

Research Ethics and Ethics Applications at KIT

- Basic Knowledge and How-To

Office for Good Scientific Practice and Ethical
Principles (Office GWP):

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1. Basics on Ethics
2. Ethical Issues in Everyday Research
3. A Case Study
4. Guidelines and Best Practices for Handling Ethical Issues
5. Practical Implementation: Submitting Ethics Applications at KIT



Basics on Ethics

Chapter
1.

Ethics?

Three (main) sub-disciplines in Ethics:

- **Normative Ethics:** Investigation on the principles of morality (deciding what is right or wrong)
- **Metaethics:** Examination of nature, foundations, and scope of moral judgements, concepts and values (underlying assumptions)
- **Applied Ethics =**
 - Concrete, action-oriented questions of a normative kind: **How should I act?**
- **Applied Ethics in Everyday Research =** Ethical and moral principles that guide researchers' actions and shape their approach to ethical problems and conflicts in research.

Ethical Problem / Ethical Dilemma

Ethical Problem

- **Necessity to choose the “harder” option:** There is a clear right and wrong, but “doing the right thing” might come with more challenges.

Ethical Dilemma

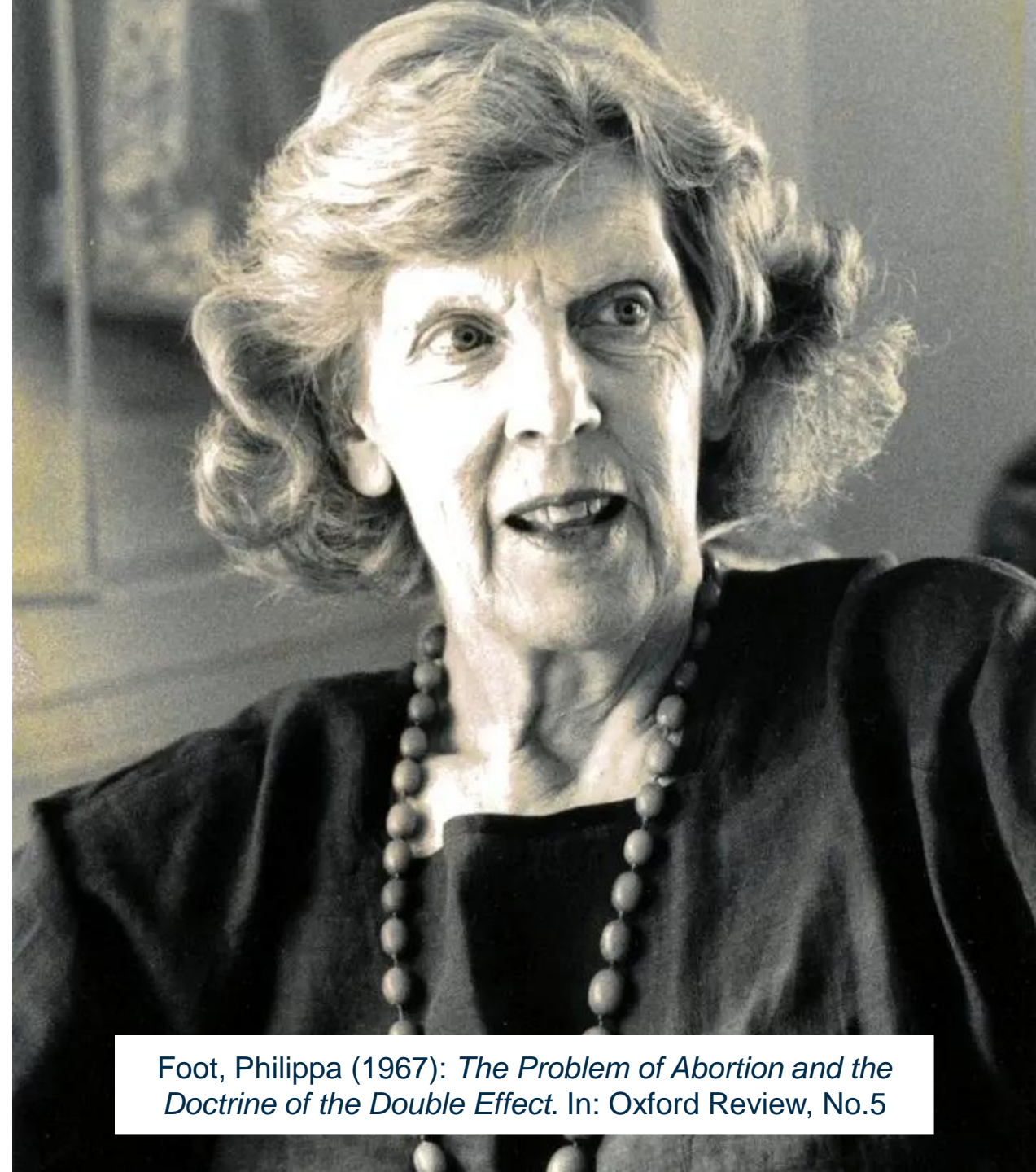
- **Necessity to choose between incompatible moral principles (of equal value):** There are two or more options for action, but none is compatible with all your moral principles. Choosing the “best option” requires careful consideration of the values, principles and potential consequences involved.

The Trolley Problem

Suppose that a judge or magistrate is faced with rioters demanding that a culprit be found for a certain crime and threatening otherwise to take their own bloody revenge on a particular section of the community. The real culprit being unknown, the judge sees himself as able to prevent the bloodshed only by framing some innocent person and having him executed.

