



Guidance Notes for completing the Research Governance Framework Application Form for External Research

Please read the guidance notes below when completing the Research Governance Application Form. If you have any questions, while completing the form please contact the RGF Coordinator by email rgf.coordinator@rbk.kingston.gov.uk.

Further information is also available on www.kingston.gov.uk/rgf

General Information

- All forms must be typed and submitted electronically initially. In addition, please send one signed paper copy to

RGF Coordinator
Quality & Performance Team
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Room 103b, Guildhall 1
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey, KT1 1EU

- Please complete the form using Arial 12 point Normal
- Write in plain English. Your proposal is likely to be seen by a great many people, some of whom will not be versed in your particular specialisation.
- Please avoid using jargon or abbreviations.
- If you refer to existing legislation, please provide a brief explanation.
- Please complete the RGF checklist and return it with your completed application form.
- Please send a covering letter with your application.
- Please note any failure to complete any parts of the application form may result in project approval being delayed or refused.
- Your research application once submitted will go through a research approval process. Your application will be decided on criteria contained in the application form and other documentation provided.

RGF Application Form

1. Research Title

This is the full title of the Research Project. Please do not use any abbreviations in this title. Please do not use vague titles.

2. Roles & Responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the research project excluding participants as these are dealt with in a different section. Please provide full names and addresses for all these roles. In some instances, you may need to provide brief details of previous research carried out by the parties. The reason that this is asked is to determine whether those involved have the necessary skills and experiences to complete the research project. In addition, the roles of chief investigator, principal researcher, senior manager, and sponsor have a number of responsibilities and it is important that they have agreed to undertake them. They will need to sign the form in the box indicated accepting their responsibilities.

a) Chief Investigator

This is the person who takes overall responsibility for the design, conduct and reporting of the research project. This person is also likely to be the main point of contact for the research project.

b) Researchers

These are the people who are involved in conducting the research project. Please complete details for each researcher involved in the project and print off additional pages if so required.

c) Employing Organisation

This is the organisation that employs the chief investigator and the other members of the research team (ie researchers). Employers are liable for the work of their employees and therefore it is important that they are aware of and support the work. Please ignore sections 2c and 2d if you are undertaking research as part of your academic study at university or another educational establishment.

d) Senior Manager Support

This is the senior manager within the employing organisation that will be ensuring that that the employing organisation discharges its duties under the Research Governance Framework.

e) Sponsor

Your research project cannot be approved unless somebody has agreed to take on this role. The role of the sponsor is central to the Research Governance Framework.

The sponsor is the organisation or person taking responsibility for ensuring that the design, conduct and reporting of the research project meets appropriate standards. The sponsor is usually but does not have to be, the main funder. The sponsor might be a local authority, a University or research foundation. The sponsor need not be involved in the day-to-day work of the project but must ensure that, before the research project begins, that agreements are in place for the research team to access resources and support to deliver the research as proposed and that agreements are in place allocating responsibilities for the management, monitoring and reporting of the research.

The sponsor is also responsible for ensuring there is agreement on appropriate arrangements to record, report and review significant developments as the research proceeds, particularly those which put the safety of individuals at risk and to approve any modifications to the design.

f) Funder

This is the organisation that is providing funding for the study. Organisations that fund research have a responsibility to ensure that it is a proper use of funds and that the proposal provides value for money.

Please note that they will need to provide a signed letter agreeing to funding the research project. This letter will need to be signed by the Chief Officer from the Directorate that is undertaking the research if the project is being undertaken by a Local Authority or a Director if the employing organisation is a private /public company. Details of how the project will be funded should also be included in the research proposal and any financial monitoring must be explained in the section on monitoring on the application (See Section 6).

g) University College

If the research project is being undertaken by a student at a University/College, please provide details of the University/College and the main point of contact. Please also provide a confirmation letter from the University confirming their support for the project.

3. Research proposal

a) Outline of Proposal

Please provide a short (3-4 pages maximum) outline of your research proposal. This research proposal should include:

- The purpose of your research and the rationale for this research.
- The aims and objectives of this research
- Your role
- Your opening statement, argument or hypothesis

- A discussion of your proposed research methodologies such as empirical investigation, practical work, interviews and analysis
- How this proposal will be funded
- Expected outcomes of your research

The purpose of your research

Please say what the purpose of this research project is. If it is part of your academic study please describe the course. Details of your University/College should be placed in section 2(g).

