

Ethics for Teaching and Research Procedure

Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:	Our Research and Innovation - PVC, Research and Innovation - Executive Board
Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non-disclosable) ?	Disclosable
Associated Policy Statements:	Our Education - Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education
Authorised Owner:	Chair, University Ethics Committee
Authorised Co-ordinator:	Director of Research, Innovation and Impact
Effective date:	July 2025
Due date for full review:	July 2026

Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	To move policy into procedure template	URIC Executive Board	May 2025 June 2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The University of Surrey aligns with the principles outlined in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(2025\)](#) to support research integrity, in a way that is trustworthy, ethical, and responsible, fostering inclusion, equality, diversity and accessibility, care and respect in the pursuit of knowledge. This procedure provides guidance for all research activities, including those within teaching (e.g. Dissertation projects); whether conducted independently and in collaboration, to adhere and conform to scientific, ethical, legal, financial and governance standards throughout the research lifecycle, while safeguarding the dignity, rights, safety, and welfare of human participants (including their tissues and data), researchers, animals, and respecting the environment and cultural heritage.
- 1.2 All those involved in research share equal responsibility for considering the ethical aspects of their work throughout the life cycle of the research and the ethical principles and procedures that underpin the promotion and maintenance of an ethical culture throughout the university. These practices and values guide researchers to employ appropriate methodologies, report results accurately, acknowledge the contributions of others, and respect all participants involved in the research. Upholding research integrity is fundamental to maintaining public trust in science and ensuring the credibility and reliability of scientific outcomes.
- 1.3 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 behaviors described in the Ethics Guide and may also involve raising and escalating concerns about unethical practices, research misconduct or academic misconduct in accordance with the University's procedures.
- 1.4 The University expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, scientific and learned societies, and relevant professional bodies.
- 1.5 All researchers should be aware of the legal requirements which regulate their work, including health and safety legislation, data protection legislation and the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure applies to the research community: which includes all University staff including agency staff, visiting staff, Honorary Staff and Emeritus Professors and visiting Staff undertaking or supervising research at or for the University and all undergraduate and postgraduate students (both taught and research), whether registered here or on temporary placement.
- 2.2 This procedure covers activities undertaken in the UK or in any overseas location and includes research that may be led by another Institution, but where a University of Surrey researcher is contributing to research.
- 2.3 Researchers based overseas or researchers travelling to overseas locations will need to also abide by local laws and regulations, for example those relating to collecting and holding sensitive data.
- 2.4 Please note that this Procedure will apply to subsidiaries (e.g. Surrey Sports Park, Cervus+) unless the Procedure is specifically disapplied in the governance agreement between the Subsidiary and its parent.

3. Definitions and Terminology

- 3.1 **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, which creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect whilst promoting inclusivity and respect for diversity in learning environments.
- 3.2 **Research integrity:** Range of values and practices that contribute to the conduct of ethical research practice aligning with the Concordat (2025) values of trustworthy, ethical, and responsible research. Upholding research integrity is fundamental to maintaining public and institutional trust and ensuring the credibility and reliability of scientific outcomes.
- 3.3 **Research Misconduct:** Academic misconduct is defined as any breach of the University's [code on good research practice \(PDF\)](#), or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the research communities for proposing, conducting and/or reporting research. Misconduct in research would not normally include professional/academic differences in interpretation or judgment of data. For the avoidance of doubt, misconduct in research includes acts of omission as well as acts of commission. In addition, the standards by which allegations of misconduct in research should be judged should be those prevailing at the date that the behaviour under investigation took place.
- 3.4 **Equality:** The Ethics procedure is in keeping with the requirements for non-discriminatory and inclusive
- 3.5 **Ethics:** The analysis and application of moral concepts (societal values regarding behaviors and conduct) encompassing ethical culture based on values like honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Collecting demographic details for research falls under an **ethical review** as this includes informed consent, confidentiality, participant rights, privacy, and ethical conduct.
- 3.6 **Governance:** Includes both institutional, policy and compliance-based regulations e.g. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 3.7 **Honesty:** Includes the lifecycle of the research from research ideas, goals, dissemination of outcomes through authorship and detailing financial contributions.

4. Procedural Principles

4.1 Principles

- 4.1.1 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 Guide and may also involve raising and escalating concerns about unethical practices, research misconduct or academic misconduct in accordance with university procedures.
- 4.1.2 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 Procedure and University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, then researchers should contact Assurance or the Chair of the UEC for advice.

4.1.3 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, always, in a manner that demonstrates honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, social justice and respectfulness for individuals, the environment and artefacts used in education and research.

4.1.4 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 Assurance or the Chair of the UEC for advice.

4.2.1 Procedures

4.2.2 University research involving human subjects must be considered for review either by the University Ethics Committee (UEC) or an appropriate external ethics committee such as NHS/HRA, MOD Ethics Committee (MODREC) or Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) Ethics Committee.

