

Research ethics protocols - guidance to students

This document is addressed to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who are undertaking research as part of a summative assessment such as a dissertation. Research is sometimes undertaken as part of a work placement and the same guidance on obtaining a favourable ethics review from the University for the Study applies if the organisation has not already done this through its own systems. Your module leader can advise.

All research undertaken which involves direct contact with human participants, (whether clinical, biomedical or social research) or the secondary use of human and animal materials or specimens, or where there may be any other ethical issues, should be subject to ethical review.

Your research must also confirm to all legal requirements, which includes compliance with relevant data protection legislation, undergoing appropriate screening (e.g. DBS) when working with vulnerable groups, and strict adherence to standard operating procedures and licensing requirements for any animal, biomedical or other research associated with the collection and analysis of human tissue.

It is important that whilst you are undertaking research that you follow the accepted research procedures and behave appropriately. This requires you to:

- obtain the appropriate ethical approval for your research before you begin;
- avoid unreasonable risk or harm to humans or animals used in research and to the environment;
- obtain appropriate permissions to undertake research from participants and organisations;
- handle privileged or confidential information on individuals collected during research in an approved manner including appropriate disposal of such material;
- follow approved procedures when producing or dealing with hazardous materials including chemical, biological and genetically modified materials.

Prior to the collection of any data, you are required to complete the appropriate Research Ethics Proforma and to obtain any necessary ethical approvals for your research. You must then undertake your research in strict accordance with the ethical approval received. Your supervisor will advise you of the correct procedures you need to follow. If you wish to change any of the procedures described in your Research Ethics Proforma or add any others you must discuss this with your supervisor and submit an amended Proforma. You cannot proceed until your amendment is approved.

Failure to follow or comply with the correct procedures may result in an allegation of unethical practice under the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#). Full details of the forms of misconduct which could be considered to constitute academic misconduct are listed within the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).