

University Teaching and Research Ethics Policy

Operational Owner:	Chair, University Ethics Committee
Executive Owner:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation
Effective date:	1 st June 2021
Review date:	1 st June 2024
Related documents:	Code on Good Research Practice; Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct; Ethics Code of Practice; Intellectual Property Code (including patents); Health and Safety Policy; Dignity at Work and Study Policy; Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing Policy); Donations Policy and Accounting Procedures: Ethical Conduct Policy: Bribery, Fraud, Gifts, Hospitality and Conflicts of Interests; Regulations for Academic Integrity; Data Protection Policy; Grievance Policy and Procedure; Equality and Diversity; University Biosafety Manual; Research Data Management Policy; Records Management Strategy; Copyright Policy; Animal Welfare Policies; Sustainable Procurement Policy: Social Media Policy; Risk Management Policy; Prevent Policy; Statement on Modern Slavery; Information Security Policy; Export Controls Policy; Ethical Investment Policy; Environmental Policy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

Approval History

Version	Reviewed by	Brief reason for review	Approved by	Date
1	Ann Gallagher UEC Chair	Original Draft		9th February 2013
2	Ann Gallagher UEC Chair	Circulated to Research Integrity Committee members for comment	UEC/RIC	July 2014
3	Ann Gallagher UEC Chair	Update to section 2.2	URIC	January 2015
4	Christine Hine UEC Chair	Checks on webpage links and adding new relevant policies. Minor changes made.	URIC	25th Jan 2017
5	Kevin Wells UEC Chair	Policy reviewed and revised. Code of Practice introduced.	URIC	May 2021

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The University of Surrey is committed to conducting research, including research activities within teaching (e.g. Dissertation projects), to the highest ethical standards. This policy details the principles and procedures that underpin the promotion and maintenance of an ethical culture throughout the university. Further implementation details may be found in the companion document 'Ethics Code of Practice'.

The policy emphasises the values of respect, integrity and the promotion of an ethical culture for research driven by passion, collaboration, openness and curiosity. It also integrates the core elements of the concordat to support research integrity, honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, and care and respect.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The policy relates to all university staff (including emeritus staff), students and collaborators and extends to teaching, research and enterprise activity undertaken both in the UK and overseas.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 **Ethics** – The analysis and application of ethical concepts (i.e. what is valued in society in terms of behaviour and conduct) that describe and prescribe 'right' conduct and 'good' character of individuals within specific contexts. It also encompasses the ethical culture of organisations and consideration of the factors that enable or diminish human, animal and environmental flourishing.

1.3.2 **Research integrity** – This specifies the range of values and practices that contribute to the conduct of ethical research practice from the design to dissemination of research. The values as specified in the concordat to support research integrity include: honesty (emphasizing truthfulness in data collection and reporting of results); rigour (requiring appropriate and competent research methods in keeping with disciplinary norms and standards); transparency and open communication (regarding conflicts of interest and the trustworthiness of data reporting); and care and respect (relating to research participants and subjects – human and animals – and the stewardship of the environment, artefacts and data for future generations).

1.3.3 **Academic integrity** – This relates to ethical practice in all areas of academic research activity and professional conduct, including the design, execution, analysis and publication/dissemination of research. Such conduct is guided by adherence to agreed codes of practice and procedures that ensure fairness and create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

2 Policy

2.1 Principles

2.1.1 Respect for people

All members of the university community must demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the rights, interests and well-being of students, colleagues and research participants both within and outside the university. This involves upholding the principles, processes and behaviours described in the Ethics Code of Practice and may also involve raising and escalating concerns about unethical practices, research misconduct or academic misconduct in accord with university procedures.

2.1.2 Respect for non-human subjects and the external environment in research and education

All proposed research must demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and preserving the rights, interests and well-being of non-human species in research and education. It must also adhere to the three R's of animal research which emphasises wherever possible, the replacement, reduction and refinement of using animals in research. Should members have concerns about unethical practice, research misconduct or academic misconduct they have a duty to report and escalate these concerns in accord with university procedures (Whistle Blowing Policy, Research Integrity policy).

All proposed research should also minimize the risk of damage/impact to the environment and impact on culture and cultural heritage. This includes living habitats, local environments and preserving sites and environments pertaining to cultural heritage.

2.1.3 Promotion and maintenance of the ethical culture of the university

All members of the university community have an obligation to adopt an ethical approach when undertaking research and teaching-related research. This involves acting, at all times, in a manner that demonstrates honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, social justice and respectfulness for individuals, the environment and artefacts used in education and research.

2.1.4 Ethical engagement with external organisations and the international community

All members of the university community have an obligation to reflect on and enact ethical practice in their engagement and collaboration with external organisations, national and international. Where issues may arise, contact RIGO or the Chair of the UEC for advice.

Members of the university community embarking on research, and/or educational/teaching-related research activities within the University, or with external organisations and the international community must ensure that wherever possible, they act in accord with the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy is in accord with the Equality Act 2010 and covers the following protected characteristics: race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership; and pregnancy and maternity. Where university activities are conducted in other jurisdictions, there needs to be adherence to the local policies and laws that apply. Where these might conflict with the University's Ethics Policy and University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, then researchers should contact RIGO in the first instance for advice.