Beside this example is placed another [...] To make the parallel as close as possible it may rather be supposed that he is the driver of a runaway tram which he can only steer from one narrow track on to another; five men are working on one track and one man on the other; anyone on the track he enters is bound to be killed.

In the case of the riots the mob has five hostages, so that in both the exchange is supposed to be one man's life for the lives of five. The question is why we should say, without hesitation, that the driver should steer for the less occupied track, while most of us would be appalled at the idea that the innocent man could be framed.

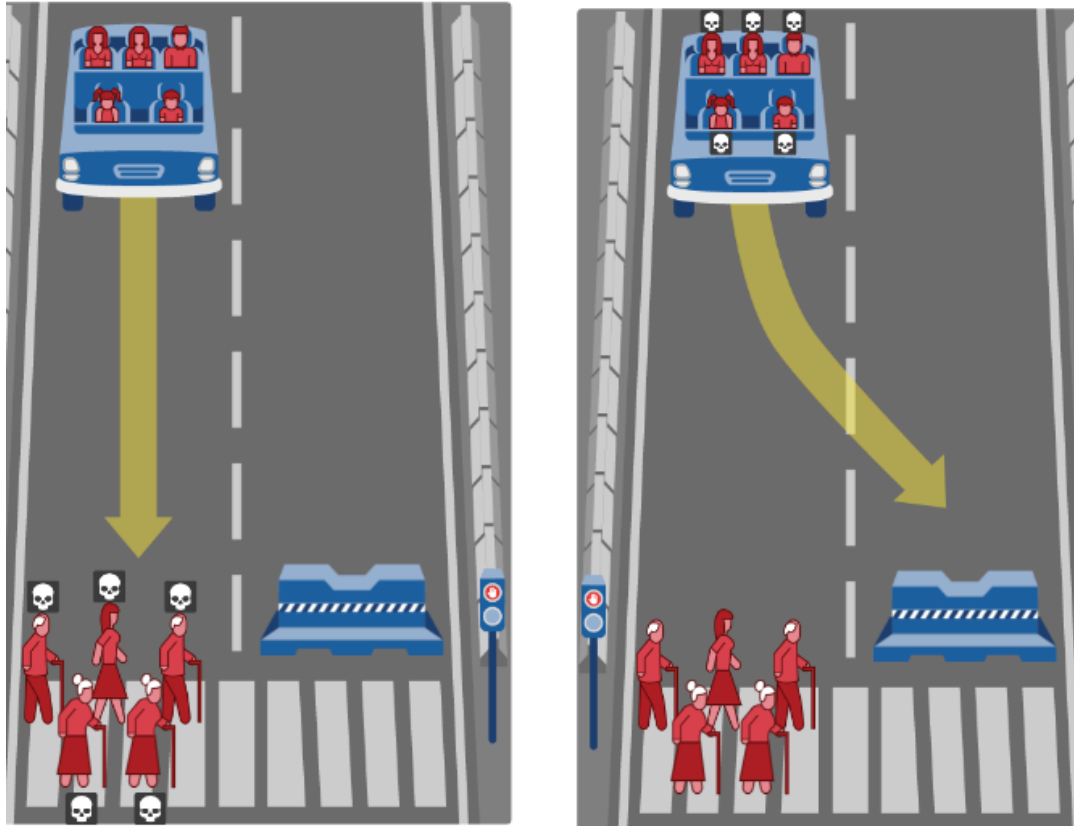


Foot, Philippa (1967): *The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect*. In: *Oxford Review*, No.5

The Moral Machine

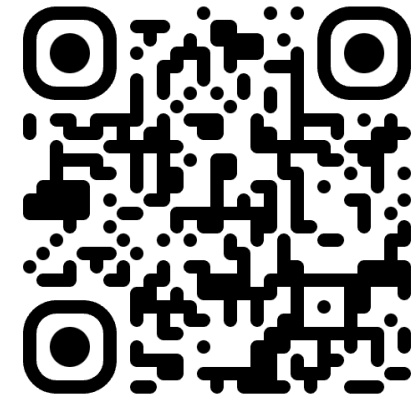
Research Project of Max Planck Institute for Human Development

What should the self-driving car do?



