NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee (REC)

DO I NEED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

Human Projects & Ethical Approval

All human interaction, including human research, has ethical dimensions. Responsibility for the ethical design, review and conduct of human research is exercised at many levels. While the processes of ethical review are important, individual researchers and the institutions within which they work hold primary responsibility for ensuring that their research is ethically acceptable.

On the NUIG REC web-page please find NUIG Galway guidelines for deciding whether to apply to the NUIG, Galway Research Ethics Committee, the Galway University Hospitals Research Ethics Committee or both.

Examples of activities that may require ethics approval include the following:

- Clinical trials involving human participants
- New treatments or interventions
- Research involving human remains, cadavers, tissues, discarded tissue (e.g. placenta), or biological fluids
- Physiological studies
- Comparing an established procedure, whether therapeutic, non-therapeutic or diagnostic, with other procedures which are not recognised as established by virtue of their recent development, discovery or use in a new or unfamiliar way
- Innovative practices in health and disability services
- Research conducted by students, which includes all activities that meet the definition of research with human participants
- Observational clinical research
- Access to personal information by means of questionnaires, interviews or other techniques of information gathering
- Research involving the secondary use of data (use of data not collected for that research purpose), if any form of identifier is involved and/or if health information pertaining to individuals is involved
- Case studies, when a series of subject observations allow possible extrapolation or generalisation of the results from the reported cases and when there is an intent to publish or disseminate the data
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Review by REC **may not be required for:**

- Research utilising existing publicly available documents or data
- Observational studies in public places in which the identity of the participants remains anonymous
- A case study of one patient with the proviso that written informed consent has been obtained from the relevant subject
- Quality assurance studies
- Audits

The REC accepts applications from Doctoral & MD (Doctor of Medicine) postgraduates and staff members. The REC does not accept applications for review from any other master’s students, either taught or by major thesis.

For Ethical Approval to be given there is a requirement that the research requiring approval should not commence before such approval is granted.

In cases where there is uncertainty about whether a project needs ethical approval please contact the Research Ethics Committee administrator at ethics@nuigalway.ie or telephone 091-495312 for advice.