**How to get permission from ELFT to conduct an evaluation?**

The Trust’s internal Governance & Ethics Committee for Studies and Evaluations (GECSE) advises applicants on their proposals’ compliance with relevant regulatory and ethical standards. The Committee consists of people who all have regular ‘day jobs’, but who contribute their time to:

* assess proposals’ compliance with relevant regulatory and ethical standards and advise applicants on appropriate revisions;
* offer guidance designed to improve the quality of studies and evaluations taking place in the Trust;
* ensure that any expertise regarding good practice in study design gained from the work of the GECSE assessing proposals is disseminated effectively throughout the Trust; and
* encourage staff at ELFT to undertake service evaluations and other studies.

To help us help you through the process as quickly (and painlessly) as possible, we have developed the follow advice.

Developing and submitting your proposal

As mentioned above, the GECSE is not a dedicated team, so if you are seeking help on how to design / develop your project please refer to this useful [five-step guide to the evaluation cycle.](http://www.nhsevaluationtoolkit.net/evaluation-cycle/)[[1]](#footnote-1) For students and trainees, your Academic Supervisor is your best resource.

We are continuously improving our guidance and processes, so with each new application, please always go to the [R&I section on the ELFT website](https://www.elft.nhs.uk/research/conducting-study/choosing-study-type-and-getting-permission) and link to the most recent template Proposal for a Service Evaluation. The template contains *in blue italic font* helpful advice, including hyperlinks to further resources, on how to answer the questions.

Please complete **all** the sections. Even if you think something is not relevant to your project – for example, obtaining consent from participants, engaging in PPI, or identifying risks – you must still complete the section justifying why. Leaving blanks or simply saying ‘not applicable’ is likely to impede our ability to assess your proposal.

Email your completed application to [elft.gecse@nhs.net](mailto:elft.gecse@nhs.net); we aim to email confirmation of receipt of your application within 5 working days, together with a **unique GECSE reference number**. Please quote this reference number on all correspondence relating to your application.

Make sure you include all the items in the checklist – we cannot add incomplete applications to our agenda, and thus delay your review.

* (Mandatory) Line manager email endorsing the proposal – this assures us that your service is aware of the proposed project and is willing to cooperate with you and commit the required resources.
* (Mandatory) [Evaluation Risk Register](https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/Wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Evaluation-Risk-Register.pdf) – this helps assure us that you have considered the potential risks and put in place actions to mitigate them.
* (Mandatory if you are a student or trainee), please work with your Academic Supervisor to complete the [Quality Assurance Checklist](https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/Wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Sample-Quality-Assurance-Checklist.doc), this should not only state Yes / No, but use the Notes section to briefly describe ***how*** the proposal meets the criteria preferably with a reference to the section of the template in which you provide details – this assures us that you are getting adequate support and oversight as you learn.
* If you are collecting information from participants (e.g., via interviews, focus groups, questionnaires), you will need to provide a draft of your:
  + Participant Information Sheet (whether this is a separate sheet, or an introductory/covering statement on a questionnaire)
  + Consent Form (or copy of the communication explicitly describing to a participant’s that their action – e.g., in submitting a questionnaire – is implicit consent to use their answers)
  + Interview guides, questionnaires, etc. (as applicable)

GECSE Meetings

GECSE meetings are held monthly and the agenda and documents are distributed to Committee members a week in advance, so please pay attention to submission deadlines in order to be included on the agenda each month.

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| **Date & Time of GECSE meeting** | | | **Submission Deadline to be included** |
| Wednesday | 24 January 2024 | 2:30pm | 16 Jan ‘24 |
| Monday | 26 February 2024 | 2:30pm | 16 Feb ‘24 |
| Monday | 25 March 2024 | 2:30pm | 15 Mar ‘24 |
| Monday | 22 April 2024 | 2:30pm | 12 Apr ‘24 |
| Wednesday | 22 May 2024 | 2:30pm | 14 May ‘24 |
| Monday | 24 June 2024 | 2.30pm | 14 Jun ‘24 |
| Wednesday | 24 July 2024 | 2:30pm | 16 Jul ‘24 |
| Monday | 19 August 2024 | 3:00pm | 9 Aug ‘24 |
| Monday | 23 September 2024 | 2:30pm | 13 Sep ‘24 |
| Wednesday | 23 October 2024 | 2.30pm | 15 Oct ‘24 |
| Monday | 25 November 2024 | 2:30pm | 15 Nov /24 |
| No meeting in December 2024 | | | |

You are welcome to attend a GECSE meeting remotely to present your application and have the opportunity to ask and answer questions in a supportive and friendly meeting environment. Please email [elft.gecse@nhs.net](mailto:elft.gecse@nhs.net) and a MS Teams link will be emailed to you together with a time for you to join the meeting (although due to time constraints, we can only offer two projects the opportunity to attend each meeting). If you are unable to attend, written feedback will be provided 10 working days following the meeting.

Revision, re-submission, and outcome of applications

Following review of your application, it is likely that you will be asked to consider suggestions for revision of your application both mandatory (to conform to regulatory and ethical standards) or simply advisory to help improve your project and make it the best quality and best chance of success. Minor changes can be assessed and approved by the GECSE Chair but for more substantial changes will have to be reviewed by the Committee at their next meeting.

If we do not hear back from you within three months, we will assume you are no longer proceeding with the proposal and withdraw your application, but you can always submit a new application in the future.

You will always receive a letter from the GECSE confirming the outcome of our assessment – requesting revisions, notifying you of withdrawal (when we don’t hear from you), confirmation that you can begin work, or (on rare occasions) rejection of the proposal.

Remember, you need formal authorisation from the Trust ***before*** you approach participants or begin collecting data. The GECSE is a review body and we cannot provide retrospective permission for activities that have already taken place.

Further questions, support, and disseminating your results

The R&I website has information on various types of research and resources and a useful [Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.elft.nhs.uk/research/resources/frequently-asked-questions) section for you to review. For example, if you need help with statistical analysis of your data, short consultations can be arranged to offer guidance.

The Trust is eager to promote continuous improvement activity to which your study contributes. Once it is completed, please provide a copy of the final paper with a summary of the impact on the services so we can celebrate our achievements together.

1. With thanks to the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration West [↑](#footnote-ref-1)