Ethics Online: FAQs

1. I understand that we can now submit personnel and application modifications simultaneously. I have submitted an application modification for a project, then I realized that I have missed some parts which require changes. I clicked the New Application (Modification) button for that project but received a message “An application modification has been submitted for review”. Please advise why I could not submit another modification.

   A: You are correct that the revised animal ethics modification structure allows simultaneous submission of both personnel and application modifications. But only one submission per each modification type will be allowed for the same project. Hence, if you have started or submitted either a personnel or an application modification for the project, you will not be able to submit a second modification of the same type (personnel or application) for the same project before approval of the original submission.

2. I think I have already completed and sent off my application online but was told by the Ethics Committee that they could not find my application. Why?

   A: You might have forgotten to go onto the last section “Check & Final Submit” and click the SUBMIT button at the bottom of the page. Remember that you have to answer all of the required questions before you can submit your application.

3. Can I submit my modifications for an approved project in 2005 in hard copy modification form? If yes, where can I get the form as I did not seem to be able to find the form?

   A: All of the modifications and applications will need to be done on Animal Ethics Online. No applications will be accepted in hard copy or other electronic formats. You will need to go to Animal Ethics Online and submit your modifications for the 2005 projects.

4. Now that animal ethics have gone online, do we expect Ethics Online to be available for human ethics?

   A: Work is underway for the online submission of human ethics applications for both HREC and HREA.

5. I was logged onto the online system and went for a short coffee break. When I came back, I discovered that I was logged out of the system and that the application form which I was working on before the break was not saved. Where did I go wrong?

   A: The Ethics Online system has an automatic timeout function which logs users out if it is not actioned for more than 60 minutes. Unfortunately, unlike Microsoft applications which have the auto-save function, any applications which have not been saved (hence users are recommended to constantly save their applications by clicking the SAVE button at the bottom of the page) will be lost.

6. One of my researchers has left UNSW and I need to replace him with somebody else for my approved project. I tried using both personnel and application modification forms, and did not seem to be able to do this. Please advise.

   A: By law, you can not remove any researchers whom you have nominated in the original application. You can only change the roles of existing personnel (apart from the 1st and the 2nd Chief Investigators) and add in new co-investigators and other participants.

7. I was advised that my application had been approved by the ACEC, how would I know if the approval letter was ready and where could I obtain the approval letter?

   A: If the Approval Letter is ready for your collection, it will appear under the Application Outcome column in Animal Ethics Application > Existing Application section.

8. I would like to add a contact person to my application in case I am away or sick. How can I do it on the Online system?

   A: You can enter the alternative contact person in question A.5 "Name and phone number of
alternative contact person (if it is not the same person as in A.4)” on the new animal ethics application form.

The difference of the personnel nominated in question A.5 and that nominated in question A.4 "Name and phone number of second chief investigator (person who can take executive responsibility for the project in the absence of the CI)” is as follows:

The person at A4 is someone who is sufficiently senior, experienced and involved in the project that they can take over executive control of the project and make decisions about the ongoing conduct of the project in the absence of the First CI.

The person at A5 is someone who is involved in the project at some level who can be asked for details if the CI is not contactable. This is primarily to provide the Spokesperson with someone associated with the project to contact. So it is preferable that they be familiar with the details of the project or at least able to advise the Spokesperson as to when/where the CI can be contacted (eg student whose project it will be). It is a necessary consequence of the UNSW ACEC’s Spokesperson system of pre-meeting review.

9. I have submitted a personnel modification some time ago and I have not yet heard from the ACEC. Please advise.

A: To check the latest status of your personnel modifications, go to the Animal Ethics Application > Modification for Approved Application section and check under Status. If the Status says "Pending new personnel validation” which is the most common case, you might want to check and chase up with your researcher(s) for validation. We are currently designing a reminder which will be sent out automatically 30 calendar days from the date of submission to the changed/added personnel for any personnel modifications which are still pending for validation.

10. I would like to add in a participant whose last name is O’Brien. I tried the first time to search the name with the apostrophe (O’Brien) but was not able to find him. When I tried the second time to search without the apostrophe (Obrien), he was found. Why?

A: We did notice the inconsistency in displaying/storing the format of last names with apostrophes. Our final aim is to standardize and to have just one format of recording such data. Apparently, all of the staff and student records are imported from the UNSW staff and student databases. We will check with them and shall keep you posted of the progress.

Suggestions

For our continuous improvement of the Ethics Online system, please send us your valuable comments or suggestions by email to ethicsonline.gmo@unsw.edu.au