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University of Aruba Research Ethics Guidelines

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Research Ethics Guidelines

The University of Aruba's Research Ethics Committee (REC) assesses research proposals by UA researchers for which an ethics clearance is requested, for example, by the research funder or a journal/publisher. To see whether you are obliged to fill out an application, **use the flow chart** on the next page.

In addition, the committee can offer advice if you have questions about ethical aspects of the research. UA researchers are responsible for submitting their research proposal to the Ethics Committee on time (at least six weeks) **before the (PhD) research starts**.

The procedures of the University of Aruba's Ethics Review Committee have been based on the procedures set out by the KNAW [Academy Ethics Review Committee](#).

To submit a proposal to the REC, please use the Ethics Committee application form. The form consists of a mandatory checklist and informed consent form, and you can additionally share your Data Management Plan and/or Participant Information Sheet. Completed forms and requests for advice can be sent to ethics@ua.aw. The committee will respond within six weeks.

- **Approval** - Research can continue as planned and indicated in the submission.
- **Revision** - the Ethics Committee will request changes to the proposal and a resubmission of the changes needs to take place for further review.
- **Disapproval** - the research cannot continue as planned in its current form and needs to be resubmitted.

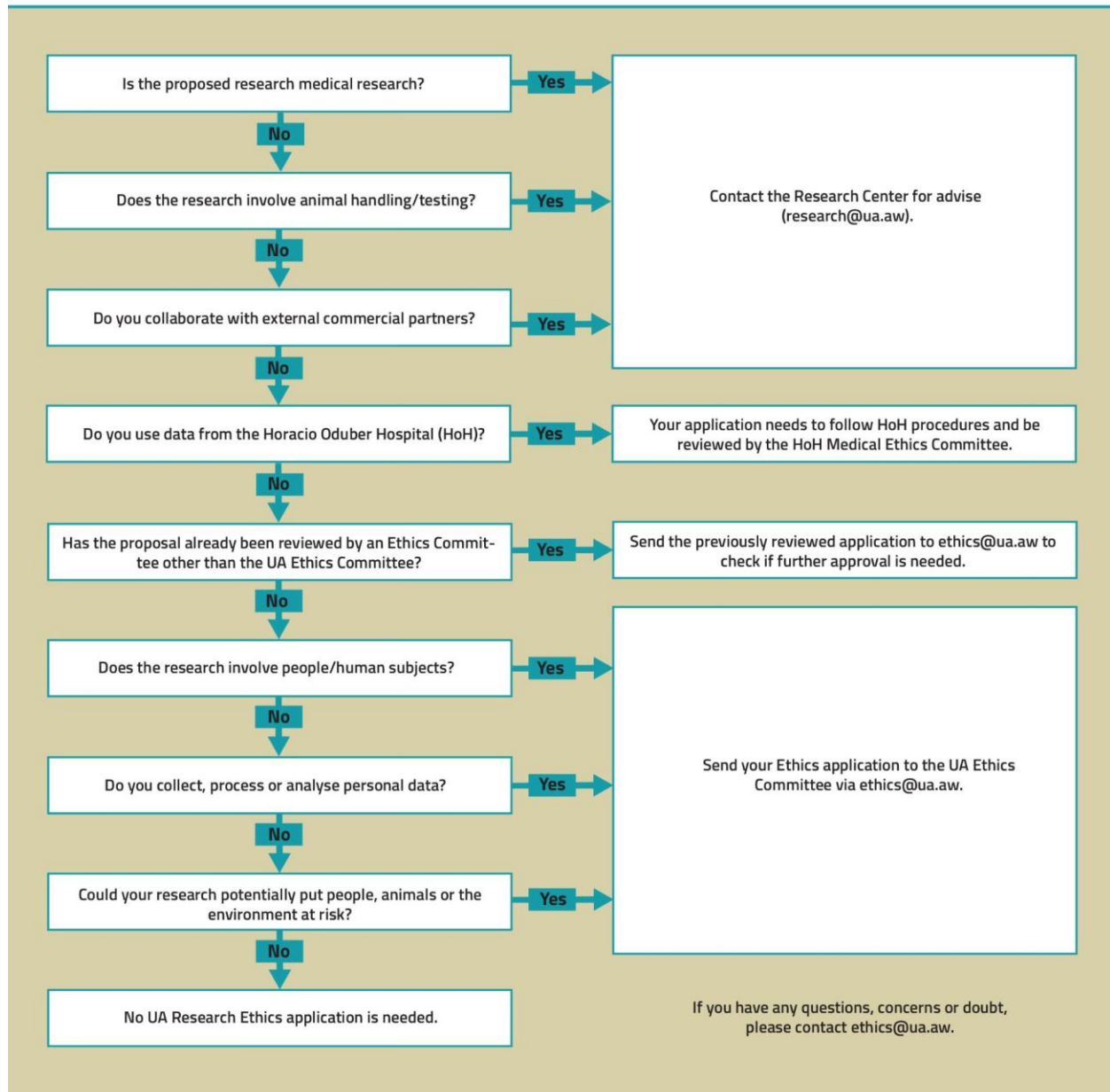
Using the flowchart, you can check whether your research needs an ethics review.

