



IfKW Institutional Review Board

Application Guidelines

06 November 2023

Purpose

The Institutional Review Board of the Department of Media and Communication (IfKW-IRB) at LMU Munich supports researchers applying for and carrying out empirical research projects by advising them on or assessing the ethical aspects of their planned project. Using the services of the committee is voluntary and provided at the researchers' request. Applications will be treated strictly confidentially.

IfKW-IRB clearance is not equivalent to compliance with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR/DSGVO). Researchers are obliged to conduct their research in accordance with GDPR requirements or any other legal requirements they need to follow.

Eligibility and Type of Research

All researchers in the Department of Media and Communication (IfKW) at LMU Munich are eligible to apply for ethical review by IfKW-IRB, including all ranks of academic staff, project assistants, habilitation candidates, doctoral candidates, and students.

IfKW-IRB review applies to all standard research conducted at IfKW. Any ethical review applications involving non-standard research need to be submitted to the [Research Ethics Committee](#) (REC) of the Faculty of Social Sciences at LMU Munich. The following are examples of non-standard research:

- Research involves vulnerable subjects, such as children under the age of 16 or individuals known to suffer mental disorders.
- Research is invasive, i.e. when it involves penetrating into the subject's body (e.g., taking blood samples), or when it involves informing participants about physiological parameters that may severely disturb them (e.g., feedback on elevated BMI).
- Research stimuli include content that may severely disturb participants (e.g., extreme violence, pornography, and hate speech).
- Personal data is gathered that cannot be processed in an anonymous fashion (e.g., video material of participants).

IfKW-IRB

IfKW-IRB has at least four members. Members are appointed by the IfKW Executive Board ("Departmentleitung") for a renewable term of two years. Appointed IfKW-IRB Members elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

Procedure

Applications should be submitted prior to starting data collection. Retrospective applications (seeking IRB approval for ongoing or completed projects) will be accepted during the years 2022 and 2023. Simultaneous submission of applications to IfKW-IRB and the Faculty of Social Sciences' Research Ethics Committee (REC) are not permitted for the same project.

When seeking IfKW-IRB review, researchers are required to fill out the application form provided on the Department website. All submitted materials are reviewed by at least two IfKW-IRB members, who are mandated to make recommendations. Recommendations will be discussed among all IfKW-IRB members until a final consensus is achieved. Outcomes are communicated by the IfKW-IRB Chair or Vice Chair.

If a study is considered "non-standard" based on the submitted materials, applicants are requested to seek approval from REC.

Application documents (application form and any supplements in one pdf file) should be sent via email to irb@ifkw.lmu.de.