

How long will it take to obtain ethics clearance?

- **LOW RISK** applications are reviewed by the Faculty Ethics Screening Committee (FESC) and it takes approximately **3 – 4 weeks** to get from Point # 1 to Point # 8 (refer to the next slide). Once Point # 8 has been reached, an applicant may start with their data collection, but it is important to note that the Research Ethics Committee (REC) still has the prerogative to add a few additional stipulations, or to request further clarification/changes (which you need to respond to as a matter of urgency), before final approval is granted. Once an applicant has received the go-ahead to start with their data collection, it takes an additional 4 weeks before the applicant receives a formal letter of ethics clearance.
- **MEDIUM/HIGH RISK** applications are reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) and it takes approximately **6 – 8 weeks** to get from Point # 10 to Point # 11. In these cases Point # 2 to Point # 8 becomes irrelevant, seeing as the application is not reviewed by the FESC. The FESC does, however, receive the application and does a quick evaluation to ascertain whether the application is medium/high risk. Once the level of risk has been determined (usually within 5 work days), the application is submitted to the REC for further review and changes requested. An applicant will therefore have to wait until the Research Ethics Committee (REC) gives the go-ahead before they can start with their data collection.
- **INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION** might also be needed, and the application (which is a completely separate process) takes **2 – 6 weeks** to be processed, if obtained from Stellenbosch University. If an applicant is applying for institutional permission from an outside institution, the duration depends on the institution.

What process is followed once an applicant submits an ethics application?

