Top 15 Tips for Submitting Your Ethics Application

Submitting an ethics application can be challenging, no matter your field of study. To help you navigate the process, we've compiled 15 essential tips to boost your chances of approval. This guide isn't exhaustive—there's more to learn—so reach out for personalised support to ensure your application succeeds!

1. Understand Your Research Scope
Clarify your study's focus and ensure you have a research team who have expertise to help you achieve your goals. For example, you shouldn't be developing an app on mental health without a mental health professional on board.

2. Review Relevant Guidelines
Familiarise yourself with the standards applicable to your institution or region. If you are intending to recruit overseas participants, you should be familiar with international expectations or cultural differences.

3. Ensure a Clear Study Design
Justify your methods with a well-defined research plan, written in lay-language, to build a strong case for approval.

4. Complete Required Training
Finish mandatory courses (e.g., Good Clinical Practice) before submitting your application.

5. Prioritise Informed Consent
Draft clear, accessible consent forms to ensure participants fully understand the study. Our templates can help you do this.

6. Protect Participant Privacy
Use secure data storage and anonymisation to safeguard personal information. Many applications require a research data monitoring plan (or RDMP). Our template is a great start for this.

7. Address Potential Risks
Identify all risks to participants and provide mitigation strategies. Risks are on a spectrum, from minor risks to a participants time all the way up to major risks to personal safety.

8. Respect Cultural Sensitivities
Incorporate relevant cultural considerations into your plan to ensure ethical alignment. Community consultation is incredibly important and should be considered during any research submission.

9. Keep It Clear and Concise

Focus on essential details—avoid overloading the application with unnecessary information (particularly for participant documentation).

10. Seek Peer Feedback

Share your draft with colleagues to catch errors or unclear sections before submission.

11. Double-Check All Documents

Ensure all forms and attachments are complete to avoid delays in the review process. It may seem easy, but errors in attachments are a common reason for why the committee will bounce back an application.

12. Allow Time for Review

Be prepared for a multi-week review period and plan your timeline accordingly.

13. Disclose Conflicts of Interest

Be transparent about funding or affiliations to maintain credibility.

14. Engage Stakeholders Early

Consult relevant groups to strengthen your application's relevance and impact.

15. Submit with Confidence

Provide a clear timeline and follow up politely to demonstrate professionalism. The committee wants to approve your research project; make it easy for them.

Need More Support?

These tips are just the starting point! For tailored guidance on your ethics application, contact us—we're here to help you succeed!