Show Description

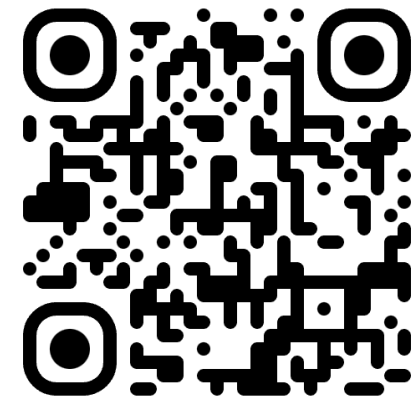
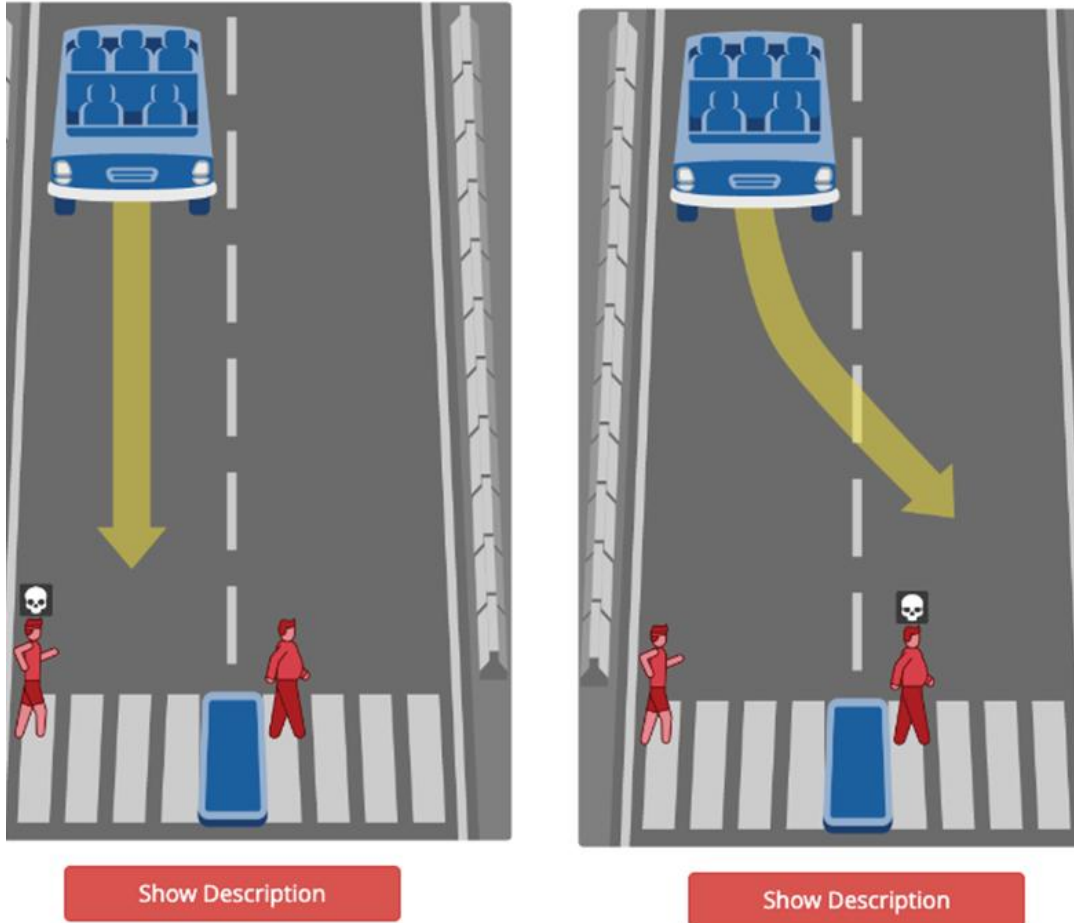
Show Description



<https://www.moralmachine.net/>

The Moral Machine

What should the self-driving car do?



<https://www.moralmachine.net/>



Ethical Issues in Everyday Research

Chapter
2.

Freedom of Research vs. Research Risks



With new developments in research, risks must be mitigated—for example, after the first successful cloning experiment, many countries enacted laws prohibiting the unrestricted use of the technology.

Human Research

Human Subject Research / Clinical Trials

- **Clinical (medical) research**, e.g., analysis of biological material, epidemiological studies, behavioral studies...

Human Participant Research / Research Involving Human Subjects

- **Non-medical research**, e.g., in the social sciences—particularly questionnaire-based studies, interviews, and focus group work...



Human Research

Ethical Principles



Autonomy

Informed consent

Avoid deception

**Avoid research with minors
or mentally disabled people**

Harm avoidance

Protect privacy

**Avoid disproportionate
distress**

Avoid health risks

Justice

**Protect vulnerable
groups**

**Antidiscrimination
(e.g. avoid gender bias)**

Dual Use and Security-Relevant Research

Dual Use

- **Dual-use goods** – goods with a dual purpose – are usually products that can be used for both civilian and military purposes.
- **Dual-use research** refers to those research results and methods that can be used both for peaceful or beneficial purposes and for deliberately harming or suppressing society or the environment.

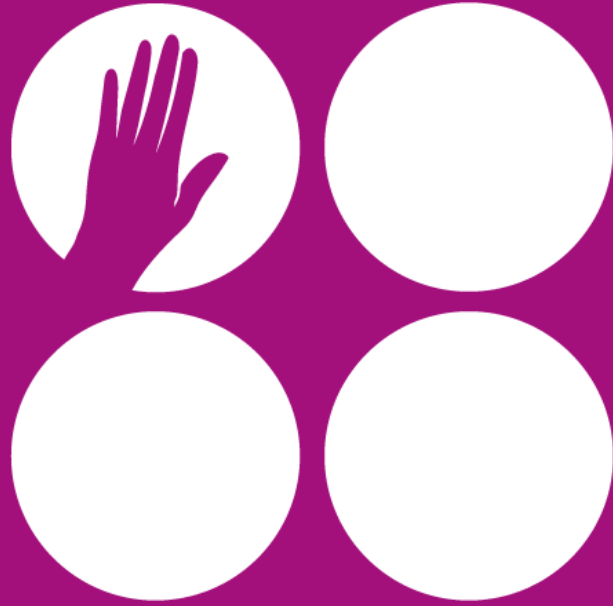
Security-Relevant Research (of Concern)

- Security-relevant research includes scientific work that has the potential to produce knowledge, products or technologies that can be misused (by third parties) to harm human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, the environment or peaceful coexistence.
- It is labelled as “of concern” if
 - the misuse can be immediate and
 - the potential damage is significant.



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<https://www.security-relevant-research.org/>



GUTE

WISSENSCHAFTLICHE

PRAXIS

A Case Study

Chapter
3.

