

Ethical Conduct of Research Application Guide

Introduction

World Athletics has established the World Athletics Independent Research Ethics Committee (WAIREC) to promote high-quality and ethically informed research.

The **Ethical Conduct of Research Application Guide** has been designed to assist researchers in the preparation and submission of the **Ethical Conduct of Research Application** to WAIREC. The Guide includes explanatory notes, ethical rationales, as well as practical tips and examples.

The Guide can be read beforehand or during the preparation of the application. The seven sections of the Guide correspond to the seven sections of the Application form.



Section 1	Project Overview
Section 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Project Investigators</p> <p>The clarification of funding sources for the project has ethical implications in terms of the expectation of public dissemination of results in publicly funded research and restrictions that might apply in privately funded research.</p>
Section 3	<p style="text-align: center;">Research Background, Aims, and Relevance</p> <p>Applicants must make it clear in plain language how the research can contribute to the body of knowledge and/or how it can extend, refine, or re-apply knowledge for some beneficial purpose for the sporting or general community.</p> <p>The statements in this section set up the discussion of appropriate research methods and how the benefits of the proposed research need to outweigh the costs (e.g., risks to participants).</p>
Section 4	<p style="text-align: center;">Research Methods</p> <p>Applicants must be able to describe in plain language the research methods and step-by-step procedures, as well identify any risks to participants associated with any of the procedures.</p> <p>Why is methodology relevant to ethical rigour and review?</p> <p>A rigorous methodology is needed to ensure that the study is valid, that is, that it can measure what it is supposed to measure. Without validity, the research cannot deliver expected benefits and thus cannot justify subjecting participants to risks associated with the procedures.</p>

	Ethical Risks and Safeguards
Section 5	<p>What makes a research risk an ethical one?</p> <p>Ethical rigour involves the awareness and application of ethical principles. Here are some ethical principles and related questions to ask yourself:</p> <p>Beneficence – obligation to produce good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your research produce original performance or health benefits for athletes? • Does your research expand the body of knowledge or professional practice? • Does your research prioritize the health and well-being of participants? <p>Non-maleficence – obligation to do no harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of the potential physical, psychological, social, or other risks associated with your research procedures? • Do you have procedures in place to prevent or minimize the likelihood of risks or harms to participants? • Do the benefits of the research outweigh the costs (i.e., risks to participants)? <p>Rights – responsibility to respect autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are participants volunteering freely, that is, under no obligation or pressure (e.g., financial inducement, dependent relationship with researcher) at the time of recruitment? • Are participants made aware of the research aims, methods, benefits, risks, and safeguards to ensure that consent is informed? • Are participants made aware that they are free to withdraw consent at any stage without having to explain themselves and without penalty? <p>Fairness – responsibility to treat participants equally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are some groups over-researched (e.g., male athletes)? • Are there certain conditions that warrant unequal treatment of participants (e.g., consent from parent/guardian, translation of details of Consent form)? • Can the immediate benefits of research be made available to participants in control or placebo groups? <p>It is sometimes the case that researchers have put in place all the necessary safeguards, so believe that risks no longer exist to be reported. For purposes of WAIREC endorsement, it is important for researchers to <u>demonstrate</u> that they have identified the risks and explained how they are managed.</p>

<p>Section 6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Attachments</p> <p>Researchers need to ensure that the language used in <u>recruitment</u> notices (e.g., posters, flyers, online ads) is concise and clear about the type of participants, aim, method(s) and expected benefits (to participants and wider community).</p> <p>The context is important, too, for recruitment should be done in a setting and by someone where there is no pressure to participate. For example, a head coach endorsing his or her own research project at a team meeting and then encouraging athletes to sign up may be seen by athletes as pressure to participate (to gain favour or avoid falling out of favour). It is important to recognize potential role conflicts and how to ensure that recruitment is independent of other relationships and commitments participants might have with the researchers.</p> <p>The process of informed <u>consent</u> should involve both written statements and verbal description about the group/institution undertaking the research and a plain language explanation of project title, aims, methods, benefits, risks, and safeguards, including contact details of Principal Researcher or support person (e.g., GP, psychologist), if needed.</p> <p>Care should be taken to ensure that the potential participant has sufficient time to think about the information and have any questions answered before committing to the research. Researchers should also be mindful of factors (e.g., level of language proficiency, vulnerable populations) that might inhibit understanding, thus requiring additional support for the participant.</p> <p>The signed consent form should be stored in a way that cannot be directly connected to the research data.</p>
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<p>Section 7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ethical Conduct of Research Declaration</p> <p>Research is to be conducted in a way consistent with the Declaration of Helsinki principles of protecting the health, well-being, and rights of research participants.</p> <p>https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/</p> <p>Researchers acknowledge in this section that they are taking responsibility for the scientific and ethical rigour of the proposed research.</p> <p>Researchers also acknowledge that any changes to the research procedures after WAIREC approval must be submitted for approval before research can continue.</p> <p>Researchers also acknowledge that any adverse event (e.g., participant injury, breach of confidentiality) and how it is being managed must be reported immediately to the Chair of WAIREC.</p>
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