



R(D)SVS Policy on Recruitment of Students to Research Projects

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies has large numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students and members of staff engaged in research projects which may involve recruitment of our own students as participants, in addition to a number of university wide surveys and projects that are run every year. The R(D)SVS therefore has a policy in place to protect our students from excessive requests to participate in research and surveys either from internal, or external to the University of Edinburgh (UoE), sources.

This means that any internal or external research project targeting R(D)SVS students must first be reviewed by the school Human Ethical Review Committee (HERC). This is partly to protect our students from harm by preventing student overload and survey fatigue but also to maximise the potential for those surveys or studies which are approved to be effective and collect meaningful data.

As such, mass emailing of the student body is prohibited for recruitment as is any other method of recruitment that could lead to students feeling coerced or required to participate. Requests from internal or external parties to simply send on a link via email for a survey to some or all of our students will therefore be denied and researchers will be asked to follow our local approval procedures.

To avoid student overload HERC has an initial screening process where the topic and timing of any proposed research study is compared with other research projects or surveys that are currently underway in the student body. If at that time there are no other projects or surveys on similar topics targeting the students then the application may go to the next stage and be reviewed by the committee for approval to go ahead. Applications will need to include any promotional materials and consent forms or statements intended to be used as well as a copy of the questionnaire (if relevant).

Please be aware that due to the number of projects generated locally and within the university, approval is unlikely to be given unless the application is part of a robust educational research study. Additionally as emailing students for recruitment is prohibited, a UoE lead will be necessary in order to provide recruitment opportunities.

Request process

1. R(D)SVS students and staff should follow HERC processes and include in their application who they want to contact, based on the information below. All non-R(D)SVS requests should in the first instance be forwarded to the Human Ethical Review Committee (HERC), Herc.vets@ed.ac.uk who can provide more information on the screening and ethical approval processes. Information can also be found on the [website](#) or [Sharepoint site](#) (internal only).
2. HERC will seek consent from Year (UG) or Programme (MSc) Directors for their students being contacted for research purposes.
3. Emailing undergraduate students, will be restricted to two year groups. Typically final year students will not be surveyed. In your request please identify which years you wish to survey. The email may be issued on your behalf.
4. Emailing postgraduates is typically avoided and instead an announcement is made via the MSc Programme hub/Base courses. Please indicate which MSc programme you wish to engage with.
5. Alternative/informal methods of communicating with students can be via social media e.g. Facebook pages or the undergraduate BVM&S hub but the above process should be followed.
6. For non-survey research e.g. interviews, observation, educational studies – the above process is still applicable.

HERC contact: Herc.vets@ed.ac.uk