Study: Deep Neural Networks are More Accurate Than Humans at Detecting Sexual Orientation From Facial Images

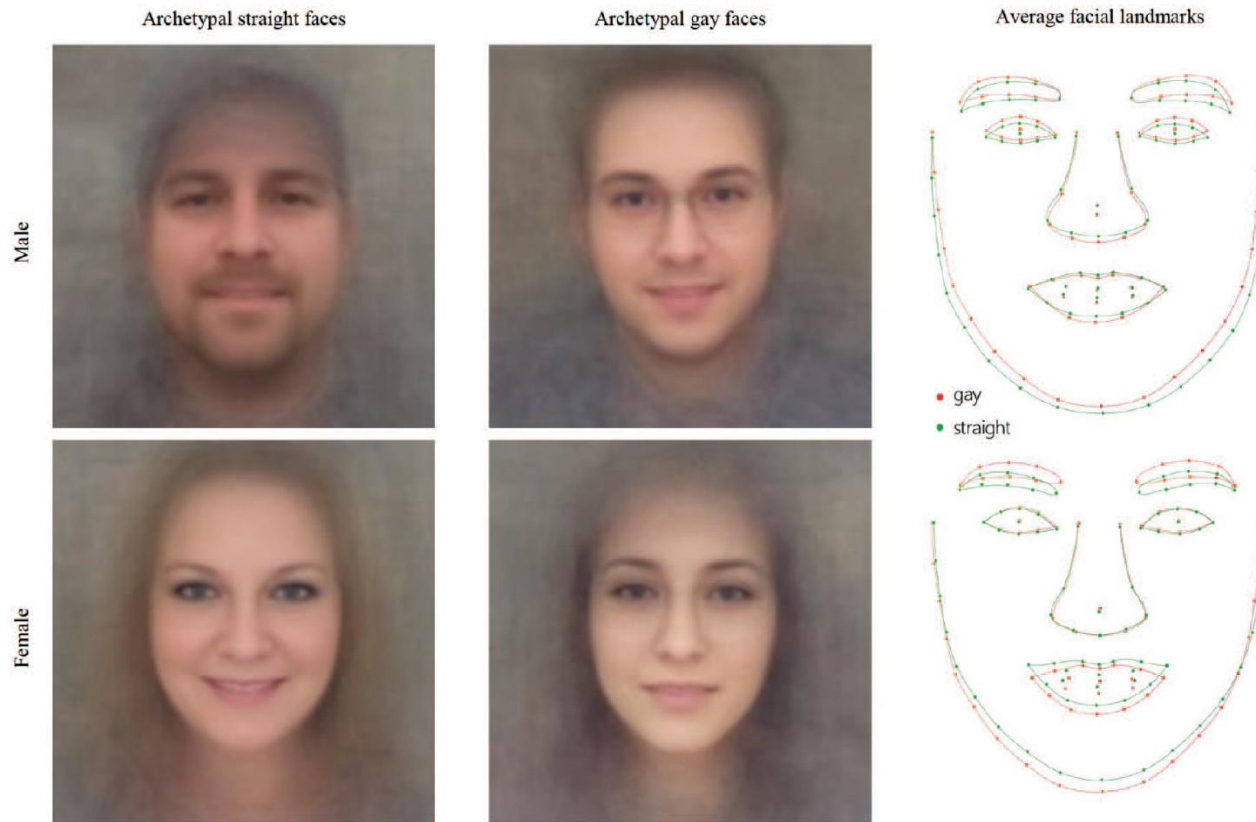


Figure 4. Composite faces and the average facial landmarks built by averaging faces classified as most and least likely to be gay.

INNOVATIONS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Deep Neural Networks Are More Accurate Than Humans at Detecting
Sexual Orientation From Facial Images

Yilun Wang and Michal Kosinski
Stanford University

Abstract

We show that faces contain much more information about sexual orientation than can be perceived or interpreted by the human brain. We used deep neural networks to extract features from 35,326 facial images. These features were entered into a logistic regression aimed at classifying sexual orientation. [...] **Consistent with the prenatal hormone theory of sexual orientation, gay men and women tended to have gender-atypical facial morphology, expression, and grooming styles.** [...] Those findings advance our understanding of the origins of sexual orientation and the limits of human perception. Additionally, given that companies and governments are increasingly using computer vision algorithms to detect people's intimate traits, **our findings expose a threat to the privacy and safety of gay men and women.**

Wang, Y., & Kosinski, M. (2018). Deep neural networks are more accurate than humans at detecting sexual orientation from facial images. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 114(2), 246–257.

Potential for Misuse

Potential for Misuse of the Findings

- Enables the (unlawful) acquisition of sensitive personal data through biometric analysis of individuals.
- Draws parallels to eugenics research based on physiognomy during the Nazi era.
- Advanced deep-learning algorithms of this nature could also be exploited to categorize people by their consumer behavior, voting patterns, or criminal records.



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<https://www.sicherheitsrelevante-forschung.org/case-studies/>



Laws, Guidelines, and Best Practices for Handling Ethical Issues

Chapter
4.

German Basic Law (Grundgesetz)

Article 5 – Freedom of Expression, Arts, and Sciences

(1) Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing and pictures and to inform himself without hindrance from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and films shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.

(2) These rights shall find their limits in the provisions of general laws, in provisions for the protection of young persons and in the right to personal honour.

(3) Arts and sciences, research and teaching shall be free. The freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution.



Guidelines for Ethical Principles at KIT

1. Ethical Principles

With the freedom of arts, sciences, research, and teaching being guaranteed in Article 5, par. 3 of the German Constitution, **we**, the members and bodies of KIT, **are aware of the influence our work and its results have on societal, technical, economic, and ecological systems.**

We assume responsibility for our acting and for the consequences of our actions. Our work serves the gaining of knowledge, the sustainable benefit of humanity, the protection of the environment, and peaceful purposes exclusively.

We commit to cooperating with each other in partnership, truthfulness, and trust irrespective of our position, origin, religious denomination, gender, and other forms of diversity.

We undertake to observe the present ethical principles in word and deed.

