion of a research project, it is expected that supervisors will check papers (both internal and external) produced from research before they go forward for publication.

¹A change is considered to be 'significant' if it results in what had been a 'No' response to any of the questions in

the application becoming a 'Yes' response.

Appendix I - Table of application statuses

The table below provides a list of statuses which will help you understand what stage your application is at.

Please note that in your view you will see some additional text after this status; the additional text is a time and identity stamp which shows the last time the application was updated and by whom it was updated.

Application status	What this application status means
Saved	The application has either been drafted but not submitted or the application has been updated, and thereafter saved, by a member of staff.
Submitted	The application has been submitted and is ready for review.
Placed on Hold Placed on Hold by SNL	The current reviewer has placed the application on hold.
Approved by Supervisor and sent to SNL	The supervisor has endorsed the research and the application is now going to be reviewed by a Subject Network Leader. It is important to note that the research is not approved at this point.
Simple Admin Approval	The supervisor / line manager has endorsed the research and the application is going to be reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) administrator on behalf of the REC. It is important to note that the research is not approved at this point.
Awaiting HSC review	The Health Sub Committee will review this application. It is important to note that the research is not approved at this point.
Conditionally Approved by SNL REC Conditional Approval AWEC Conditional Approval	The application has been approved subject to condition/s as noted in the 'feedback to student' section. The research can commence once the applicant has met the conditions outlined, for which they should update their application and email the relevant SNL or administrator to advise them that the condition/s have been met.

HSC Conditional Approval	
Approved by SNL	The research has been approved by the Subject Network Leader and may commence.
Approved and sent to REC	The supervisor has endorsed the research and the application is now going to be reviewed by either the REC committee or Animal Welfare and Environment Committee (AWEC). It is important to note that the research is not approved at this point.
Approved by REC Approved by AWEC Approved by HSC	The research has been approved by the REC, AWEC or Health Sub Committee (HSC) and may commence.
Rejected Rejected by SNL REC Reject AWEC Reject HSC Reject	The application has been rejected for the reasons outlined in the 'feedback to student' section.
Research has been noted	The research has been noted, does not require UHI ethical approval, and may commence.
NHSIRAS	The research involves recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS and will be noted by the REC.

Appendix II – REC, AWEC and HSC meeting dates

A reminder that applications in respect of undergraduate / taught postgraduate / masters students (including non-clinical postgraduate taught students from The School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences) are not taken to the above meetings but are reviewed and approved by SNLs within 2 weeks of being submitted.

Research Ethics Committee (REC) meeting dates 2019/20
29/01/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 22/01/20)
18/03/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 11/03/20)
20/05/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 13/05/20)
22/07/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 15/07/20)
23/09/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 16/09/20)

Animal Welfare & Environment (AWEC) meeting dates 2019/20
11/02/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 06/02/20)
20/04/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 13/04/20)
15/06/20 (the deadline for applications to be submitted and endorsed is 08/06/20)
Health Sub Committee (HSC) meeting dates 2019/20
There are no set submission deadlines for the HSC, please submit your application when it is ready. The HSC aim to respond to applicants within 2 weeks.

Appendix III Guidance notes to assist with completing the application form

The application form has been designed for use by all UHI researchers; it is the same form for staff and students.

The user will be presented with questions relevant to their research, i.e. a researcher working with humans will be presented with different questions to a researcher working with animals and a student will be presented with different questions to a staff member (although there may be some overlap).

Please take care in completing your application. Answering 'yes' in error or not answering 'yes' could result in your application being routed in the wrong direction and will lead to a delay in it being processed.

The completion of some fields is mandatory; they are highlighted with a red asterisk *.

Page 1

You will be unable to progress your application past the first page if you do not complete the mandatory fields contained in the first page.

There are 7 types of applications to choose from in the drop down menu; double check to make sure that you select the correct one. Selecting the incorrect type of application could result in a delay in your application being processed.

It is essential that you do not enter SAMS email addresses in any of the address fields as they will not appear in the portal. All SAMS staff have UHI email addresses; if relevant please ensure that they are used.

If you are not undertaking a module, leave that field blank.

For the faculty field, if you are not attached to a faculty then select 'executive office'.

For the subject network field, if you are not attached to a subject network, leave that field blank.

The academic year will automatically populate with the current academic year.

Ensure you set a realistic proposed research start date, giving time for your application to be reviewed and approved.

Page 2

If your study will involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS you may need to apply for NHS ethical approval or NHS R & D approval; ensure you complete the relevant fields and read / follow the notes.

Page 3

If your study already has ethical approval from another organisation you must attach proof of that to your application; thereafter it will be reviewed by either the AWEC or the HSC and you will not need to complete the application past page 3.

Page 4

If your study contains in vitro research you must attach your research proposal, which should include a clear outline of your project and a description of the materials you will be working with, e.g. cell lines; thereafter it will be reviewed by the HSC and you will not need to complete the application past page 4.

Page 5

If your study involves human participants you will be presented with a page of questions to answer for which you should supply further information and supporting documentation as relevant.

Page 6

If your study involves the study of non-human animals (including observations studies) or tissue of animal origin you will be presented with a page of questions to answer for which you should supply further information and supporting documentation as relevant.

Page 7

If your study involves working in environments with protected status or involve manipulations of the natural environment, plants or animals, including observation, removal or translocation of material you will be presented with a page of questions to answer for which you should supply further information and supporting documentation as relevant.

Final page

The final page of the application form contains questions that are relevant for all applications that progress to that stage. Please ensure that you submit all relevant supporting documentation.

You will be unable to submit your application if you do not tick the box to confirm that you have read the UHI Research Ethics Framework.

You will be unable to submit your application if you do not tick the box to confirm that you understand that ticking that box constitutes a legal signature.

You can either submit your application for review or save a draft of your application after which you can access it through the portal when you are ready to finish completing it ready for submission.

If you need to go back into your application to make amendments you should access the application through the link in the portal, which can be accessed [here](#).