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OVERVIEW

To apply for Ethical Clearance from the UKZN Research Ethics Office, you need to login to the RIG system using your UKZN login credentials, or if you are external to the university, you need to login with the credentials provided to you by the Research Ethics office. For login help, please refer to the *Logging in to RIG User Guide*.

Once you have logged in to the RIG system, you need to select the relevant application form pertinent to your study e.g. Biomedical (BREC), Human and Social Sciences (HSSREC) or Animal (AREC).

The next step is to fill in the required pages of the online application form, including all relevant attachments and lastly fill in the Declaration page.

Once all relevant and required pieces of information is filled in, you may submit the application form. Once submitted, the form will go to one of the following destinations:

1. **Student applications** go to the **Supervisor** that the student has selected on the online form.
   
   **NB:** The applicant cannot edit the application after submitting it, unless the application is sent back to the applicant (either from supervisor, PG Admin or Research Office Ethics Admin).

2. The supervisor can review the application and can either send forward to the School Postgrad Administrator (PG Admin), or send back to the student to address any missing details or problems found.

The **PG Admin** then verifies that the application is complete and the relevant documents are attached. The PG Admin then sends the application to the School Academic Leader: Research (ALR) who goes through the application in detail.
After reviewing the application, the **ALR** sends it back to PG Admin with instructions to either send to Research Office or to send back to student for further clarification, etc.

The above process can continue back and forth until the PG Admin submits the application to the Research Office for review.

**NB:** If the **ALR decides** that the application is classified as **No-Risk**, then the PG Admin sets the application as “Approved – Active” and does not send the application to the Research Ethics Office for review. The PG Admin can generate an Approval Letter for the applicant.

**Important:** The **School takes full responsibility** for the No-Risk / Exempted applications. There are guidelines displayed on the online application form to help the ALR determine if there is risk involved in the study.

Once the application is received by the Research Office, it is thereafter processed by the Ethics Administrators, the relevant Ethics committee Chair and the relevant Ethics committee members at the Research Office.

The **application outcome** is determined by the Ethics committee and/or Chair. The outcome is communicated to the applicant via a **Letter**.

Ethical clearance is approved for a **period of 12 months** from the date approval. If the study is for a longer period, a **renewal form** must be filled in by the applicant before the clearance expires.
The Renewal form is part of the Progress report, hence both the Renewal and Progress sections need to be filled in and submitted for a renewal to be approved.

3. **Staff applications** go to the School Postgrad Administrator. The process that unfolds is the same as for students (see above), however there is **no supervisor involved**.

4. **External applications** go directly to the Research Ethics Office.
SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

1. Login to http://rig.ukzn.ac.za
2. You will see the following dashboard page:

3. In the top right corner click on the button.
4. Click on Ethics Review
5. In the column under Ethics Review, click on the required committee.
6. Click on the required Application form, e.g. for a BREC application:

7. The BREC application form should then open up for you to fill in.
8. There are several sections (tabs) at the top that group related information together, separating the form logically. Each section is numbered for your ease of reference. You are required to complete all relevant sections as indicated in the instruction near the top.

9. In the Key information section, please ensure that Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators (if any) and Supervisors (for students) are added.

**NB: If the PI is a student,** it is important that the primary supervisor is added onto the application form, else the application will not reach anyone for processing after being submitted by the student.

**Click on the button to add.** You may add multiple people under each of these sections, if applicable.
After clicking on the button, you can search for the person you are looking for by typing in the name, part of the name or staff number, then click on the search button.

The search results window displays only 10 results at a time. To move to the next set of 10 results, click on the blue arrow at the top right of the search window.

To select the person, click on the button to the left of the name. Clicking on the name itself will not select it. To help you select the correct person in the case of two or more people having the same name, the staff number is displayed in brackets next to the name. Furthermore, the
School is also displayed to help ensure that you are able to select the correct person.

- Lastly, at the end of the line, it shows whether the record is active or inactive. You should choose the active record.

In the case where there is more than one supervisor, the Primary supervisor must be added first, followed by the co-supervisor(s). On the right hand side, select Primary or Co-supervisor from the drop-downs in the Supervisor type column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Internal or external</th>
<th>Supervisor type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muzumbevikile, Wilongwa (6644775)</td>
<td>Research (Ovc Research)</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lufakwa, Joly Nzavake (26449)</td>
<td>Research (Ovc Research)</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Co-supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each investigator, select the Current Qualification from the drop-down on the right hand side and fill in the HPCSA number by typing it in the HPCSA Number column (if applicable).