Statutes for Safeguarding Good Research Practice at KIT




Article 10: Legal and Ethical Frameworks, Usage Rights

- (1) Researchers of KIT are obliged to adopt a **responsible approach to the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of research**. Irrespective of the funding party, this mainly implies unprejudiced research.
- (2) In all research projects, applicable legal provisions that result in both rights and obligations have to be observed. [...]
- (3) [...]
- (4) **Researchers gather approvals and ethics statements and present these when required**. Ethical dimensions of the research project should be considered and consequences of research should be assessed. Researchers observe the binding ethical principles valid at KIT. In addition, researchers of KIT pay particular attention to the **aspects associated with security-relevant research (dual use) and the associated risk of misuse of research results**.

Guidelines and Best Practices Regarding Ethical Issues


- World Medical Association: [Declaration of Helsinki](#)
- UNESCO: [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#)
- EU Research Council: Website [Ethics Guidance](#)
- DFG/Leopoldina: [Publications](#)
- Rat für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsdaten: [Forschungsethische Grundsätze](#)
- NFDI4Society/German Data Forum: [Collection: Best Practices for Research Ethics](#)
- Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI): [Ethical principles of the engineering profession](#)
- ...




Dilemma Game – Professionalism and Integrity in Research

17    Dilemma

Outliers

When screening my data, I find that there is one extreme observation. What do I do?

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Make it happen. 

17    Option

A Nothing, it is part of my theoretical sample for a reason.

B I look for information on the observation, trying to find qualitative reasons for the deviance. If there is a good explanation for its position, it must be a niche observation. Since it is a part of my theoretical sample, I leave it in. However, if there is no explanation for its position, I leave it out as it is there either due to measurement error or response bias.

C I look for information on the observation, trying to find qualitative reasons for the deviance. If there is a good explanation for its position, it must be a niche observation. Despite my theoretical sampling, there is no place for such anomalous observations, so I leave it out. If there is no explanation for its position, I leave it in to avoid potential sampling bias.

D I let a colleague review the data and follow her advice whatever it is.



<https://www.eur.nl/en/about-eur/policy-and-regulations/integrity/research-integrity/dilemma-game>



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Practical Implementation: Submitting Ethics Applications at KIT

Chapter
5.

How to Submit an Ethics Application

When should I submit an ethics application?

- If you identify an ethical risk and require **guidance** on it.
- If you are publishing in a field where journals and publishers request **mandatory ethics votes**.
- If you need an ethics vote for **third-party funding or a scholarship**.

For further information
see our website:

[https://www.ethik.kit.edu/english/
index.php](https://www.ethik.kit.edu/english/index.php)

How to Submit an Ethics Application

Application process



How to Submit an Ethics Application

Application process



How to Submit an Ethics Application

Application process (research without personal data)



How to Submit an Ethics Application

How do I submit an ethics application?

- **Complete** the application form (don't forget the signatures).
- Gather the completed form and all additional documents and **send them to both**, DSB (datenschutz-ethik@dsb.kit.edu) and the organizational team of the Ethics Committee of KIT (kommision@ethik.kit.edu).
 - DSB prefers Word documents for easy commenting
 - Ethics Committee prefers PDFs for easy access to the Committee Members and long-time storage
- Be aware of the **separate deadlines** for DSB and the Ethics Committee!

For further information
see our website:

[https://www.ethik.kit.edu/english/
index.php](https://www.ethik.kit.edu/english/index.php)

How to Submit an Ethics Application

What factors should I keep in mind when applying?

- Provide a **detailed description of the research design** (avoid overly formal or vague language).
- Description should be **understandable for laypersons**.
- Emphasize:
 1. **Description of benefits and risks** – for involved persons, society, and/or the environment
 2. How will you **minimize these risks** within your research project?



How to Submit an Ethics Application

What to expect from a review by the Ethics Committee of KIT?

- A plausibility check of your project design regarding ethical issues and risk mitigation.
- Identification of ethical risks that you may not have recognized yourself.
- Recommendations for risk minimization.

What will the KIT Ethics Commission **NOT** do?

- No scientific quality control of your research.
- No evaluation of clinical research projects.
- No review after beginning of data collection.

How to Submit an Ethics Application

Who is eligible to submit an ethics application?

- In general: members or employees of KIT, acting as responsible principle investigators of the respective project.
- Specifically: the **responsible principal investigator** of the research project (as outlined in the ethical guidelines), typically a professor or the head of the institute/research group.
- If doctoral researchers and employees in dependent positions submit an application, the signature of the head of the institute/research group is required.

How to Submit an Ethics A

Who is eligible to submit an ethics applic

- In general: members or employees of KIT, acting as investigators of the respective project.
- Specifically: the **responsible principal investigator** of (outlined in the ethical guidelines), typically a professor/institute/research group.
- If doctoral researchers and employees in dependent application, the signature of the head of the institute

With my signature, I confirm that ...

- All information provided in this application is correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.
- We took note of the currently valid versions of the legal provisions and guidelines relevant to the research project and have been taken them into account when planning the research project and submitting the application. This applies in particular to:
 - Data protection regulations according to the General Data Protection Regulation ([GDPR](#)) and the Data Protection Act of the state Baden-Württemberg ([LDSG BW](#))
 - [General Act on Equal Treatment](#)
- We took note of the relevant regulations of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) in their currently valid versions and have been taken them into account when planning the research project and submitting the application. This applies in particular to:
 - [Guidelines for Ethical Principles of KIT](#)
 - [Statutes for Safeguarding Good Research Practice at KIT](#) and it's [changes](#)
- We took into account the regulations and guidelines for research involving human subjects as well as other ethical standards in our respective field⁴⁰ when planning the research project and submitting the application.

