



HÖGSKOLAN
DALARNA

Instructions regarding research ethics for essay students at Högskolan Dalarna

Ratified by UFL and UFN at Högskolan Dalarna 2009-06-04
DUC 2010/687/90

When a research project involving human subjects is conducted, it is vitally important that it is carried out in an ethically acceptable way. Therefore, at Högskolan Dalarna there is a Research Ethics Committee, the duty of which is to ensure that research at the undergraduate and graduate level is carried out according to ethical research principles and requirements.

There are a number of points which you as a student should consider prior to starting your essay, during the process, and after finishing the essay. If you are writing your essay within the scope of a research project, the *Law on ethical review of research involving humans* (SFS 2003:460) applies.

Prior to realizing the project

Before you start working on your project, it is necessary to acquaint yourself with the principles of research ethics as applied by Högskolan Dalarna. Your supervisor may provide you with this information, but it is also available in a recorded lecture which you can download from the Research Ethics Committee's home page.

If you or your supervisor judges your research to be ethically problematic, or believe it to involve ethical problems, it has to be ethically reviewed. This means that you submit an application to the Research Ethics Committee, which will examine the study and determine whether or not it may be carried out and what alterations are required to allow it to be realized.

To make it easier to decide whether you need to submit an application to the Research Ethics Committee, there is a form in attachment 1 that can help you. If you answer "yes" or "perhaps" to any of the questions, you must discuss whether you need to submit an ethics application with your supervisor.

Application forms, as well as instructions on how to write your application, can be found on the Committee's web page. Remember to hand in your application well in advance, as the Committee only meets a few times per semester.

The Committee's evaluation involves three main issues; is the investigation scientifically tenable? Can the possible damage caused by the study be counterbalanced by its utility (gain in knowledge)? Is the information provided to the people who are studied, and the means of getting their consent, adequate?

During the project

As part of the project you may need to ask people if they want to take part in your study. What you must consider is that individuals should have information about the project before they are asked to participate. The participants should have complete information about the project and what participation entails. This means that you have to write a letter of information which should be written in easily-comprehended language. It must not contain

any imperatives or urgent requests for participation. A template illustrating how a letter of information should be shaped can be found in attachment 2.

If you involve children below the age of 15 in your project and want to collect sensitive personal data, then your study must be ethically reviewed. You must also, in these cases, request the written consent and permission from the legal guardian, as well as the consent of the child. If your investigation is carried out in a school you also need permission from the school's director and teachers.

Always remember that participation in a study is on a voluntary basis, which must also be made clear in your letter of information. If one of your informants wishes to end their participation during the investigation, you must not apply any form of pressure, or try to influence his/her decision.

After the essay has been completed and approved

When you have completed your project and it has been approved you should inform your participant(s) of your results. You are also obliged to ensure that all empirical material (such as enquiries, sound recordings, video films, etc.) is destroyed or stored in such a way that it cannot be misused. If the material is included in a research project, Högskolan Dalarna's "Guidelines for documentation and archiving of research material" (DUC 2008/1279/90) must be observed.

A few final words

If there are any questions, the Committee is happy to be of service with advice and opinions. The telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the members of the Committee can be found on the Committee's home page. See www.du.se/forskningsetik