

Mauritius Institute of Education
Research Unit - Quality Assurance Division
MIE Ethical Clearance Review: Guidelines for Reviewers

The following guidelines and Ethical Clearance Review Document are to help reviewers to ensure that their feedback addresses key elements in the application as per the ethical standards guiding research ethics at the Mauritius Institute of Education.

The document indicates the ethical standards and the processes entailed in the ethical clearance application. The checklist allows reviewers to identify areas that meet the required ethical standards. Finally, the Reviewer Decision indicates the outcome of the review process, which is endorsed by the Head of the Research Unit.

[Note: All the sections of the Ethical Clearance Review Document should be completed and submitted to the Head of the Research Unit before a final Ethical Clearance Outcome document is issued by the Research Unit to the researcher].

Ethical Standards

Reviewers should be mindful of the following when reviewing an ethical clearance application. Based on the MIE Code of Ethics, Research Ethics at the Mauritius Institute of Education are specifically founded on the following standards:

Honesty

The researcher(s) should demonstrate honesty:

- Towards the participants and beneficiaries of the research
- Towards the funding/sponsoring body and other stakeholders
- About the methodology adopted, and the findings of the research
-

Positionality

Where possible, the researcher's positionality should be acknowledged.

Integrity

The researcher(s) should ensure that they carry out their research in honesty and with sincerity, and uphold any agreements made with participants and other stakeholders. They should not create false expectations or exploit situations that may arise in the course of the research.

Fairness

The researcher(s) should ensure that benefits and burdens are distributed fairly and that, in cases of differential treatment, everyone is informed of their roles and

responsibilities and is aware of the criteria upon which these roles have been allotted.

Respect for the autonomy, rights, welfare, and dignity of individuals, communities and society

The researcher(s) should:

- Show respect for the Participants' autonomy and capacity for self-determination
- Protect persons with diminished or impaired autonomy, and/or who potentially may be vulnerable or dependent
- Ensure that there is Informed Consent:
A potential participant knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently gives consent to participate in a research after being duly informed about the research objective(s), expected role, potential benefits and harms (if any)
- Maximize the possible benefits and minimize possible harms to the participants, communities and society.
- Protect the anonymity, privacy, and dignity of participants and communities.

Transparency and Openness

The researcher(s) should clearly document the different steps and processes in their research. They should be open to sharing results, data (where applicable) and other resources. They should also be receptive to constructive feedback.

Respect for Intellectual Property

The researcher(s) should be careful about possible errors and biases in the research. Care must be taken to give credit to the intellectual property of others and to use appropriate referencing and citation conventions when referring to others' work/research to avoid instances of plagiarism.

Confidentiality

The researcher(s) should take care to protect confidential information, especially data that may interfere with the privacy and/or anonymity of respondents.

Responsible Knowledge Management and Transfer

The researcher(s) should manage and disseminate research data and findings responsibly. Malpractices should thus be avoided (e.g. publishing the same article in different journals, or self-plagiarism)

Professional Conduct

The researcher(s) should display professional conduct at every stage of the research process.

Accountability

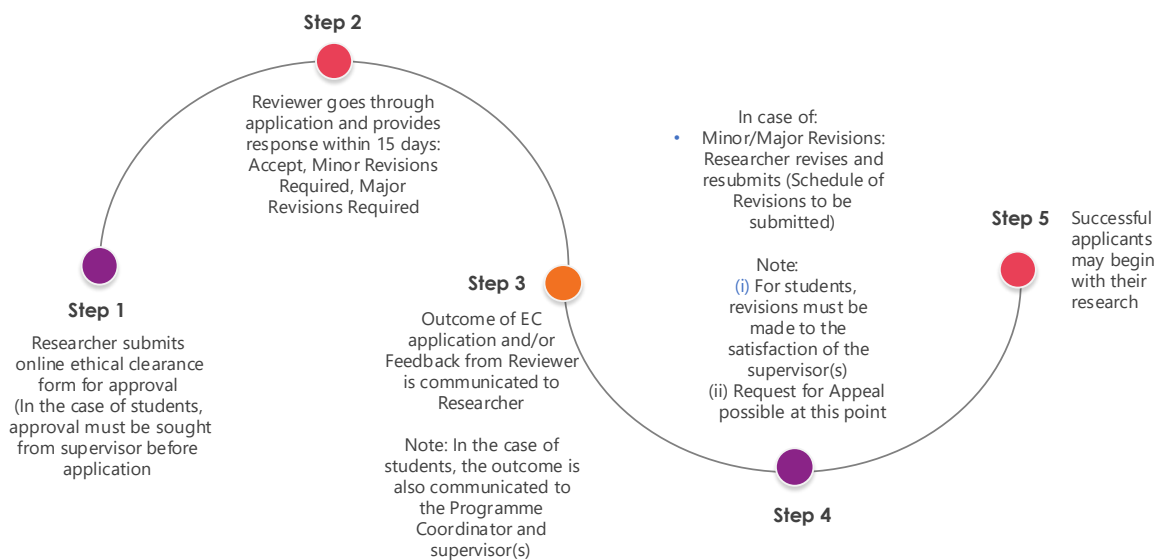
The researcher(s) remain accountable to their funding/sponsoring institution, their participants, and other stakeholders involved in the process.