For student projects: I also confirm that we informed the students about the legal and institutional regulations as well as the ethical guidelines.

Place, date

Signature project lead

Name of project lead: Title Surname Name

If the project lead lies not with the professor holding the chair at the institute/ working unit:

I confirm that the project lead informed me about the above-mentioned research project and that I agree with its conduction at the institute/ work unit for which I am responsible.

Place, date

Signature chair holder

Name of chair holder: Title Surname Name

How to Submit an Ethics Application

Which application form to use?

- **Individual Project:** standard case
- **Study Series:** project containing various individual project, results not mutually dependant
- **Substudy:** adding a substudy to an (already approved) study series
- **KD²Lab Studies:** special form for studies of KD²Lab with some pre-filled fields (additional information required)
- No separate application form for follow-up projects
→ select “follow-up project” in field 2.M

A Look at the Application Form

Request to the KIT Ethics Committee for Assessment of a Research Project (Single Study)

Overview of the Form

1. [Basic administrative information](#)
2. [Information on research project](#)
3. [Data processing, personal data protection, ethical data sources](#)
4. [Partnerships, founding institutions, third parties](#)
5. [Risks of abuse, military-relevant research, "dual use"](#)
6. [Hazardous substances, environmental protection, animal welfare, material of human origin](#)
7. [Interaction with test subjects](#)
8. [Responsibility for research staff](#)
9. [Confirmation & signature](#)

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 0 | Information will be completed by the Office for Good Scientific Practice and Ethical Principles | |
| A | Application Number: | |
| B | Date of submission: | |

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Basic Administrative Information | | |
| A | Project leader ¹ | Title Surname(s) Name |
| B | Email project leader: | surname.name@kit.edu |
| C | Project coordinator ² : | Title Surname(s) Name |
| D | Email project coordinator: | surname.name@kit.edu |
| E | Institute (Acronym): | Institute for Examples (IfB) |
| F | Research group (if necessary): | research group |
| G | Address (with building and room no): | building and room no., street, house no., city, postal code |
| H | Other persons involved ³ : | (Title) Surname(s) Name (role) |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 2. Information on Research Project | | |
| A | Short title of the study (max. 10 words, | English: Study title in 10 words or less |

For further information

see our website:

<https://www.ethik.kit.edu/english/applications.php>

A Look at the Application Form

Section 2: Information on Research Project

- **B & C: Duration of the project & data collection**
 - Data collection is only allowed to start after the ethics commission reviewed the project, a vote after the fact is not possible.

| 2. Information on Research Project | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| A | Short title of the study (max. 10 words, no abbreviations): | English: Study title in 10 words German (optional): Studientitel |
| B | Entire duration of the project: | Month, year until Month, year |
| C | Duration of data collecting phase: | Month, year until Month, year |
| D | Objective of the research project (max. 300 words): What overarching goal does your research project have? Goal of research project in max. 300 words | |
| E | Description of research project (max. 300 words): Description of research project in max. 300 words | |
| F | Description of methods (max. 300 words): Description of methods in max. 300 words | |
| G | Scientific relevance (max. 250 words): What is the theoretical relevance of your research project? Theoretical relevance in max. 250 words | |
| H | Scientific relevance (max. 250 words): What is the practical relevance of your research project? Practical relevance in max. 250 words | |
| I | Which ethically challenging areas and questions do you see as relevant to your research project? (max. 300 words) Description of ethically problematic areas in max. 300 words | |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 2: Information on Research Project

- E & F: Research project & methods
 - Make the committee understand what you are doing!

| 2. Information on Research Project | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| A | Short title of the study (max. 10 words, no abbreviations): English: Study title in 10 words German (optional): Studientitel in 10 Wörtern |
| B | Entire duration of the project: Month, year until Month, year |
| C | Duration of data collecting phase: Month, year until Month, year |
| D | Objective of the research project (max. 300 words): What overarching goal does your research project have? Goal of research project in max. 300 words |
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A Look at the Application Form

Section 2: Information on Research Project

- G, H, & I: Benefits & risks
 - Description of benefits (scientific and practical)
 - Description of ethical risks
 - Weighing risks vs. benefits

| 2. Information on Research Project | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| A | Short title of the study (max. 10 words, no abbreviations): English: Study title in 10 words German (optional): Studientitel in 10 Wörtern |
| B | Entire duration of the project: Month, year until Month, year |
| C | Duration of data collecting phase: Month, year until Month, year |
| D | Objective of the research project (max. 300 words): What overarching goal does your research project have? Goal of research project in max. 300 words |
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A Look at the Application Form

Section 3: Data

- **A: Personal data**
 - Do you want to collect personal data? Then you have to follow data protection law.

| 3. Data Processing, Personal Data Protection, Ethical Data Sources | |
|--|---|
| A | <p>Personal data: Will you collect any personal data of study participants, scientific personnel, or other persons?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p>If “Yes“: Before putting your request to the ethics committee, you have to consult with the data protection office (DSB). The KIT ethics committee requires DSB’s approval of the data protection measures to consent to your request.</p> |
| B | <p>Reuse of data: Do you conduct your research using purchased datasets?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. We use them for the following reasons: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| C | <p>Origin of data: Are there any ambiguities regarding the origin of the data or regarding compliance with ethical standards during their collection?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. The following ambiguities exist as well as the following reasons to use the data: ____ their origin: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| D | <p>Publishing of results and data: Do you forgo or restrict the publication of your research results and data for ethical reasons, even though this would be legally permissible?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. We plan the following restrictions in publishing our results and research data: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 3: Data