Please also describe in brief why this research is required. If this work is for a Local Authority describe how this work fits in with policy and strategic objectives. If this research is building on previous research, please justify why this further research is required. (You may want to identify relevant literature). Research which duplicates other work unnecessarily or which is not of sufficient quality to contribute something useful to existing knowledge is in itself unethical and any such proposal will not be acceptable.

Aims/Objectives

Please describe the main aims and objectives of the project. These need to be clear and concise and they should be realistic. If possible, please use measurable objectives which will help in monitoring the research project.

Your role

This is your role in the research proposal, you should draw on your previous expertise and experience with this type of research and what you can add to this research.

Opening Statement

This is the statement that begins the research. You should use one statement or question that should not be too broad.

Methodology

This section should outline how you plan to go about doing your research. In this section, you need to demonstrate an awareness of the methodological tools available to you and show some understanding of which is most suitable for your research. It may be that qualitative methods, including the analysis of interviews, is appropriate or your approach may involve forecasting or statistical, financial or econometric modelling. Good research will often use a combination of methodologies, which complement each other.

Funding

Please provide details of how this research project will be funded and the systems in place to ensure value for money.

b) Timescales

Please indicate the expected commencement dates and completion dates for this research. Please provide details of the stages of the project and any timings. If possible, please provide a project plan or Gantt chart.

c) Milestones

Please identify key milestones in the research project; please be as specific as possible.

d) Peer Review

Every research proposal must be subjected to an independent peer-review. For student research projects the university supervisor and the research panels will normally provide an adequate level of independent peer review. Peer review should be carried out by individuals who are independent of the study but are qualified to comment on the science or methodology being used.

The purpose of peer review is to:

- To ensure quality research
- To maintain ethical standards
- To avoid futile and unnecessary research

If you have undertaken a peer review, please provide a copy of the Peer review report.

4. Participants

This is the service users, their relatives, carers, council staff or contractors engaged by the Council who are subjects of the research.

Generally the coverage of the Research Governance Framework applies only to those service user/carer/staff populations that are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Health. This means that it currently only covers those who receive adult social care services but we have taken a corporate approach and are applying the Research Governance Framework across the full range of our activities. We have taken this approach as research with children often presents the greatest ethical risks and methodological complexity.

If your study does not include any participants (i.e. academic research) please ignore this section. Participants should enter into the research freely and willingly and know and understand what they are agreeing to when they take part. They should be told they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Wherever possible, anonymity and confidentiality should be maintained.

a) Participants

State whether you intend to involve participants in your research

b) Vulnerable groups

This checklist includes a list of vulnerable participants. If your research study involves any of these participants, please tick the appropriate box.

c) Involvement

In this section describe how the participants will be involved in the research. Please provide a profile on the participants that you intend to use.

d) Identification/Recruitment

This section should explain how the participants have been identified and how they will be recruited to take part in the research project. If you plan to use a letter or advertisements to recruit participants, please provide details.

e) Extra steps for vulnerable groups

If you are planning to use participants from any of the vulnerable groups as described section 4 (a), please justify why you need to use the groups.

f) Language

Researchers should take account of the multi-cultural nature of society and your research proposal will need to take into account how you will contact participants whose first language may not be English.

g) Payments

If people taking part in your research are to be offered any payment or incentive to do so over and above appropriate expenses, you must explain this in your application.

h) CRB

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) was established in March 2002 in direct response to demands for a more comprehensive and effective means by which employers and others could obtain access to an applicant's criminal record details when assessing their suitability for employment. This is especially important where work relates to contact with children and other vulnerable members of society.

For those involved in a research project that will have any contact with any vulnerable groups (as discussed in guidance note) the researchers will be required to have an enhanced CRB check. The research sponsor is responsible for ensuring that an enhanced CRB check is completed and for incurring the cost of this. The research sponsor will be required to provide evidence that the enhanced CRB check has been completed.

