

Permission to conduct research at PDSE premises or with PDSE staff and/or patients/data-Obtaining a gatekeeper's supporting letter

If PDSE patients/data, staff or premises are to be used for a research project, early engagement with PDSE is required to discuss if the project can be supported and how participants will be recruited. Due to medico-legal and ethical aspects, the approach and recruitment of patients must be carefully considered and clearly outlined in your research proposal, including details of who and in what capacity (i.e. Researcher or PDSE staff) will be conducting each activity. For example, patients cannot be recruited directly from triage, selected directly from the patient database without obtaining prior patient consent, or at any dental appointment.

Similarly, requests for patient data should also consider patient consent and how that will be sought. Unfortunately, retrospective or late requests may not be supported as the organisation has to balance the demands of research time with its core mission of providing clinical service.

Approval from PDSE should be sought before the ethics application is submitted. This can be obtained by filling in the relevant application form; the latter will enable PDSE to issue a gatekeeper's supporting letter. Further details on the process can be seen in Figure 1.

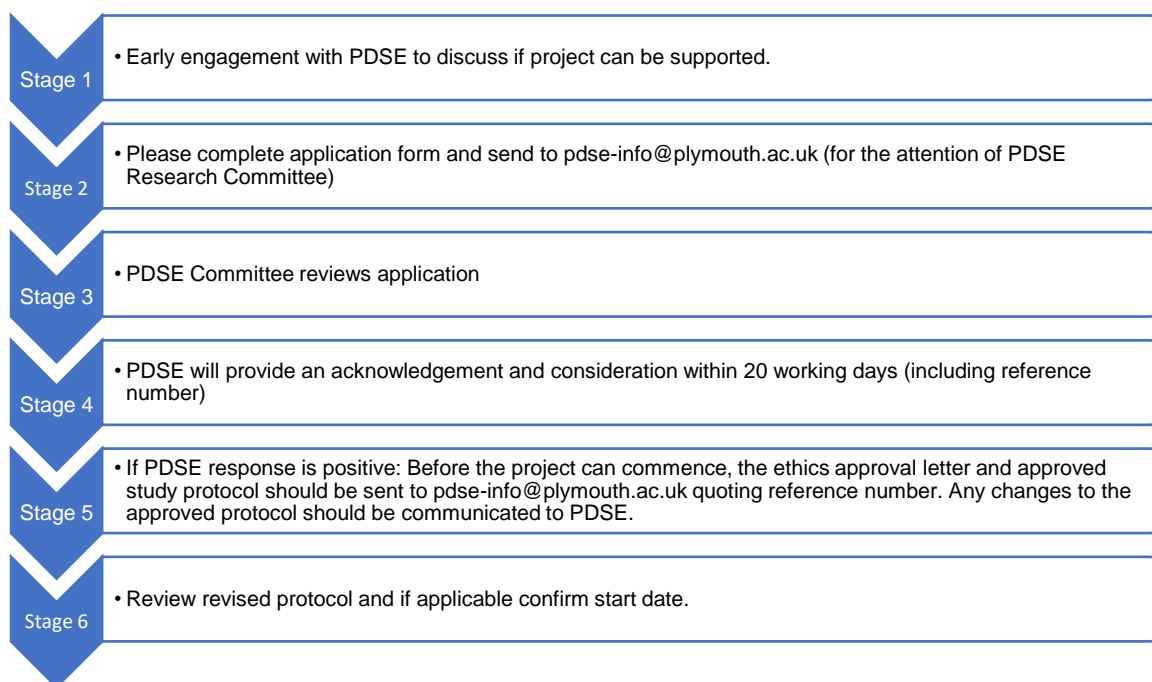


Figure 1. Pathway for obtaining a PDSE gatekeeper's letter

All requests/applications should be submitted for the attention of the PDSE Research Committee at: pdse-research@plymouth.ac.uk who will assign the information to the appropriate staff members. A response will be provided within 20 working days upon receipt of the project proposal.

Please note that if the request is regarding participation of PDSE staff in a research study (e.g. qualitative interviews), applications may be exempt from the process described above. In such cases, the PI is advised to contact pdse-research@plymouth.ac.uk (for the attention of PDSE Research Committee) to confirm need to fill in the application form.