**Guiding Principles for Access to Staff and Students at Sheffield Hallam University by External Researchers**

**BACKGROUND**

1. Each year the University is approached by external organisations requesting access to University staff and students for the purpose of participating in research projects. These requests are over and above internal research being undertaken using University staff and students as volunteers.
2. As a research and educational institution, the University is supportive of high quality academic and student research; however, the University has a duty of care to its staff and students and due diligence is required to ensure that external requests meet the charitable purposes of the University and that they do not place an unnecessary burden on staff, students and University resources.
3. The University Research Ethics Committee has approved guidelines and associated procedures for granting external organisations permission to access University staff and students for the purpose of research projects.
4. The following key personnel were consulted in developing these guidelines: Head of Research Ethics, Director of Student and Learning Services, Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Knowledge Transfer, Academic Affairs Executive Students Union and Learning and Information Services.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. The following principles must be followed:

1. The proposed research must meet the charitable aims of a Higher Education Institution and must demonstrate that it meets the definition of public good research (Research by Higher Educations, The Charity Commission June 2009).
2. The proposed research must have received a favourable ethics opinion from an appropriate ethics committee; the University will accept the decision made by another University's ethics committee.
3. The proposed research must comply with the Data Protection Act 1988 (amended).
4. External researchers must provide all documentation requested by the University to ensure appropriate processes and procedures have been followed. This includes a full research protocol, written confirmation of ethics approvals, participant information and informed consent sheets. Participants will be required to complete a University authorisation form.
5. Participation by staff and students must be entirely voluntary and individuals must be free to withdraw at any time with no adverse consequences. Staff and students should not be taken away from normal duties nor should they be expected to recruit participants.
6. Generally, individual contact with named staff or students is deemed not appropriate as this may place unnecessary burden on individuals; furthermore all staff emails are not recommended in line with Corporate Communications policy approved by the University Executive in 2005. It is recommended that a short advertisement together with a survey link or document is placed on staff and/or student websites so that individuals can respond if they chose to do so. All advertisements will be time limited. The exception to this is if the research is considered to be of high importance to the University in which case individuals or groups may be targeted directly, again participation must be voluntary.

1. The University will not consider applications from undergraduate students registered at another Higher Education Institution or members of staff acting on behalf of an undergraduate student.
2. The University can deny access at any time due to internal pressures including, but not limited to, examination periods, internal surveys, conflicting research projects, lack of available resources.
3. The University can deny access at any time if appropriate documentation or assurances are not provided or if the research matter is considered inappropriate for the institution.
4. For the avoidance of doubt it is noted that individual staff and students may voluntarily participate in research projects of their own choosing at all times.

**PROCESS**

1. All enquiries should be directed to the Research Support Team (RST) in the Research and Innovation Office ([researchsupport@shu.ac.uk](mailto:researchsupport@shu.ac.uk)). RST will act as single point of contact and will assess all applications using a standard procedure.
2. External organisations must complete a pro-forma (SHUREC4) and provide all necessary supporting information as requested by the University. Information should be submitted to the Research Support Team who will undertake initial quality assurance checks in line with the established principles. Projects will be assessed on a case by case basis.
3. Projects that meet the established principles will be recommended for University approval using a standard pro-forma (SHUREC5). Projects that fail to meet the established principles will be rejected by RST (following consultation with the Head of Research Ethics or nominee). The external organisation will be informed of the outcome but the decision of the University is final.
4. The Head of Research Ethics and/or PVC Research and Knowledge Transfer will act as University authoriser with the power to grant overarching access to staff and students for research purposes. Heads of Faculty Research Ethics Committees will act as advisors where required.
5. If access to a particular subject group(s) is required additional approval will be sought from the Head of Subject area or Research Centre as appropriate.
6. Following University approval RST will liaise with appropriate Departments to ensure the research project is advertised appropriately.

1. The Research Support Team will monitor annual external requests and report annually to the University Research Ethics Committee. All records will be kept in the Research and Innovation Office in accordance with University data retention guidelines.

**PRO-FORMA FOR EXTERNAL RESEARCH REQUESTING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS (SHUREC4)**

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| **SHU reference number:** (please quote on all correspondence) |  |

**TO BE COMPLETED BY EXTERNAL ORGANISATION**

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| **Summary Information** | | |
|  |  |  |
| Principal Applicant |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Research Institution |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Funding Source (include funder reference number if available) |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Full Project Title |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Short Project Description (max 4000 characters) |  |  |
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| **Resources** | | |
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| Provide details of staff or student group(s) to which access is requested |  |  |
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| Provide details of how staff/student group(s) will be accessed |  |  |
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| What are the resource implications for staff and/or students? |  |  |
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| What are the resource implications for Sheffield Hallam University? |  |  |
| **Other issues** | | |
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| Has this project received a favourable ethics opinion? |  | Please attach formal ethics review and favourable opinion as an appendix or separate document |
|  |  |  |
| Is the project sensitive in nature? If yes, please detail specific issues. |  |  |
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| Please provide the full research methodology including participant information sheets and/or surveys |  | Please attach as an appendix or separate document |
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| How will the results be disseminated? |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| How will you ensure compliance with DPA 1988 and ensure participant confidentiality? |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Will the University be identified and listed as a participant? |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Please detail indemnity and/or sponsorship arrangements |  |  |
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| Does the proposed research meet the charitable aims of a HEI and does it meet the definition of public good research in accordance with "Research by Higher Educations, The Charity Commission June 2009"? |  |  |