

Research and Ethics Committee Freedom from Torture Guidelines for evaluating research proposals

The following provides some guidelines on evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of research proposals submitted to Freedom from Torture's REC. Please refer to these when completing the evaluation form for research proposals.

Aims of the research and proposed title

- Have the aims of the research been adequately and clearly stated?
- Is there a clear proposed title?

Research question(s)/ hypotheses

- Are they clearly stated, focused and answerable?
- Are they relevant to the work of the Freedom from Torture?

Background information

- Has relevant literature/ existing knowledge been addressed?
- Has the person shown sufficient grasp of the literature/existing knowledge to support their research question(s)?

Methodology

- Is the methodology clearly stated, described and justified?
- Is it the most appropriate method for the research question(s) posed?
- Is the methodology appropriate for Freedom from Torture (given Freedom from Torture context, resource issues-time, use of interpreters etc.)?
- Is the design of the research appropriate and clearly stated?
- Is the method of data collection clearly stated and appropriate?
- Is the method of analysis clearly stated and justified?
- Is there a detailed timetable for the research proposed?

Sample

- Is the method of obtaining research participants clearly stated and justified?
- Has there been sufficient attention given to issues regarding heterogeneity of sample, language needs, and the cultural and political context of researching survivors of torture (if relevant) and particularly those who are in receipt of Freedom from Torture services?

- Have the sources of research participants, availability, approximate numbers etc. been specified?
- Is the sample size appropriate for the proposed research question and methodology?

Ethical issues

- Are all relevant ethical issues stated clearly - have they demonstrated an understanding of ethical issues in relation to Freedom from Torture clients/staff/context?
- Are all relevant ethical issues dealt with satisfactorily?
- Have information leaflet/letters, consent forms, questionnaires or interview schedules etc. been provided for review?
- Have the provisions for debriefing medical/psychological/legal aftercare been properly considered and are the arrangements sufficient to mitigate risk?
- How will the confidentiality/anonymity of the information collected be ensured? (See Freedom from Torture Data Protections and Confidentiality policy).
- How will the information from the research be secured? What will happen to it ultimately?
- Are any additional permissions required, parental/guardian consent?

Freedom from Torture strategic plan and research priorities

- Is the research proposal in line with Freedom from Torture's strategic plan and core research priorities?
- Does the research proposed have the potential to make a contribution to knowledge in any of the following areas?
 - Rehabilitation of survivors of torture
 - Protection of survivors of torture through the asylum process and medical documentation of torture
 - Accountability for torture and torture prevention
 - Identified policy priorities-

Implications for Resources

- What resources will be required of Freedom from Torture?
- How realistic are the expectations of Freedom from Torture resources (e.g. staff time, room availability, IT resources) and what arrangements have been made to cover research costs (e.g. interpreter costs)?
- What arrangements are proposed to secure necessary resources?

Details of Collaborators, Supervisors & Funding body, if relevant

- Are there any other proposed/outstanding projects at Freedom from Torture that could be developed as joint/collaborative research?
- Are there any collaborators/advisors in the field?

- Are there any named supervisors?
- Who are they and are there potentially any conflicts of interests relevant to the FFT?

Details of plans for dissemination and publication

- What are the plans for dissemination? Where and for whom?
- If the research is for a university degree, where will the full thesis be available?
- What are the plans for publication? Where and for which audience?
- Will the research findings be made available to Freedom from Torture in an appropriate format?

Research and Ethics Committee

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