5. Ethics

This section examines whether the proposed research project respects the dignity, rights, safety and well being of individual research participants. Please provide as much information as possible, particularly if you are likely to work with any vulnerable groups. Please note that as part of the application process your application for research will be submitted to the Research Governance Coordinator for ethical approval.

a) Risks & Ethical Issues

Research may expose the researcher (i.e. lone working) as well as the participants to unknown or unusual situations and careful attention must be paid to anticipating potential risks. Health and safety must be prime considerations in any proposed research. You need to consider health and safety risks to participants in your research, to yourself, to other members of staff and to any others who might be affected. You may need to take into account any of the following regulations:

- Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (1992/1999)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (1992)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations – RIDDOR (1995)

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, it is necessary to carry out assessment of risks to identify the measures necessary to comply with appropriate health and safety standards. If the project is being undertaken using staff from a Local Authority or other organisations, you need to be aware of their procedures relating to health and safety. Please contact the designated health and safety officer within the organisation concerned.

Please identify what risks are likely and rate them according to the likelihood of them occurring and the impact within the project.

The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants are the primary consideration in any research study. Please identify the likely ethical issues with this project. Ethical issues will include the following:

- Health & safety
- Consent
- Confidentiality
- Data Protection
- Recruitment & selection of participants
- Voluntariness of participants

b) Dealing with risks and ethical issues

Please identify what arrangements are in place to deal with risks and ethical issues involved in the research project for both participants and researchers.

This should include:

- the health and safety of research participants and/or researchers
- provisions to enable participants to complain if they wish to
- how follow up support will be offered should participants require this as a consequence of this research

- how informed consent will be obtained (see 5c) and what are the procedures if the participants are unable to give informed consent such as those people who may have learning difficulties
- what arrangements for insurance will be made such as Employer's Liability; Public Liability & Professional Indemnity (you will need to provide a copy certificate)
- risk assessments to show how identified risks will be managed.

c) Informed consent

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that the interests of those participating in the research are respected. In cases, involving research where those participating are not anonymous, informed consent of the participant may be required. Such consent is not necessary if the research takes the form of an anonymised questionnaire to collect the data.

Where informed consent is necessary (this should be done preferably in writing) participants should be given an information sheet setting out the reasons for the study, the benefits of participation and how their information is to be stored. If you have drafted consent forms, please include a copy with your application.

Please provide any explanation or letters to be used where informed consent is not possible with persons such as children and what procedures will be used for the research project.

d) Storage

Particular attention must be given to systems for ensuring confidentiality of personal information and to the security of these systems. All those carrying out research studies also need to be aware of their legal and ethical duties regarding the protection of data as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and the local Caldicott guardian legislation. Please also provide details on who has access to this data and how it will be stored and for what length of time.

e) Independent Ethical review

If your research project has been subject to an ethical review, please check this box. (Please include a copy of this review)

6. Monitoring

The research sponsor (in internal cases this is likely to be the line manager and/or an academic tutor) is responsible for ensuring that the design, conduct and reporting of the study meet appropriate standards. To ensure that standards are reached, monitoring arrangements need to be in place that will ensure that the project meets its agreed deadlines in its project plan. Here, you will also need to define financial monitoring procedures to ensure financial probity such as those relating to budgeting, value for money and ways to minimise mismanagement.

7. Collaborative arrangements

If the research project is being completed in partnership with another agency please explain the agreed boundaries, tasks and responsibilities. Please also identify how you plan to deal with any conflicts of interests. In addition, please provide written evidence. This must be provided by a letter signed by a senior manager in the organisation of the partner agency.

8. Dissemination

Please describe how you intend to report the results of this project and how this information will be disseminated. Will this be through an article in a journal or published on a website?

There are also ethical issues involved in respect of publishing research as you will need to ensure the dignity, safety and rights of the participants.

You must tell the proposed research subject in advance if you have any intention of publishing the results of the project. You must also explain the extent to which, if at all, any identifying information about the research subject will appear in the publication.

One of the key standards of quality research is that participants are informed about research findings as it recognised that social care research is undertaken for the benefit of service users, care professionals and the public in general. There should be free access to both the information on the research being conducted and on the findings of the research. This information should be presented in a format that is easy to understand for the public. If you believe that your project may take months for you to complete, you may need to provide feedback reports to participants prior to publication.

9. Declaration

This section asks you to provide the following:

- Possible relationships with staff members, participants
- Commercial interests
- Duty to inform RGF coordinator if any changes
- Confirmation that information provided is correct
- Confirmation that you are aware of your responsibilities such as the Data Protection Act.