2.2 Procedures

2.2.1a Respect for people

University research involving human subjects must be considered for review either by the University Ethics Committee or an appropriate external ethics committee such as NHS/HRA, MOD Ethics Committee (MODREC) or Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service Ethics Committee. In the case of NHS patients' involvement, research studies will only be reviewed by an NHS Research Ethics Committee.

The process for submitting a case for review is described in the accompanying Code of Practice.

Should there be concerns regarding the conduct of university activities that impact negatively on individuals or groups, these should be raised and escalated in accord with the appropriate policy. These could include:

Ethics Code of Practice;

Code on Good Research Practice;

Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fraud in Research;

Donations Policy and Accounting Procedures;

Intellectual Property Code (including patents);

Health and Safety Policy;

Dignity at Work and Study Policy;

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing Policy);

Ethical Conduct Policy: Bribery, Fraud, Gifts, Hospitality and Conflicts of Interests; Regulations for

Academic Integrity;
Data Protection Policy;
Grievance Policy and Procedure;
University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan;
Research Data Management Policy;
Records Management Strategy;
Copyright Policy.

For advice on such matters, RIGO should be contacted in the first instance.

2.2.2a Adverse/Hazardous/Criminal events

University research using human participants must be considered for review either by the University Ethics Committee or an external research ethics committee. Part of any such review will consider the risks associated with the proposed work and mitigation against adverse events, including physical, environmental, emotional and psychological events. However, there may be occasions when an unanticipated adverse event is witnessed, or that information is disclosed to a researcher that raises concern for the safety of themselves, the research participant or others.

The guiding principles to be adopted in such situations are informed by the guidance from the British Psychological Society quoted below:

‘For the case of a crime or criminal act, researchers in the UK have no special legal protection that requires them to uphold confidentiality (as medical staff and lawyers do). Researchers and their data can be subject to subpoena where they may have evidence relating to a case. This legal situation should be taken into account by researchers when they offer confidentiality. Rather than absolute confidentiality, researchers may consider making the limits of confidentiality clear to respondents.’

In general in the UK, people who witness crimes or hear about them before or afterwards are not legally obliged to report them to the police. Researchers are under no additional legal obligations. [However] there exists a legal obligation to report information about three [particular] types of crime to the relevant authorities:

- i) Where a person has information relation to an act of terrorism, or suspected financial offences related to terrorism (Terrorism Act 2000);
- ii) Where a person has information about suspected instances of money laundering (Proceeds of Crime Act 2002). Although this legislation is aimed at those working in the regulatory sector, this legislation could potentially cover researchers. This is a complex area and researchers are advised to seek legal advice;
- iii) Where the researcher has information about the neglect or abuse of a child, there is a long-standing convention that researchers have responsibility to act. There is no legal obligation to do so, however Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gives power for individuals to disclose information to specific relevant authorities (engaged in crime prevention) for the purposes of the Act.

2.2.2b Confidentiality and Breaching Confidentiality of Research Participant Information

There may be occasions when information is disclosed to a researcher that raises concern for the safety of themselves, the research participant or others or concern that a criminal act is being/has been committed, or that an individual is at risk of harm.

As in section 2.2.2a, the approach adopted by University Policy in such situations is informed by guidance from the British Psychological Society quoted below:

‘Subject to the requirements of legislation, including the Data Protection Act, information obtained from

and about a participant during an investigation is confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance. Investigators who are put under pressure to disclose confidential information should draw this point to the attention of those exerting such pressure. Participants in [all] research have a right to expect that information they provide will be treated confidentially and, if published, will not be identifiable as theirs. In the event that confidentiality and/or anonymity cannot be guaranteed, the participant must be warned of this in advance of agreeing to participate.'

'The duty of confidentiality is not absolute in law and may in exceptional circumstances be overridden by more compelling duties such as the duty to protect individuals from harm.'

'Where a significant risk of such issues arising is identified in the risk assessment, specific procedures to be followed should be specified in the protocol'

From the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, Section 1.2:
<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf>

In any such cases advice should be sought from RIGO or the Chair of the UEC.

2.2.3 Respect for non-human subjects and the external environment in research

The University promotes a culture of welfare and respect for all non-human subjects. All University research on protected animals is legally covered by the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Amendment Regulations 2012 (ASPA). Under the ASPA, all research on protected and non-protected animals must be reviewed by the Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board (AWERB) which acts to advise the Establishment License Holder whether to support a project proposal. In addition, the AWERB helps promote a culture of care, awareness and application of the 3Rs (replacement, reduction, refinement) and reviews the development and outcome of projects carried out at the University as well as other tasks as specified in the ASPA. Ultimately project licenses personal licenses and the Establishment License are issued by the Home Office. Researchers must ensure that ethical standards of animal research are adhered to both in the UK and when such research is conducted in other countries.

