

# Queen Mary University of London PhD Induction

January 2026

---

# Research Ethics

Nooreen Shaikh

---

# Defining research

Research unlike service evaluation or audit is a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalisable knowledge.

Human research is any research conducted with or about *people, their data or tissue*. This can include:

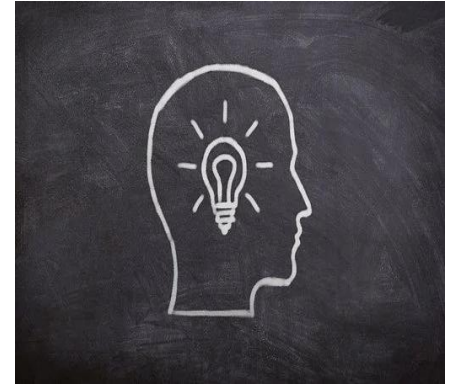
- surveys, interviews, focus groups
- observations
- accessing personal documents
- collecting and using organs, tissue or fluids\*
- clinical assessments\*

\* May require ethical review by an NHS REC



# Why do researchers need ethics approval for their research?

- **Ethical conduct** is essential for high quality research and helps mitigate risks to participants and researchers.
- Data collection must not begin until ethics approval is been granted (mandatory university requirement).
- Considering ethics improves research design my addressing key factors and potential risks.



# Approval routes

## Low risk

- Must not involve vulnerable individuals, or raise sensitive topics likely to cause harm or distress.
- Ethics review is handled by the Research Ethics team, unless your department/school has an established DSREC (Devolved School Research Ethics Committee)

## Panel review

- Application form includes questions to identify moderate risk studies requiring Panel review.
- Panel meetings and submission deadlines apply.
- Lead applicants are invited to attend; students and supervisor are strongly encouraged.

## Main QMERC

- For research posing exceptionally high risk to researchers, participants, or the University (e.g. security sensitive material).
- Full QMERC membership meets once per semester.

All research involving human participants, their data or human tissue samples, must undergo ethics review and receive approval **before** any research activity begins.

For more information about the review requirement and to access the research ethics application documents, please visit the **JRMO Research Ethics website.**

Or contact the team on: **research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk**



Queen Mary  
University of London