

Research and Ethics Committee Freedom from Torture Procedures for Submitting Research Proposals

Purpose

Researchers wishing to conduct research at Freedom from Torture should submit their proposal to Freedom from Torture's Research and Ethics Committee for review.

The purpose of every proposal submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee at Freedom from Torture is to provide:

- a clear idea of the rationale of the research proposed;
- an account of the intended method, the resources needed and available;
- clarity about how ethical matters will be addressed; and
- a clear idea of how the proposed research will be relevant, applicable and useful to FFT and to survivors of torture?

Researchers should also complete the summary information document available on our website, in order to help us determine whether the Committee should review the full research proposal. This includes summary information about the help and resources required from Freedom from Torture, how the research is relevant to the strategic aims of the organisation, and plans for dissemination and publication of the research.

Process

The Research and Ethics Committee meets four times a year. However, research proposals are reviewed by Committee members between meetings, subject to capacity and number of proposals received. Where necessary the Committee will prioritise proposals according to Freedom from Torture's research priorities and will inform the researcher promptly when it is unable to consider their proposal.

An electronic copy of the summary information document and the research proposal, including a copy of the ethics approval from the applicant's institution where appropriate, should be submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee via the following email address: rec@freedomfromtorture.org.

The summary information document will be reviewed by the Committee Co-Chairs, who will consider the relevance of the research proposal and Freedom from Torture's capacity to support the research. If it is accepted for review, the full proposal will be distributed to members of the Research and Ethics Committee and evaluated according to the criteria set out in the '*Guidelines for evaluating research proposals*', available on Freedom from Torture's website. The researcher will be given an indication of when they should expect a decision. If revisions to the proposal are recommended, the researcher will be informed and given the opportunity to submit a revised proposal for further consideration within a reasonable timeframe.

Once a final decision has been made by the Research and Ethics Committee the research proposed will either be given permission to proceed or be rejected. The researcher will then receive this decision in writing.

The Research and Ethics Committee will monitor research while it is in progress at FFT, and in particular ethical aspects of the research and the researcher's code of conduct.

Researchers will be required to:

- Provide details of their supervisor, including contact details, where appropriate.
- Up-date the Committee in writing on a regular basis (at least 6 monthly) on the progress of the research, in particular at the stages of data collection, end of the research and publication, where relevant.
- Inform the Committee of any ethical concerns, including those raised by research participants or their supervisors, and reasons for research not progressing, with up-dated timelines.
- Present their research findings to the Committee in an appropriate written form for internal use by Freedom from Torture, and present their findings to Freedom from Torture staff in a relevant forum, when requested to do so.
- Acknowledge help or supervision provided by a member of staff at Freedom from Torture in any publication resulting from work carried out at the organisation, including through joint authorship where appropriate.
- Indicate in any subsequently published research, where required to do so by the Committee, that the views expressed in the research are solely those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the views of Freedom from Torture.

Where there are (financial) resource implications for Freedom from Torture arising from the research, the research proposer will need to indicate how these will be covered, for example interpreter fees.

Any information accessed from clients' files, from the client database known as 'Daylight', or otherwise obtained during the course of the research as a result of the researcher's involvement and contact with Freedom from Torture, and not otherwise in the public domain, remains the property of Freedom from Torture. This material is confidential, must not be duplicated or shown to anyone else or used for any other purpose other than the project for which its use was officially authorised.

Where research has been directly commissioned by Freedom from Torture, the research itself remains the property of Freedom from Torture, and must be given to the organisation when requested, and irrespective of whether the research project has been completed. If, for whatever reason, the researcher fails to return the research project to Freedom from Torture, Freedom from Torture will deem the researcher to be acting in bad faith and may require, in addition to the research itself, the return of any expenses paid to the researcher in their conduct of the research and any payments to Freedom from Torture, as per the original agreement. Freedom from Torture reserves the right to pursue any legal avenues necessary to ensure the return of such research.

Freedom from Torture reserves the right to withdraw approval of the research at any stage of the research process. If such a decision is taken, the researcher will be informed in writing and the Senior Management Team will be notified. Should approval be withdrawn, access to client files or other information, together with any other forms of assistance or cooperation from Freedom from Torture clients and staff, will cease, and the name of Freedom from Torture may not be used by the researcher in relation to any research produced as a result of the study. In particular, the researcher may not attribute any findings to Freedom from Torture, or ascribe any views or opinions to this organisation.

In the event that approval for the research is withdrawn, any information, records or any other form of material not otherwise in the public domain and obtained directly as a result of the researcher's involvement and contact with Freedom from Torture relating to this project, in original, duplicate or electronic form, must be returned to Freedom from Torture or, in the case of non-original materials only, properly disposed of (including removing all electronic traces of it the information from computers etc.). If material is so destroyed, the researcher will be required to provide a signed statement confirming that they have done so.

Please note: as a charity with resource constraints, we will normally only consider proposals from doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. Furthermore, while a research proposal may meet the necessary ethical and methodological criteria, we may not be able to accept it due to resource constraints and/or a lack of alignment with the organization's strategic priorities.

Research and Ethics Committee Freedom from Torture

Conditions of Confidentiality

The conditions outlined below are designed to protect the confidentiality of our clients. Any research project cannot commence until we have received written notification of acceptance of these conditions. Please therefore read the conditions listed below and sign and return one copy of this letter to indicate your acceptance of them. Kindly keep the second copy for your own records.

1. All information and materials obtained during the research process must be kept confidential and secure at all times, in accordance with data protection guidelines.
2. Freedom from Torture clinical records should not be taken or accessed off site.
3. Information and materials should not be shown to anyone else unless authorised by the Research and Ethics Committee.
4. Information and materials should not be copied unless authorised.
5. Information and materials should not be used for any purpose other than the approved research project.
6. Information and materials obtained from Freedom from Torture for the purpose of the approved project should be returned to Freedom from Torture upon completion of the project.
7. Ownership of the information or other materials remains with Freedom from Torture. See conditions on withdrawal of approval, stated above.
8. I have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in “Procedures for Submitting Research Proposals”.

Name of researcher:

Signed:

Date:

Headings for proposals

1. Name, designation, contact details of researcher
2. Proposed title of the research
3. Named supervisor with contact details, including email
4. Aims of research
5. Specific research questions/hypotheses
6. Background details/literature review and justification for the research
7. Method: design, data collection, data analysis
8. Research participants: sources, availability, approximate numbers, implications for Freedom from Torture
9. Resources required and arrangements for securing them. Implications for Freedom from Torture
10. Detailed timetable
11. Details of ethical concerns and steps proposed to address ethical issues
12. Details of collaborators/advisors/supervisors in the field
13. Funding
14. Ethical approval sought from other institutions/organisations (where relevant).
15. Relevance and applicability of research proposed to Freedom from Torture
16. Plans for dissemination and publication (where, to whom, how, when?)

For details of the criteria used to evaluate all research proposals submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee please refer to '*Guidelines for evaluating research proposals at Freedom from Torture*', available on the website.

If proposals submitted do not adhere to the headings and the criteria for evaluation your proposal is likely to be returned to you for amendment.

Research and Ethics Committee

Up-dated December 2018

Research proposals - summary information

Please complete this form in order to help us determine whether the Committee should review your full research proposal.

Research applicant	
Research institution	
Research type: doctoral/post-doctoral/NGO/other	
Title of research proposal	
What help do you need from Freedom from Torture?	
How is your research relevant to Freedom from Torture's strategic aims?	
What resources do you need from Freedom from Torture?	
How will your research be disseminated/published?	