Research Ethics at the Faculty of Social Sciences: Pre-screening for PhD projects

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Research Ethics at the Faculty of Social Sciences

• Information, procedures, resources and support on research ethics are available on the website of the Faculty of Social Sciences

• Pre-screening for PhD projects
  https://sowi.univie.ac.at/en/research/research-ethics/pre-screening-for-phd-projects/

• and the regular Research Ethics Screening for researchers in the different departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences
What is the pre-screening for PhD projects?

• Tool to support reflection on research ethics in developing research projects

• The core of the process is a (field-specific) research ethics questionnaire which is supposed to
  ◦ support doctoral candidates in developing their project and
  ◦ the Doctoral Advisory Board in discussing research ethics during the public presentation at the Faculty

• Resources and support section
  ◦ Further information and material: Univie Support, Guidelines, Legal Regulations, ...
  ◦ Repository of the current scholarly debate: Collection of publications on different aspects

• Mandatory as of February 2022 in order to register for the public presentation at the Faculty
The 3 stages of the pre-screening process

• In preparation of the public presentation at the Faculty doctoral candidates have to conduct an **online self-assessment**

• Throughout the **public presentation at the Faculty** reflections on research ethics are discussed with the Doctoral Advisory Board

• In preparation of empirical research, the **project is adapted** according to the advice received in the discussion

and depending on the specifics according to research field you would conduct the regular Research Ethics Screening
Stage 1: Preparation and online self-assessment

- Consider the research ethics questionnaire early on
  - Consult the specifics according to research field section and download the questionnaire
  - Use it to identify potential ethical challenges in your project and to develop respective mitigation strategies
  - Think about including a section on research ethics in the research proposal and/or take notes on reflections in a separate document

- Conduct the online self-assessment
  - Have longer answers and the overall ethical reflection ready in a separate document
  - Fill out and submit the online self-assessment
  - Sign the pre-screening confirmation and register for the public presentation at the Faculty
**Stage 2: Public presentation at the Faculty**

- Research proposal: you do not have to (but still can) include a section on research ethics

- **Summarize reflections on research ethics** during the public presentation at the Faculty

- **Discussion** with the **Doctoral Advisory Board**
  - Are these reflections and proposed mitigation strategies **coherent with the proposed research**?
  - Are there challenges suggesting an **application with the Ethics Committee** of the University of Vienna?
  - **Feedback** on ethical challenges and proposed mitigation strategies
Stage 3: Preparation of empirical research

- Doctoral candidates are advised to consider comments received by the Doctoral Advisory Board throughout the public presentation at the Faculty.

- Do comments and feedback suggest adaptations or further development of the project design?

- Discuss potential adaptations/reactions with your supervisor.

- Have a look at the specifics according to research field to find out whether you have to conduct the regular Research Ethics Screening before you can start empirical research.
Practical example: “walk-through”

1. check-out the [website](#)
2. Download the field-specific [research ethics questionnaire](#) 
3. Use it to further [develop your project](#) 
4. [Prepare answers](#) and an [overall ethical reflection](#) in a document
5. Go online and [fill out the online self-assessment](#)
6. Check e-mails, [sign the pre-screening confirmation](#) and [register](#) for the FÖP
7. [Present and discuss](#) reflections and mitigation strategies at the FÖP
8. [Consider the comments](#) received and discuss reactions with supervisor
9. Check out whether the regular Research Ethics Screening is mandatory as well or not

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Thank you!

Questions?