# CASA ethics procedure for dissertations

## Procedure (in a flow diagram)

Below is the procedure you should follow to complete your ethics assessment and prepare the UCL ethical review where needed.

*Stage 1*

*Stage 1*

*Stage 1*

*Stages 2-9*

*Stage 10*

## Procedure (in detailed stages)

### Stage 1: Initial ethical assessment

1. Identify and reflect on potential ethical issues arising from your dissertation project. Check whether your research is exempt. <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/exemptions.php>
   1. Most likely, you can rely on exemption 2, wherein public domain refers to datasets available under the Open Government Licence of Creative Common Licence.
   2. Nevertheless, discuss and assess this with your supervisor. If you find the research is exempt, please add a brief justification somewhere in the dissertation. If not, continue with stage 2.

### Stages 2-10: Preparation of ethics review

1. If the research is not exempt, determine into which substantive domain your research falls. There are four options: health, social care, defence or other university research. <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/which-ethics-committee-apply-to.php>. If it falls into any category other than ‘university research’, stop here and follow the procedure of the respective institution (linked on the webpage).
2. If it is ‘university research’, the UCL’s REC is responsible. Decide with your supervisor whether the research involves ‘more than minimal risk’ (= higher risk). What is that? Check here: <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/forms/what_requires_approval.pdf>. This document can also be accessed through the webpage provided in stage 2 (scroll down to section ‘UCL Research Ethics Committee’, read the section if possible).
3. Now follow the step-by-step guide set out here: <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php>. Note that ‘minimal risk’ means ‘low risk’ in a sudden switch of jargon. If your research involves low risk, you can skip step 1 listed on the webpage.
4. Read step 2 of the web page. If step 2 applies, please complete
   1. a Data Privacy Impact Assessment. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/ucl-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/guidance-notices-ucl-staff/data-privacy-impact>. Please use the form listed under 2. (DPIA Research Fillable Form).
   2. a Data Protection Registration. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/research>. Use the second form called ‘Research Registration Form’ and check if the ‘Research Consent Form’ applies
   3. Once completed, send both to research.data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. They will get back with a ‘UCL Data Protection Registration Number’ typically after 5-10 working days. You will need this number later in the process.
5. Going back to <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php>, continue with step 3. This involves online registration of your project and selecting the correct form for review – low risk or high risk. Before you start filling in the form, go back to the step-by-step guide (link just given).
6. Check if steps 4 and 5 apply. In most cases, they don’t.
7. Complete step 6 – risk assessment. If the research involves field work outside the office, complete a risk assessment. If not, you don’t need this and supervisors should indicate in the ethics form that it is not required.
8. Read and (try to) understand steps 7 and 8. Now you are ready to fill in the ethics form you downloaded in 7. Provide the Data Protection Registration Number, which you should have received in stage 5.3 (of this guide) if/where necessary. If you haven’t got it yet, indicate on the form that you have requested it.
9. The form needs to be signed by the student, supervisor and the department (Jens or Adam). Then it should be sent to ethics@ucl.ac.uk.

*CASA*

*Last update: 21 Mar 2019*