

Ethical clearance should be sought for **all research in which human or animal subjects will be involved as subjects** of the research. Clearance should be sought prior to any research work being undertaken, including pilot studies or focus groups.

Most research granting organizations will require completion of ethical clearance from your organization – the approving body often referred to as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in US universities. Always check the ethical clearance requirements of the research granting organization you are applying to, as there can be marked variations.

Collaborative research projects involving other researching institutions will often require the ethical clearance of all participating institutions, and can be quite time consuming.

It is in the interests of both the institution and all researchers that research projects are reviewed and conducted ethically, both to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects, as well as to enable recognition of international-standard procedures in the conduct of research being undertaken at Zayed University.

Ethical clearance is required:

- ✓ whether the research is funded or not;
- ✓ whether the funding is internal or external;
- ✓ whether the research is a pilot study or a fully developed project;
- ✓ whether the subjects are from inside or outside the institution;
- ✓ whether the research is conducted in person or remotely (e.g. by mail, email, fax or telephone)
- ✓ whether the information is collected directly from subjects or from existing records not in the public domain;
- ✓ whether the research is published or not;
- ✓ whether the research is observational, experimental, correlational or descriptive;
- ✓ whether the research is to acquire basic or applied knowledge;
- ✓ whether a similar project has been approved elsewhere or not;
- ✓ whether a co-investigator or collaborating institution has received ethical clearance for this research project or not.

1.0 How do I apply for ethical clearance?

In most cases the Primary Investigator must complete the *Full Application for Ethical Clearance* and attach all required documentation. The application requires the researcher to describe their proposed research in detail, and provides sufficient information for the Research Ethics Committee to make their determination.

All forms are available on the [Research website](#).

Completed forms should be submitted electronically to the [Office of Research](#).

All investigators and research personnel must complete compulsory [CITI human subjects research on-line training before they begin their research](#). For assistance with registering for CITI training or completing the required modules, contact the [Office of Research](#).

2.0 How will my application be evaluated?

All research projects will be evaluated using international best practice, applying the following guiding principles:

- The proposed research applies sound research design and recognized data collection techniques.
- Risks to participants are acceptable in relation to anticipated benefits and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.
- The research reflects an awareness of cultural sensitivity, specifically relating to issues of Islamic culture and traditions.
- Informed consent is obtained from all participants or their legal guardian.
- There are adequate provisions to maintain the confidentiality of participants.
- Selection of participants is appropriate and equitable.

- Research Assistants and other supporting staff are adequately trained for the tasks and possess the necessary skills, experiences and professional maturity to undertake all required tasks.
- There are planned processes for the handling of potentially sensitive data, highly personal information, observations of criminal acts or dealing with dangerous or emergency situations (*this is particularly relevant where researchers are interviewing children, visiting family homes or discussing topics of a personal nature*).

Committee members follow strict guidelines in the evaluation process. All efforts are made to ensure a speedy and transparent approval process.

3.0 Can I apply for an exemption?

Due to the nature of their research, some Primary Investigators may request an exemption from the full application process. Exemption is only awarded where the proposed research meets one or more of the exemption criteria below:

<p>1. Research is undertaken by students at Zayed University This includes both undergraduate or graduate student-led projects. Graduate research thesis which are considered externally, are subject to ethic review and NOT exempt. "Thesis" refers to the traditional instrument that is reviewed by a panel and catalogued/accessible to the public in the library or other sources.</p>
<p>2. Research is primarily focused on quality assurance or process improvement Such projects are generally backwards looking within an institution, comparing reality/practice to established standards, and are carried out and applicable only within the institution, and not intended for publication. Eg: seeking staff opinions about IT or library services; SELEs; annual faculty surveys etc.</p>
<p>3. Research which does NOT involve human or animal subjects (Involvement of human subjects includes as recipients of surveys, interviews or focus groups, as well as more invasive or clinical research activities)</p>
<p>4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data etc, if these sources are publically available <i>Existing</i> means existing before this research is proposed, and at the time of this exemption request. For example data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publically available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified.</p>
<p>5. Research conducted in established educational settings, involving normal educational practices For example research on regular and special education <i>instructional strategies</i>, or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among <i>instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods</i>. Research is NOT exempt if subjects involved are children.</p>

If your research project meets one or more of these criteria, then you are eligible for an exemption from the full ethical clearance process.

All forms are available on the Research website.

Completed forms should be submitted electronically to the [Office of Research](#).

If you are in any doubt about which form to complete, please contact the Office of Research.

4.0 Where can I find more information

Complete information about ethical clearance and other matters relating to research can be found on the [ZU Research Website](#)

These guidelines are adapted for Zayed University, but based on [US Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46.101\(b\)](#)