Document information:

Research Ethics Committee protocol	
Approval Advisory Board	11 February 2026
Start	1 March 2026
Version	1
Last update	18 February 2026



Flowchart Ethics Committee UA





Ethics Review Application Form

Introduction

Filling out the application form is needed for research:

1. Involving test subjects/ respondents/ participants
2. Using personal data

The form consists of project details and questions. If questions are answered with 'Yes' or 'Not certain', the issue and the chosen approach can be explained in the text field below.

Please send the completed form and any attachments (such as a Data Management Plan, Informed Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet) to ethics@ua.aw. Note that the Committee will not review your application form if it has not been fully filled out.

General information about the project

Applicant/ Project details

Name of main applicant:	
Name of the supervisor:	
Title of project	
Summary (max. 150 words)	



B. Research Design/ Methodology	Yes	No	Not certain
7 Is information withheld from the participants so as not to influence the results of the study? <i>(such as selection criteria, purpose of the study)</i>			
8 Will there be physically or mentally demanding procedures involved, or the use of uncomfortable equipment? Will your research involve prolonged/repetitive testing?			
9 Could your research induce psychological stress or anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond risks encountered in normal life? <i>(participating might lead to being fired, threats, moral judgement or mental stress from exposure to certain images)</i>			
10 Will your research involve discussion of sensitive topics? <i>(such as sexual activity, drug use, medical history)</i>			
11 Are you putting yourself and/or your participants at risk in any way? <i>(Interviewing participants on your own in your or the participant's home, carrying out observations in potentially fragile or sensitive situations)</i>			
12 Once the research has started, will it be impossible for participants to stop at any time for whatever reason?			
13 Is there a possibility you may have chance findings in your research that should be reported to other authorities you should inform the participant about? <i>(encountering incriminating information about a participant or a participant exhibits suicidal tendencies or criminal behavior/intentions)</i>			
14 Will your research involve the production of recorded media such as audio and/or video recordings?			
15 Will your research involve traumatized participants <i>(from, for example, war or violence)</i> ?			
16 Will your research involve “big data”, combined datasets, new data-gathering or new data-merging techniques, or using algorithms where biased datasets could lead to biased outcomes?			
17 Does your research involve scoring/evaluation of people’s performance (students), or systematic monitoring of individuals? <i>(Processing that includes profiling and predicting, especially from aspects concerning the data subject's performance at work, economic situation, health, personal preferences or interests)</i>			
18 Will there be procedures or materials that might be harmful or offensive for certain groups of individuals <i>(for example, on the basis of their religious convictions or ethnic background)</i> , or that touch on general taboos or involve presentation of pictures with incriminating content?			
19 Are there any similarly delicate issues that have not been mentioned in this list?			



Explanation of the (potential) issues and precautions taken for questions 7-19 (where one or more questions have been answered with 'Yes' or 'Not certain'):

Empty box for explanation of issues and precautions.

