

ETHICAL RISK LEVEL DESCRIPTORS ADAPTED FROM THE NWU ETHICAL RISK LEVEL DESCRIPTORS – RESEARCH

RISK LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS
<p><u>High risk</u></p> <p>Please complete the NWU Ethics application form and send all relevant documentation with the application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research with human participants. ○ Any research with children. ○ Research with people suffering from psychological conditions that affect their cognitive, behavioural, or social functioning so that they cannot take informed decisions. ○ Any research done that is outside of the researcher's field of expertise can be seen as high risk. The competence of the researcher within this specific field will be a determining factor for the risk assessment of the research. ○ Research involving human participants with research-related medical or psychopathology ○ Research involving vulnerable human participants. ○ Research involving sensitive ethical dilemmas in society ○ Research that may affect public or environmental safety or sensitive ecosystems ○ Research budget higher than R1 million per annum ○ Any research deemed to present potential high risk for whatever reason by any applicant or committee.
<p><u>Medium risk</u></p> <p>Please complete the NWU Ethics application form and send all relevant documentation with the application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborative human social sciences research involving people. ○ Multi-centre human social sciences studies involving people. ○ Long-term human social sciences studies exceeding one year in duration. ○ Umbrella human social sciences projects involving human participants ○ Research involving face-to-face psycho-social contact with participants e.g. interviews, focus groups. ○ Any human social sciences intervention studies individually or in communities. ○ Non-clinical Research/Research with vulnerable communities/people (older persons and their care givers, patients and health-care professionals, students and teachers, persons with life-threatening diseases and their care givers, people living with HIV, wards of the state and guardians or care-givers, employees and employers, prisoners and the relevant prison authorities, members of the SA Defence Force and their supervisors, children, mentally ill persons own direct students) ○ Research budget not higher than R999 999 per annum and not lower that R250 000.00 per annum.

	<p><u>All research not described under high risk, but where the following criteria applies:</u></p> <p>Human social sciences projects involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborative research ○ Multi-centre studies ○ Long-term studies exceeding one year in duration ○ Umbrella projects
<p><u>Low risk</u> (Minimal risk to human participants)</p> <p>Please complete the NWU Ethics Checklist together with the project/research proposal/protocol</p>	<p><u>All research not described under high risk or medium risk, but where the following criteria applies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Surveys by means of validated interview schedules ○ Documented data or analyses with identifiable human participants ○ Simple questionnaire or instrument development ○ Questionnaire or instrument development ○ Research involving retrospective data. ○ System research using structured survey forms. ○ Interventions based on professional, scientific base protocols. ○ Research budget under R250 000 but higher than R100 000.
<p><u>Only ethical clearance required from BaSSREC</u></p> <p>(if you need ethical approval for funding opportunities/journal publications, you will have to follow the low risk process)</p>	<p><u>All research not described under high risk, medium risk or low risk, including the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Systematic reviews/Literature reviews ○ Postal / surveys with validated questionnaires ○ Document/artefact analyses without identifiable human participants ○ Unidentifiable electronic surveys ○ Public observation without interaction or intervention