10. All required documents should be uploaded into the application via the Attachments section. Click on the folder icon to be able to select your files from your computer to attach to the application.
11. The final section to complete is the **Declaration and School Review** tab. Please note that the declaration checkbox at the top of this section is **mandatory**. The system will not allow you to submit the application unless the declaration checkbox is ticked.

The portion starting from Supervisor Approval downwards is not required to be filled in by the applicant. This is for the Supervisor and School staff to process.

12. Please note that the application does not have to be completed in one sitting. You can save it whenever you want to, and logout and get back to it at another time.

13. When you are ready to **submit the application**, click on **Save & close** and the **Set status** window will pop up.

- **Students** will see the following:

  ![Set status](image)

  Click on **Supervisor review**, then click Done.
This will send your application to the supervisor you specified in the Key information section.

- **Staff** will see the following:

  Click on **Postgrad administrator review**, then click **Done**. This will send your application to the Postgrad Administrator in your school.

- **External applicants** (i.e. not a UKZN staff member or student) will see an option to send to **Ethics Admin initial review**. This is the option to click on if you are an external applicant, as this will send the application directly to the Research Office for processing.

14. For UKZN students, after submitting your application it is recommended that you **send an e-mail to your supervisor** informing him/her that you have submitted your application. The supervisor may then login to the RIG system and review your application.

15. **NB:** Once the application has been submitted, the applicant cannot make any changes to it, unless the application is sent
back to the applicant (e.g. from supervisor back to applicant). However, the applicant may still view the application and track its progress.

An application’s **progress can be tracked** from the Status Log at any time by the applicant, supervisor, PG Admin, ALR. See below for more details on Status Log.

**STATUS LOG**

The Status Log is used for the following:

- View the **progress** of an application in system.
- View communication between sender and receiver of the application.

It is expected that when someone receives an application, the person will check the Status Log for any communication from the sender of the application.

Please note that Status Log message are visible to all in the application workflow viz. applicant, supervisor, PG Admin, ALR, Research Office Staff, Ethics Chairs, Ethics Committee members.

**To send a message via the Status Log:**

**NB:** You can only send a Status Log message when the application is with you. If you have sent it forward for processing, you cannot send a Status Log message unless the application is sent back to you from a supervisor or administrator.

To send a Status Log message, you have to be ready to submit the application, as this can only be done when you click on this button.

Save & close
In the following example, the Supervisor has received the application and notices that the participant informed consent documents are missing.

The supervisor then does the following:

1. Click on Save & Close.
2. Click on Returned for Clarification. This makes the text box above it editable.
3. Types his/her message in the text box.
4. Clicks Done.

The application is now sent back to the student with the supervisor’s message in the Status Log.

To view the Status Log:

Firstly open the application.

Then click on Admin Info and the Status Log option pops up.
Click on **Status Log**.

You will see something similar to the screenshot below:

In the first block at the top, the yellow highlighted portion shows the communication between:

- **Postgrad Administrator** (sender) to **ALR** (receiver):
  “Please review and sign and send back to me”.

In the second block near the top, the yellow highlighted portion shows the communication between:

- **Supervisor** (sender) to **Postgrad Admin** (receiver):
  “Happy with the application please review and send to research office”.

In the first block at the top, the yellow highlighted portion shows the communication between:

- **Postgrad Administrator** (sender) to **ALR** (receiver):
  “Please review and sign and send back to me”.

In the second block near the top, the yellow highlighted portion shows the communication between:

- **Supervisor** (sender) to **Postgrad Admin** (receiver):
  “Happy with the application please review and send to research office”.
The **name** and **role** of the **sender** is also show at the top of each block, together with the **date and time** the application was **sent to the receiver**.

**APPLICATIONS SENT BACK TO APPLICANT**

Applications may be sent back to the applicant for various reasons e.g. missing attachment, missing information on the form, ALR requires some changes made, Committee Chair has queries that need addressing by the applicant, etc.

In these cases, the process to follow is simple. Firstly, edit the application and **check the Status Log** to see the reason(s) for the application being sent back to you.

- **For missing details or attachments:**
  - Fill in the missing details and attachment(s)
  - Re-submit as was done initially (i.e. click on Save and Close).

- **For Queries from the Chair:**
  - Download the Queries Response sheet template and fill it in as required.
  - Save the completed Queries Response sheet and upload it into the RIG system in the Queries section of the form.
  - Thereafter re-submit the application as was done initially (i.e. click on Save and Close).

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