The University operates a transparent and open policy with respect to all research involving animals. Queries about university research involving animals can be discussed with the Named Animal Welfare Care Officer (NACWO), the Chair of the AWERB, the named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) and the Establishment License Holder or directly with the Home Office Inspector Ethical review of activities involving animals, which fall outside the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 as amended in 2012 A(SP)A are assessed by the Non-ASPA Sub-Committee (NASPA) which advises on such activities. NASPA is a sub-committee of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB).

All proposed research should safeguard natural and physical external environments, cultural sites and especially those with links to cultural heritage in which research is undertaken. All such research should seek to identify and then mitigate all risks of damage/adverse impact to the environment/site and any impact on culture and cultural heritage. This includes living habitats, local environments and preserving sites and environments pertaining to cultural heritage or the local community.

2.2.4 Promotion and maintenance of the ethical culture of the university

The University of Surrey has mechanisms in place to maintain high standards of ethical conduct in education, research and enterprise that underpin an ethical culture. Should there be concerns regarding the conduct of university activities that impact negatively on individuals or groups, these should be raised with the UEC Chair or RIGO. This will facilitate the issue to be escalated in accord with the appropriate policy/code which may include:

Code on Good Research Practice;
Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct;
Intellectual Property Code (including patents);
Health and Safety Policy;
Dignity at Work Policy;
Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing Policy);
Ethical Conduct Policy: Bribery, Fraud, Gifts,
Hospitality and Conflicts of Interests;
Regulations for Academic Integrity;
Data Protection Policy and Procedure;
Grievance Policy and Procedure;
University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan;
University Biosafety Manual;
Data Management Plans/Record Management Strategy;
Sustainable Procurement Policy: Social Media Policy; Risk Management Policy; Prevent Policy;
Statement on Modern Slavery; Information Security Policy;
Export Controls Policy;
Ethical Investment Policy;
Environmental Policy and Copyright Policy.

2.2.5 Ethical engagement with external organisations and the international community

Members of the university community embarking on research activities, including consultancy, with external organisations and the international community are required to act in accord with the University Ethics Policy for Research and Teaching-related Research and the University's Equality Strategy. They are individually responsible for ensuring that they act in accord with local laws and regulations so long as these do not violate the Ethics Policy, other relevant University policies, Equality Strategy or international directives regarding human rights and non-discriminatory practice. Where there may be potential conflicts, members should in the first instance contact RIGO for advice.

Where there is uncertainty regarding the ethics of external engagement with particular individuals, organizations or countries - individuals should take advice from RIGO or the Chair of the University Ethics Committee.

3 Governance Requirements

3.1 Implementation / Communication Plan

3.1.1 Policy revision and Code of Practice circulated to all members of the UEC and key stakeholders in the research community for comment. Presented to University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) for comment before final approval at Senate.

3.1.2 A link to the policy and the associated Code of Practice is provided on the Research Ethics landing page: <https://research.surrey.ac.uk/ethics>

3.1.3 The policy and the associated Code of Practice are disseminated through the Research Integrity and Governance Office via its on-going work promoting ethics and governance through advice to staff and students using on-line material, drop-in surgeries and formal training events.

3.1.4 Paper-based copies of the Code of Practice, which also contains a copy of this Policy that informs the Code of Practice, is issued to all new staff and PGR students that undertake a research-component within their role. Paper-based copies are also available from RIGO.

3.2 Exceptions to this Policy

3.2.1 None applicable.

3.3 Review and Update

3.3.1 Policy to be reviewed every 3 years by the operational owner i.e. the UEC Chair.

3.3.2 Minor changes/reviews such as change of a role title or other titles or name which do not change the meaning of the policy to be undertaken by the operational owner as needed and presented to URIC and Senate for approval.

3.3.3 Major changes will be defined as representing anything that alters the meaning of the policy or represents substantial re-writes. Any such changes before the planned review date are to be submitted via the full approval route of URIC and then Senate.

3.4 Legislative context

3.4.1 There is a significant legislation which informs ethical research conduct at Surrey. Such legislation upholds the wider ethical standards reflective of the expectations of UK society and represents a legal, non-negotiable, compulsory framework for research activity.

Matters of legal, regulatory and policy compliance are handled by the Research Integrity & Governance Office. Such legislation that frequently impacts upon our research is listed below.

Human Rights Act 1998

Equality Act 2010

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Human Tissue Act 2004

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (amended 2012)

Data Protection Act 1998, 2018

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

The Declaration of Helsinki;

Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects

(see <http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/>)

3.5 Stakeholder Statements

3.5.1 Equality:

The ethics policy is in keeping with the requirements for non-discriminatory and inclusive practices as outlined in the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

3.5.2 Health & Safety:

Adherence to the principles and procedures of the ethics policy supports compliance with the requirements of Health and Safety legislation and policies. Researchers are referred to the University's Health & Safety policy for matters pertaining to physical risks to researcher's and participant's health and safety, and risks in the local environment.

Appropriate mitigations are needed in all research that involves a risk to a participant or researchers whether it is physical, psychological, mental or emotional well-being. Advice on this aspect can be obtained from RIGO. Good ethical practice includes attention to the health and safety of research

participants/subjects, researchers and the immediate environment.

3.5.3 Other:

None.