**Approved Security Sensitive Ethics Application Guidance Note for Researchers:**

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| **Version Number** | 1.2. |
| **Prepared by** | Huzma Kelly (Research Ethics and Integrity Officer) |
| **Reviewed by** | Research Committee (27 October 2021), Research Committee Chair’s Action (21 January 2022) |
| **Approved by** | Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee (7 February 2022)  |
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| 1.2. | HK | JE | 17 MARCH 2022 | Updated external hyperlinks as per information to RKE SC  |
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A guidance note to help with specific questions within the VRE Research and KE Ethics Application Form:

**Questions and Guidance**

The questions below have been taken from the Universities UK [*Guidance*](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/Oversight-security-sensitive-research-material-guidance-3.pdf) and have been incorporated into the VRE Research and KE Ethics Application Form. If Questions 1a)-d) are answered as ‘yes’ they will require the Application to be submitted to University Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (UREC). This will happen automatically via the VRE:

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| **Question 1: *Does your research fit into any of the following security sensitive* categories?** |

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| **a) Commissioned by the military?**  |

* Check whether you require approval from the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC).
* Prior to applying for review to MODREC you must submit an application via the VRE to the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (UREC) for consideration. You will be guided by UREC on any external review applications as usual.
* Useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/ministry-of-defence-research-ethics-committees>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-ethical-approval-for-mod-research-involving-humans>

* Should you not require MODREC consideration, you will still require University Research Ethics (UREC) consideration.

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| **b) Commissioned under an EU security call?** |

* Check whether your research is defined under an EU security call. Please refer to the Horizon 2020 website:

[Horizon Europe | European Commission (europa.eu)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)

* Also check whether your work is defined under the EU Directive on Network and Information Security:

[NIS Directive | Shaping Europe’s digital future (europa.eu)](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/nis-directive#:~:text=The%20Directive%20on%20security%20of%20network%20and%20information,preparedness%2C%20by%20requiring%20them%20to%20be%20appropriately%20equipped.)

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| **c) Involving the acquisition of security clearances?**  |

* Please refer to the Government’s website on National Security vetting at:

[United Kingdom Security Vetting - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/united-kingdom-security-vetting)

[Vetting explained and our vetting charter - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vetting-explained-and-our-vetting-charter)

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| **d) Concerning terrorist or extremist groups?**  |

* Refer to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015) and Terrorism Act (2006).
* You must provide an ‘additional information’ attachment to the VRE Ethics Application Form outlining the nature of the proposed research.
* Be aware of the Serious Crime Act (2007) in case of requirements to disclose illegal activity relating to terrorism.
* Please be familiar with the Prevent Guidance for Higher Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

* Please be familiar with the Universities UK Oversight of security sensitive research guidance:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2012/oversight-of-security-sensitive-research-material.pdf>

***If you answer yes to Question d) you will be prompted to complete the following questions:***

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| **The Terrorism Act (2006) outlaws the dissemination of records, statements and other documents that can be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts.**  |
| 1. Does your research involve the storage on a computer of any such records, statements or other documents?  |
| YES | NO |
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| 2. Might your research involve the electronic transmission (e.g. as an email attachment) of such records or statements?  |
| YES | NO |
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| 3. If you answered ‘Yes’ to questions 1 or 2, you are advised to store the relevant records or statements electronically on a secure university file store. The same applies to paper documents with the same sort of content. These should be scanned and uploaded. Access to this file store will be protected by a password unique to you. You agree to store all documents relevant to questions 1 and 2 on that file store:  |
| YES | NO |
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| 3a. You agree not to transmit electronically to any third party documents in the document store:  |
| YES | NO |
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| 4. Will your research involve visits to websites that might be associated with extreme, or terrorist, organisations?  |
| YES | NO |
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| 5. If you answer ‘Yes’ you are advised that such sites may be subject to surveillance by police. Accessing those sites from university IP addresses might lead to police enquiries. Please acknowledge that you understand this risk:  |
| YES | NO |
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| 6. By submitting to the ethics process, you accept that the university ethics office will have access to a list of titles of documents (but not the contents of the documents) in your document store. These titles will only be available to the ethics office. Please acknowledge that you accept this:  |
| YES | NO |
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| Countersigned in the VRE by Supervisor in the case of student applicants  |