



## Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Hamburg (EKGW)

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*Disclaimer: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes only.  
In the event of any discrepancy or conflict, the German version shall prevail.*

### § 1 Aim and task

(1) The Ethics Committee examines ethical aspects of planned research projects involving human subjects and issues an opinion if necessary. It acts in an advisory capacity on behalf of scientists of the Faculty of Humanities.

(2) In particular, it assesses whether all precautions are taken to minimize the risk to the persons involved, whether the consent of the persons or their legal representatives is sufficiently documented and whether the relevant provisions on data protection are taken into account.

(3) The opinions of the Ethics Committee may be forwarded by the applicants to third parties such as, e.g., journals or third-party funders.

(4) The Ethics Committee is committed to the „[Mission Statement of the University of Hamburg](#)“.

### § 2 Application

(1) Faculty academics may submit applications to the Ethics Committee at their own request. The current version of the guidelines for submitting applications must be observed. In the case of research projects by non-doctoral members of the faculty, a statement from the responsible university lecturer must be included.

(2) Applications may be excluded from the review process or referred to other bodies for formal reasons, in particular if the documents are incomplete, or for reasons of content if the faculty is not responsible.

(3) Short applications may be submitted for research projects that are classified as ethically unobjectionable by the scientists carrying out the research.

### **§ 3 Assessment procedure**

(1) The Committee shall base its assessment on the ethical guidelines used by the respective professional associations. The following criteria are generally important:

- a) clear designation of the objective and those responsible for the study and its implementation,
- b) information of the participants about the research project, in particular about potential risks and the possibility of discontinuation without consequences,
- c) data protection issues: type and use of personal data, e.g. through anonymization or pseudonymization (explaining access to the clear names), sustainable data security,
- d) well-informed consent of the participants, if required.

(2) The Ethics Committee shall decide in private after an oral discussion. Written resolutions by circulation are permissible, provided no member objects. Positive votes shall be given if at least four members of the Ethics Committee assess the application positively and the other members do not express any significant ethical concerns. The applicant must be informed of the Ethics Committee's decision in writing. Rejections, conditions and recommendations for changes to the research project must be justified in writing.

(3) If there are significant concerns regarding an application, the applicant may be requested to submit a revised application. If an application is rejected on ethical grounds, the applicant may present counter-arguments and request a new opinion from the Committee.

(4) After consultation with the applicant, external experts may be consulted for advice. The external experts have no voting rights.

(5) Members of the Ethics Committee who submit applications themselves are excluded from the assessment procedure for these applications.

(6) The subject matter of the procedure and the opinions of the Ethics Committee shall be treated confidentially. The members of the Committee are bound to secrecy. The same applies to any experts consulted.

(7) The applicant shall inform the Ethics Committee about all ethically significant changes before or during the implementation of the research project, in particular about the failure or termination of the project as well as about all events or conditions that could lead or have led to the endangerment of persons or restrictions of their personal rights. In this context, the Committee may withdraw a positive assessment if necessary.

### **§ 4 Structure and members of the Ethics Committee**

(1) The Ethics Committee has a total of seven members who represent the member groups of the University involved in research and teaching. It consists of four university lecturers, one representative of the academic mid-level faculty and one student, all of whom belong to the Faculty of Humanities. In addition, the Committee includes an expert on the topic of research data security and management, who does not have to be a member of the Faculty.

(2) The members of the Ethics Committee are elected by the Council of the Faculty of

Humanities for a period of two years. If possible, representatives from various departments of the Faculty should be represented. Deputies are elected from each member group (two professors and one each for non-professorial staff and students), who exercise the right to vote if they are unable to attend.

(3) The Ethics Committee elects a chairperson and a deputy from among its members. The chairperson shall come from the group of university lecturers; he/she shall lead the assessment procedure for applications to the Ethics Committee with voting rights and represent the Ethics Committee externally.

#### **§ 5 Exclusion of liability**

(1) The Ethics Committee offers assistance by advising and assessing ethical aspects and impact assessments of research projects. It accepts no liability whatsoever for any damage that may occur in connection with the implementation of the reviewed research projects.

(2) Positive votes by the Ethics Committee do not release the scientists from their own responsibility for the research project and its implementation.

#### **§ 6 Effective date**

These Rules of Procedure come into effect with their approval by the Council of the Faculty of Humanities.