The process for submitting a case for external review is described in the accompanying Ethics Guide.

4.2.3 Should there be concerns regarding the conduct of activities carried out on behalf of the University that impact negatively on individuals or groups, these should be raised and escalated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. For advice on such matters, Assurance should be contacted in the first instance.

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 Procedure and University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, then researchers should contact Assurance in the first instance for advice.

4.2.4 Risk Assessment: 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 unanticipated adverse events are 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 considered 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. 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. [Code of Ethics and Conduct | BPS](#)

Advice should be sought from Assurance or the Chair of the UEC.

4.2.5 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 Procedure). 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.

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) or is separately reviewed under the Non-ASPA (NASPA) sub-committee of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB).

Under the ASPA, all relevant research defined by the Act 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 conducted 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.

- 4.2.6 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 Assurance. This will facilitate the issue to be escalated in accord with the appropriate policy/code.

- 4.2.7 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 Procedure 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 procedure, 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 them for advice.

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

5. Governance Requirements

5.1 Implementation: Communication Plan

- 5.1.1 POPP revision has been circulated to UEC Chair and deputy UEC Chair. The POPP revision (once approved) and link to ethics guidance, including training materials and templates are currently available <https://research.surrey.ac.uk/ethics> and will be circulated to all members of the UEC and key stakeholders in the research community. The POPP revision is presented to the University Research Innovation and Impact Committee (URIC) for comment before final approval at Senate.
- 5.1.2 A refreshed Ethics Guide is currently being developed and will be provided
- 5.1.3 The procedure and the associated ethics guidance disseminated through Assurance via its on-going work promoting ethics and governance, through advice to staff and students using on-line material and formal training events.

5.2 Implementation: Training Plan

- 5.2.1 The University's ethics guidance webpages links resources below, the Doctorial College promotes ethics training to PGRs through an external training programme.
- 5.2.2 <https://research.surrey.ac.uk/ethics>
- 5.2.3 Research Ethics training is not mandatory. Training provision is under review but currently the RII Assurance Team provides some training on request to staff and students but mainly relating to research application submissions via Ethics RM.

5.3 Review

- 5.3.1 As the ethics guidance and training is currently under review, it is recommended that in the first instance this Procedure is reviewed after its first year by the operational owner.
- 5.3.2 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, Executive Board and Senate for approval.

5.3.3 Major changes are defined as representing anything that alters the meaning of the POPP 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.

5.4 **Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements**

5.4.1 **Legislation**

5.4.2 There is a significant piece of legislation which informs ethical research conducted at Surrey. Such legislation upholds 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 managed by Assurance. Such legislation that frequently impacts upon our research is listed below:

Human Rights Act 1998

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)

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 [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 The Declaration of Helsinki; [WMA Declaration of Helsinki – Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Participants – WMA – The World Medical Association](#)

Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects

5.4.3 There is a significant guidance provided across the University of Surrey supporting ethical research conducted at Surrey, including:

[Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research misconduct](#)

[Intellectual Property Code](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure \(whistleblowing\) Procedure](#)

[Ethical Conduct Procedure](#)

[Our Data Policy](#)

[Grievance Policy](#)

[Equality Policy](#)

[Biosafety and Biosecurity Procedure](#)

[Records Management Procedure](#)

[Risk Management Procedure](#)

[Prevent Policy](#)

[Modern Slavery Statement](#)

[Export Control Procedure](#)

[Our Operations Policy](#)

[Copyright Procedure](#)

5.5 **Sustainability**

5.5.1 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.

5.5.2 Application submissions are completed via online forms. There is a small amount of energy use, no waste, and no use of materials.

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on **01/05/2025** and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

6.2 Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	Request EB Approval (Y/N)	Date	Name of Contact
Governance	Emailed 16 th April		12/05/2025	Kelley Padley, Governance Officer secretariat@surrey
H&S	Emailed 16 th April	N	07/05/2025	M Purcell, Director of Health and Safety Safety@surrey
Sustainability	Emailed 16 th April			M Wyles sustainability@surrey
Academic Freedom/ Freedom of Speech	Emailed 16 th April		8 May 2025	a.bradbeer@surrey
Our Data Executive Owner	Emailed 16 th April			w.davies@surrey
Our Partners and reputation Executive Owner	Emailed 16 th April Emailed 16 th April			p.degg@surrey
Our Colleagues	Emailed 16 th April			w.davies@surrey.ac.uk
Our Education Executive Owner	Emailed 16 th April			Eunice.ma@surrey.ac.uk
Our Safety Executive Owner	Emailed 16 th April			w.davies@surrey.ac.uk
Our Students	Emailed 16 th			e.rowsell@surrey.ac.uk

Executive Owner	April			
EDI Representative	Emailed 18th June			j.mcCarthy-holland@surrey.ac.uk