■ B-D: Data ethics

- Were does the data come from? Was it sourced ethically responsible?
- What happens to research results and research data after the project is finished?
- Are there any restrictions in publishing results or data in order to minimize ethical risks?

| 3. Data Processing, Personal Data Protection, Ethical Data Sources | |
|--|---|
| A | <p>Personal data: Will you collect any personal data of study participants, scientific personnel, or other persons?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p>If “Yes“: Before putting your request to the ethics committee, you have to consult with the data protection office (DSB). The KIT ethics committee requires DSB’s approval of the data protection measures to consent to your request.</p> |
| B | <p>Reuse of data: Do you conduct your research using purchased datasets?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. We use them for the following reasons: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| C | <p>Origin of data: Are there any ambiguities regarding the origin of the data or regarding compliance with ethical standards during their collection?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. The following ambiguities exist as well as the following reasons to doubt their origin: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| D | <p>Publishing of results and data: Do you forgo or restrict the publication of your research results and data for ethical reasons, even though this would be legally permissible?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. We plan the following restrictions in publishing our results and research data: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 4: Cooperations

- **A-D: Cooperation, collaboration, funding institutions**
 - Who do you work with?
 - Where does the money come from?
- **E: Military and security-relevant research**
 - Be honest: Selecting “yes” does not necessarily mean, the commission will declare the project as ethically problematic!
 - On our website in the section “Current Topics” we have a checklist regarding research cooperations:
https://www.ethik.kit.edu/english/news/research_collaborations.php
- **F & G: Dependencies, conflicts of interest**
 - Be honest: Do you have any dependencies or conflicts of interest?
- **H & I: Foreign trade restrictions, usage rights**
 - Do you have any restrictions regarding publication and usage of results and data due to foreign trade laws or contracts with partners or funding institutions?

| 4. Partnerships, Founding Institutions, Third Parties | |
|---|---|
| A | Project partners ¹ : _____ |
| B | Public or private clients: _____ |
| C | Funding agencies/ grant authorities: _____ |
| D | Contractors ² : _____ |
| E | <p>Military-related research/ security-related research: Are you or your commissioned companies/ etc. active in military security or security-related research?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. But collaboration is ethically justifiable for the following reasons: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure. But even if they are active in military security or security-related research, collaboration is ethically justifiable for the following reasons: _____</p> |
| F | <p>Dependencies: Is there a risk for structural dependency from your project on a partner active in military security/ security-related research (e.g. financial support by a university/ department policy)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. There are the following risks and we take the following counter-measures: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p>If “Yes”: Is there a risk for granting the client's or funding body's requirements with the ethical principle of KIT, to pursue peaceful purposes with the following measures?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. We will counteract this risk with the following measures: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| G | <p>Conflicts of interest: Regarding the researchers involved, is there a risk of conflicts of interest due to dual roles?⁵</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. We anticipate the following conflicts of interest: _____ following counter-measures: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| H | <p>Foreign trade restrictions: Do you have to consider foreign trade laws of the above-mentioned partners/ clients/ etc. or in publishing results?</p> |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 5: Risk of abuse, „Dual Use“

- **A-C: Basic research, applied research, military research**
 - Guidelines for Ethical Principles: „Our work serves the gaining of knowledge, the sustainable benefit of humanity, the protection of the environment, and peaceful purposes exclusively.“
 - Selecting “no” does not necessarily mean, the commission will declare the project as ethically problematic!

- **D: Misuse of research results**
 - Are there indications, your research could be misused?
 - Do you have procedures and tools in place to prevent or hinder the misuse of your research results?

| 5. Risks of Abuse, Military-relevant Research, “Dual Use” | |
|---|--|
| A | <p>Will the study conduct purely basic research¹?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No. The study is to be classified as applied research.</p> |
| B | <p>If 5.A “No”: Does the project serve exclusively civilian purposes in a way that the optimization options or application scenarios are a result of the project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the project serves exclusively civilian purposes. The most important optimization options or application scenarios are: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the optimization options or application scenarios are also suitable for military purposes. The most important of them are: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but military use could still be supported or cannot be ruled out.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, the project (also) aims on military purposes.</p> |
| C | <p>If 5.B “Yes, but...” or “No”: If military purposes are pursued, can they be ruled out: Are these purposes of protection, supply, reconnaissance, or defense?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. The most important optimization options/ application scenarios are: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No. The most important optimization options/ application scenarios are: _____</p> <p>If “No”: The above-mentioned purposes contradict KIT's ethical principles of peaceful purposes, which generates an ethical dilemma. Please explain why KIT's ethical principles must/ should be accepted in this case (reasons): _____</p> |
| D | <p>Do you see any risk for potential misuse of knowledge/ results of the project?³</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. The most important ethically problematical forms of misuse are: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p>If “Yes”: What options/ measures are available to you to reduce the risk of misuse, and which one/ will you take? _____</p> |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 6: Hazardous Substances, Environmental Protection, Animal Welfare, Material of Human Origin

- Did you ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements?
- The contact persons of the Service Division Security and Environment (<https://www.sum.kit.edu/index.php>) can help you with the current legal requirements.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 6. | Hazardous Substances, Environmental Protection, Animal Welfare, Material of Human Origin |
| A | <p>Hazardous substances: Do you use or (potentially) generate (beyond the permitted limits) in your project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. This is necessary due to the following reasons: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| B | <p>Environmental hazards: Are there increased environmental risks produced in your project that go beyond the risk that usually occurs (e.g. through an environmental assessment): _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. However, their use/ production is necessary due to the following reasons: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| C | <p>If 6.A or 6.B “Yes”: Did you involve the respective KIT responsible persons (e.g. biological security officer, hazardous materials officer, water safety officer): _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| D | <p>Animal welfare³: Does your project carry out animal testing or experiments?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have already received the appropriate permit from the responsible authority.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have already asked the KIT animal protection officer for a permit. (Please attach)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |
| E | <p>Material of human origin: Will you use material of human origin in your research project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Using material of human origin is necessary due to the following reasons: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 7: Participants