C. Financial incentives	Yes	No	Not certain
20 Will there be any payments planned/carried out to researchers and/or participants?			

Explanation question 20: How much will the participants receive and what is the reason for the payment?

Empty box for explanation of question 20.



D. Personal/sensitive data and data management	Yes	No	Not certain
21 Will you collect and process personal data , such as names, identification numbers, location data, online identifiers, or factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural, or social identity of that natural person (<i>as defined in the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and as ‘persoonsgegeven’ in the Landsverordering 19 Mei 2011, defined as ‘een gegeven dat herleidbaar is tot een individuele natuurlijke persoon’</i>)?			
22 Will you collect and process special personal data ? These are data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data or health data, or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation.			
23 Does the investigation involve the use of sensitive data , such as state secrets or information requiring permission from authorized administrators?			
24 Is there a high possibility of re-identification for your participants? (for example, do they have a very specialist job of which there are only a small number, are they members of a small community, or employees from a partner company collaborating in the research?)			
25 Will the research involve the use of interpreters? Or other third parties that need to process the data?			
26 Does the research use data from social online platforms such as forums or social media (paid or harvested), and/or publicly available datasets?			
27 Will the data be processed using AI?			
28 Will data be used for purposes beyond the initial consent?			
29 Will anyone outside the research team be able to access the data?			
30 Are personal data transferred to international organizations?			
31 Will you store your data using a cloud storage solution? (Note that cloud storage solutions are not secure enough for very sensitive data)			
32 Will you store your data in a location that is not (automatically) backed up? (<i>USBs or external hard drives</i>)			
33 Will your data collection consist of more than 1 TB in size?			
34 Will you store your informed consent forms in the same storage location as the personal data that you are collecting?			



35 Are you collecting any personal data that could potentially be combined with other datasets?			
36 Will your research data be shared for re-use and publicly available on a data repository?			
37 Do you need to store the personal data for the long term (internally)?			
38 Would you need access to additional resources to ensure that the data can be properly managed/stored, and preserved for the long term in accordance with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable)?			

PLEASE NOTE Personal data may only be processed under certain conditions as defined by the [Landsverordering persoonsregistraties](#). While the GDPR does not directly apply to Aruban citizens, the UA aims to follow the recommendations of the GDPR where possible. ‘**Processing**’ as defined in the GDPR means any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organization, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure, or destruction. Additional rules apply to special categories of personal data (see Article 9, GDPR and [Landsverordering persoonsregistraties](#) Artikel 6.2).



Explanation of the issues and precautions taken for questions 21-38 (where one or more questions have been answered with 'Yes' or 'Not certain') - Note that if you include a Data Management Plan that already addresses these questions you may suffice by including this Plan into your application instead of duplicating that information here below.



F. Risk to researchers/environment	Yes	No	Not certain
39 Are there any doubts or concerns regarding your own safety and/or well-being of any of your fellow colleagues during the research period?			
40 Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment?			

Explanation of the issues and precautions taken for questions 39-40 (where one or more questions have been answered with 'Yes' or 'Not certain'):

G. Questions and remarks

Are there any questions, remarks or information that you would like the Ethics Review Committee to address?

Questions/ remarks:



Guidance for accompanying documents

1) Informed Consent Form (required)

Your Informed Consent materials can be considered as a legal and ethical contract between you and the people who will be providing you with your research data. This means that when you give participants a choice, you will need to follow up on those agreements! This document contains information you can use to set up your consent form.