Non-Discrimination

The researcher(s) should avoid discrimination of any sort on the basis of factors that are in violation of human rights and are not related to the study.

The Ethical Clearance Application Process

The following diagram indicates the different steps from submission of the ethical clearance application form to the outcomes of the application.

**Note: Research in class/school/educational institutions**

In the event that the research is located in classroom/school/educational contexts and potentially involves access to minors/vulnerable groups, an additional application for clearance should be made through the Research and Ethics Committee (REC) at the Ministry of Education. The application can be accessed at the following URL: [https://forms.gle/GQrqK8ZDER9SzcQn7]

Decisions / Possible Outcomes of the Review Process

The potential outcomes of the review process are as follows:

- **Approval** (without revisions): The research can proceed as proposed.
- **Minor Revisions Required**: This requires minor changes to items that will be highlighted by the reviewer(s). A schedule of revisions has to be submitted alongside the revised Ethical Clearance Application and the research can proceed upon

approval. [Note: In the case of students, the revisions would require the supervisor's approval before proceeding to resubmission].

- **Major Revisions Required:** This requires major changes to items that will be highlighted by the reviewer(s). A schedule of revisions has to be submitted alongside the revised Ethical Clearance Application and the research can proceed upon approval. [Note: In the case of students, the revisions would require the supervisor's approval before proceeding to resubmission].

The Reviewer should indicate the outcome clearly, providing feedback and/or suggestions for revision in the decision sheet provided, and submit the checklist and decision sheet to the Head of the Research Unit. The outcomes of the review process will be considered and endorsed at the level of the Research Unit, and the researcher will be informed of the outcomes and any feedback provided.

In the case of students, the programme coordinator and supervisor(s) will also be informed of the outcome.

Right to Appeal

Researchers/Students have the right to appeal against any decision they deem to negatively impact their research. In the event of a rejection, they may write a letter to the Head of the Research Unit, providing justifications and evidence (if any) to support their request for appeal. The Head of the Research Unit will assign an independent reviewer to evaluate the Research Ethics Application and after consideration of the outcome, will inform the researcher.

Mauritius Institute of Education

Ethical Clearance Review

Instructions to Reviewers

1. This Ethical Clearance Review document consists of 3 sections:
Section A: Information Table
Section B: Reviewer Checklist
Section C: Reviewer Decision on Ethical Clearance Application
2. Indicate any relevant aspects which the researcher may/may not have adequately addressed.
3. Highlight any other ethical concerns that need clarifying (if applicable).
4. Clearly indicate the outcome of the review in Section C, providing appropriate feedback where applicable.
5. Email completed document (**Sections A, B, and C**) to rec@mieonline.org

Section A: Complete the following table with details of the Researcher

Name of Applicant:		<u>Student ID (if applicable):</u>
Name of Supervisor(s) (where applicable):		
Department and School or Programme (where applicable):		
Title of Research:		

Section B: Checklist for Reviewers

Complete the following checklist and add any relevant details in the comments section.

No.	Checklist items	Tick the appropriate box	Comments
1.	Have all the relevant sections been completed by the researcher?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
2.	Are the research start and end dates mentioned on the application form? (Note: Fieldwork should not start prior to Ethical Clearance application outcome)	☐ Yes ☐ No	

3.	If the research has already received ethical clearance from another institution, have the relevant information and evidence been provided?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
4.	In the case of students, has the researcher received approval from their supervisor to proceed with the Ethical Clearance Application?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
5.	Has the researcher clearly indicated the research aims/objectives and/or research questions?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
6.	Has the researcher clearly identified the study participants?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
7	Are there any ethical issues you wish to raise in relation to any potential benefits to the participants in the research?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
8a.	Are there any ethical issues you wish to raise in relation to any potential risks to the participants in the research?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
8b.	Has the researcher clarified how potential risks will be addressed/mitigated?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
9.	The following annexes have been submitted with this application:		
	- Consent Form(s)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	- Participant Information Sheet		
	- Gatekeeper Consent Form(s) – <i>if applicable</i>	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	- Any other relevant certificates and/or approvals	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	- Data Collection Tool(s) (<i>such as</i> Questionnaire, Survey, Interview Schedule, Observation Checklist, etc.)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	- Other (Please specify):	☐ Yes ☐ No	
10.	Are there any ethical issues that you wish to raise on the proposed research design and methodology?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
11.	Has the researcher clearly indicated how data obtained from this research will be stored?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
12.	Are there any additional comments you would wish to raise about the ethical dimensions of this research?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
13.	Have you indicated your final decision on the Ethical Clearance Application on the <u>Reviewer Decision Sheet</u> ?	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Section C: Reviewer Decision on Ethical Clearance Application

This Ethical Clearance Application has been reviewed based on the institutional guidelines in the ethical conduct of research.

The reviewer has reached the following decision:

[Tick one of the following boxes, where appropriate.]

- ☐ **Approved:** This research may proceed.
- ☐ **Minor Revisions Required:** This research may proceed if the requested revisions outlined below have been adequately addressed.
- ☐ **Major Revisions Required:** This research may proceed if the requested revisions outlined below have been adequately addressed.

Suggested Revisions (if any):

Reviewed by: _____ [Reviewer]

Signature: _____ Date: _____

[To be completed by Head, Research Unit]

Signature: _____ Name: _____

Head, Research Unit

Date: _____