- **A: description of experiment**
 - What are the things in particular you are asking the participants to do?
- **B & C: description of sample and recruitment**
 - What characteristics must the participants have, or which characteristics disqualify them from participation?
 - Does the selection process introduce risks of bias, such as gender bias or age-related bias?
 - Are there ethical risks in the selection process, for example due to unreasonably high compensation?
 - Could individuals feel pressured to participate due to relationships of dependency (such as recruiting their own students, acquaintances, etc.)?

| 7. Interaction with Test Subjects (if applicable) | |
|---|---|
| A | <p>Description of experimental tasks (max. 300 words) (if necessary, describe the test subjects do? In what time frame?¹)</p> <p>Description of experimental tasks (max. 300 words)</p> |
| B | <p>Description of the sample (max. 250 words) (if necessary, divided in groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of persons • Main characteristic(s) of the group(s)² • Age • Gender distribution³ • Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation (list)⁴ • Justification of necessity⁵ <p>Description of the sample of people</p> |
| C | <p>Acquisition of test subjects (max. 250 words) (if necessary, divided in groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Financial compensation (including rules for partial <p>Description of acquisition of test subjects</p> |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 7: Participants

- F-T: Risks for participants
 - Screening checklist to detect violations of ethical principles



- If any potentially problematic field is checked
 - (a) justification (risk-benefit assessment)
 - (b) measures to reduce the risk
- E.g.: (Why) is it necessary to induce psychological distress?
How can the distress be reduced (afterwards)?

| 7. Interaction with Test Subjects (if applicable) | | |
|---|--|--|
| D | Voluntary nature: Is participation in the study guaranteed to be voluntary? ¹ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| E | Withdrawal: Are the participants assured that they can discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving reasons and without negative consequences? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| F | Legal capacity: Will only people take part in the study, who can give their consent to participate because they are of age and fully capable of judgment? ² | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| G | Participant information: Are participants fully informed about the aims and purposes of the study in a language that is accessible to them? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| H | Informed consent: Is informed consent obtained in writing (or electronically)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| I | Standardized questionnaires: Do you only use standardized questionnaires in your study (possibly with scaled answer options)? ³ If “No” (in case of qualitative surveys): Are you working with interview guides? ⁴ (If „Yes“, question no. 7.I is considered answered with „Yes“.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| J | Training of research staff: Have research staff been appropriately and adequately trained to ensure careful and sensitive communication with participants? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| K | <p>If you have answered any or all of the questions above (7.D-J) with “Yes”, please attach the respective documents in PDF format to this request (e.g. participant information, consent form, data privacy statement (reviewed by DSB), etc.).</p> <p>If you answered “No” to at least one of the questions above (7.D-I), this could indicate ethical concerns regarding the study design. For each question, you answered with “No”, please explain whether and in what respect ethical concerns exist or could exist and why the study design was chosen in this form (risk-benefit assessment). Do you take any additional measures to rule out or reduce negative effects on the persons involved?</p> <p>_____</p> | |
| | ... | |

A Look at the Application Form

Section 8: Research Staff

- **A-C: Physical and psychological risks, other consequences**
 - Are researchers exposed to physical or psychological risks that exceed normal levels? Does the researchers' work have other negative consequences?
 - How do you mitigate risks and negative consequences?

| 8. Responsibility for Research Staff ¹ | |
|---|--|
| A | Physical strain/ risks: Are the research staff exposed to physical strain or risks in connection with the study that exceed what would be expected in everyday life? |
| B | Psychological stress/ mental health risks: Might participating in your research project cause psychological stress or other mental health risks to research staff beyond what would be expected in everyday life? |
| C | Other (negative) consequences: Are there any negative social, legal or economic consequences for the research staff, which could arise in connection with the research project? ² |
| D | If you answered “Yes” to at least one of the questions above (8.A-C), this concerns regarding the study design. For each question, you answered with “whether and in what respect ethical concerns exist or could exist and why the chosen in this form (risk-benefit assessment). Do you take any additional measures to reduce negative effects on the persons involved? _____ |
| E | If the data collection (partially) takes place abroad: Have all important measures to protect (especially inexperienced) researchers during their research stay abroad? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we take measures to protect the researchers. The following measures are noteworthy (optional): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No. Implementation of such measures has to be foregone for the following reasons: _____ |

Next meetings of the Ethics Committee and deadlines

Ethics Committee of KIT > [Meeting dates](#)

Next meetings of the Ethics Committee and deadlines

July: Tuesday, 14.07.2026, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

- Submission of applications to the [data protection staff unit](#) ✓ by 23.06.2026
- Submission of applications including relevant documents to kommision@ethik.kit.edu ✓ by 29.06.2026

August: summer break

September: Tuesday, 15.09.2026, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

- Submission of applications to the [data protection staff unit](#) ✓ by 17.08.2026
- Submission of applications including relevant documents to kommision@ethik.kit.edu ✓ by 27.08.2026

October: Monday, 05.10.2026, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

- Submission of applications to the [data protection staff unit](#) ✓ by 15.09.2026
- Submission of applications including relevant documents to kommision@ethik.kit.edu ✓ by 17.09.2026

November: Monday, 02.11.2026, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Contact persons



Office for Good Scientific Practice and Ethical Principles



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