For most Informed Consent forms it is sufficient to have one confirming statement of the participant to establish that they have been informed and therefore able to give ‘informed’ consent to participating in the study. For example:

- I have read and understood the study information dated [DD/MM/YYYY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

In some cases it may be necessary to ask for explicit consent for specific parts of the study. If participants do not consent to these explicit parts, they are generally still able to participate in the study:

Explicit consent - when participants have multiple options to participate

	Yes	No
<i>If you want to use quotes in research outputs:</i> I agree that my responses, views or other input can be quoted anonymously in research outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you want to use quotes where the participant could potentially be identified:</i> I agree that my responses, views or other input can be quoted with a general identification (such as my job description) in research outputs		
<i>If you want to use named quotes:</i> I agree that my real name can be used for quotes in research outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for the de-identified [<i>specify the data</i>] that I provide to be archived in [<i>name of data repository/ies</i>] repository so it can be used for future research and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



When working with vulnerable research participants

If you are working with children, minors (under the age of 16), refugees, persons in ill health, persons with symptoms of depression or other mental health issues, whistle blowers, integrity officers, victims of crimes, witnesses of crimes, or with people who have been in circumstances that put them at risk of victimization, they will probably be vulnerable. If your research participants are healthy adults they will probably not be vulnerable. When working with vulnerable research participants, additional consent from parents or guardians may be necessary. Also, if you do research in schools, always ask the school board for permission.

Surveys

In online surveys it is more feasible to have an opening statement with which participants demonstrate their agreement by continuing clicking on the survey links, instead of a signed Informed Consent form.

- Your opening statement should ensure that your participants are aware of what your research is about, what is expected of them, how their data will be used and what rights they have as data subjects.
- Make sure that your participants are aware that they can leave the survey or skip questions in line with your opening statement



Templates

Key points to include	Suggested text
<p>1. Level (Masters, PhD, research), purpose, potential outcomes and implications of the study</p> <p>2. The role of the University of Aruba and any third parties including funding body</p> <p>3. What are participants being asked to do?</p> <p>4. What if any personal data will be collected, and how it will be used, published and managed. This should include clarity on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How the data you collect will be used during the research ● How you will safeguard information and maintain confidentiality ● Whether data will be de-identified (pseudo/anonymizing data) ● Who will have access to the data? ● Will the data be archived or shared publicly for wider reuse? ● Data archiving for internal data storage, and the retention period for research data or criteria used to determine that <p>5. What physical, emotional or reputational risks might arise from participation either during or after the study, and what steps will be used to mitigate these risks</p> <p>6. Participant right to refuse to answer/withdraw from the study. Information provided should not be aimed at convincing people to participate - it should inform them.</p> <p>7. The right of participants to request access to and rectify or erase personal data</p> <p>8. Any remuneration for time/compensation for taking part in the study</p> <p>9. Contact details of the Responsible Researcher (not the Research Ethics Committee!) and procedure for making complaints.</p> <p>Based on TU Delft Ethics Committee Materials</p>	<p>You are invited to participate in a research study titled [<i>Name of your research</i>]. This study is being done by [<i>Name of Researcher(s)</i>] from the University of Aruba [<i>include also any collaborating partners including internship provider and/or funding body</i>].</p> <p>The purpose of this research study is [<i>provide participants with a short statement about the research</i>], and will take you approximately [<i>XX</i>] minutes to complete. The data will be used for [<i>provide list of intended uses, including publication, application and teaching</i>]. We will be asking you to [<i>provide summary of what kinds of questions or tasks participants will be faced with</i>].</p> <p>To the best of our ability your answers in this study will remain confidential. We will minimize any risks by [<i>be clear on whether the survey is completely anonymous, and/or whether Personal Data will be collected. If so, describe how you will safely store data, how confidentiality will be secured and how it will be anonymized</i>]. The data of this research project will be shared using [<i>name of the data repository</i>] data repository where possible. Only de-identified data that will not lead back to you as an individual will be publicly shared. [<i>Or if public sharing is not possible, leave out this paragraph.</i>]</p> <p>[<i>mention Open data specifically if applicable</i>]</p> <p>Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time [<i>or specify up to what point withdrawal would be possible, especially when data is anonymized it is difficult to withdraw</i>]. You are free to omit any questions.</p> <p>[<i>Provide contact details for the Researcher</i>]</p> <p>[<i>If participants agree to this Opening Statement by clicking through to an (anonymous) online survey, it should be clear from this statement that by continuing they agree to participate in the study.</i>]</p>



2) Data Management Plan (Optional)

