

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has a duty to ensure that high ethical standards are applied to its research grant programs regardless of the location where the research is conducted. All projects submitted for funding under these programs shall receive appropriate and adequate ethics review according to international standards.

It is therefore expected that all projects submitted for funding have already received or are in the process of receiving ethical approval from their local Research Ethics Board. Reasonable national or institutional variations in rules and policies will be accepted as long as they conform to international standards.

General Assessment Criteria

WADA recognizes the need to minimize harms, and to ensure that risks are proportionate to the benefits that might be expected from the knowledge gained from the study. The primary criteria taken into consideration shall be ethical probity, scientific validity and quality. Consideration will be given to the safety of research subjects and also of the researchers.

Research requiring engagement in covert activities for intelligence, police or military purposes will not be admissible for funding by WADA.

Regardless of the successful outcome of the review performed by the local Research Ethics Board, WADA reserves the right to refuse a proposal based on ethical considerations.

Research Requiring Review

All research that involves living human subjects, human tissues or biological fluids requires review and approval before the research is started.

Documents Required for Ethics Review

All grant applications falling under the above criteria for Research Requiring Review shall be accompanied by sample consent forms, letters of information for participants, and, if applicable, interview protocols. Free and informed consent procedures must include information on participation incentives, information on potential harms and benefits of participation, a description of privacy and confidentiality safeguards, and information on the possible use of data for subsequent projects.

If the project has already received approval from its local Research Ethics Board, proof of approval shall be submitted to WADA along with the grant application. If the project is in the process of receiving approval from its local Research Ethics Board, WADA may approve the proposal contingent upon approval of the local Research Ethics Board. Under no circumstance will WADA funds be released before evidence of such approval has been provided to WADA. WADA may also request copies of any other document submitted to or prepared for the local Research Ethics Board.

Review Procedures for Longitudinal Research

Longitudinal research projects may be subject to periodic ethics review. The rigor of the review will depend on the risk assessment but will consist of at least the submission of a succinct annual status report to WADA, to be incorporated in the progress report.

International Research Projects

Research to be performed in more than one institution or country shall undergo prospective ethics review to respect ethical and procedural safeguards in all the countries or institutions where the research is to be conducted.

Ethics review of research with international scope should be done in the spirit of the Declaration of Helsinki and comparable declarations intended to protect the human research subjects.