The easiest way to set up your Data Management Plan is to follow your funder's template, or to answer the questions below:

During the project:

- What data/code will be collected/generated or reused?
- How sensitive is the data that you are collecting in this project? How do you minimize the collection of personal data?
- How and where will the data/code be stored and backed up? (For example, Google/OneDrive are automatically backed up but for very sensitive data - such as videos of individuals - not the most suitable location).
- How will the data be encrypted?
- Who owns the data? What rights do data subjects have to access or erase their data (and up to what point)? What rights do organizations have? Who will have access to the data/code and how? How will access be limited to certain individuals to avoid data leaks? How securely stored is the data (encryption, access controls/logs)?
- How will the data/code be organized and documented?
- Can you easily figure out which file is what? If you were to open some of the files, are they properly labelled and described?
- If the individual responsible for data collection would leave the university, can you still make sense of the data without their input? Can you still access the data (and informed consent forms?) Is the process of generating the analysis well documented and reproducible?
- Which potential sources of bias can be introduced during data collection and design? How are shortcomings, limitations, and biases communicated to relevant stakeholders?
- Are you reporting data in a manner that avoids misleading conclusions (for example, misuse of data visualization)?

After the project:

- Are you reporting incomplete or inaccurate data and if so, where and when?
- Will it be possible to share (part of) the data/code? Who will have access to the data/code and what access procedures are in place?
- Where will the data/code be stored and for how long?
- If data can be shared: what license will be the most suitable for the data (and code)?

See [The Turing Way](#) for more details about what a Data Management Plan should contain.



3) Participant Information Sheet (Optional)

If you want to provide your participant with more details about your research project, you can use a participant information sheet. The information you provide should be easily understandable and accessible for your participants. Your Participant Information should clearly summarize what your research aims to do, what participants are asked to do, what risks might arise – including identification – and what steps you will take to mitigate them

Information about your research project

- Describe your research project in easy to understand terms. Include the full title, your research question and your institution.
- Introduce the main researcher(s) carrying out the research project and provide their contact information (name, position and email address).
- Describe your research team and any other involved parties. Clearly indicate the role of each party in the project: who will access or process the data subject's data?
- If the research project is (partially) funded, indicate by whom (unless you can demonstrate that providing this information will affect the results of your research).
- Include the date or version number of the information. This enables you to track which data subjects received which version if you update the information.
- Indicate whether the research project was approved by the ethical committee

Information affecting the participant and data collected about them

- Describe the role of the participant in your research project (such as the duration and type of tasks/questions they can expect).
- Mention potential risks and unpleasant aspects, as well as advantages of participating. If applicable, mention the compensation that the data subject will receive for participating.
- Briefly explain how you will collect and use these data in your research project. (How will their data help to answer the research question? Will they be contacted throughout the research project?)
- Briefly explain any privacy measures that you will use to protect the data
- Describe how long concretely, in what form, and for which purposes you plan to store data subjects' personal data. If there are different storage terms for different types of data, make this clear.
- If applicable, describe which data you will share during the project, with whom, their role in the project, and under which conditions the data are shared
- If applicable, describe whether you will make any personal data available for reuse after the project. Which personal data will be shared, who can reuse it and under what conditions? (For example, some personal data can only be reused if there is a data sharing agreement between partners, whereas other data may be more easily de-identified and publicly shared on a repository under an open license).



Glossary of terminology

- **Anonymization** - Anonymization is a data processing technique that removes or modifies personally identifiable information. The resulting data is anonymized when it cannot be associated with the individual.
- **DMP** - Data Management Plan. This is a plan to consider what type of data will be collected, where it will be stored, to whom it will be accessible during and after the project, and if there are any associated costs for data management.
- **FAIR** - Abbreviation for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. Data that is FAIR is reusable to other researchers.
- **Pseudonymization** - Pseudonymization is a data management where data is de-identification. The personally identifiable information is replaced by artificial identifiers, or pseudonyms. This data is not fully anonymous as the person can be identified if the key to the identifiers is available.