



CODE OF PRACTICE ON RESEARCH ETHICS INTRODUCTION

Norwich University of the Arts has a responsibility for ensuring that the research conducted by its staff and students maintains the highest possible standards of integrity, is conducted in accordance with the law, and is consistent with best practice.

This document defines the scope of the University's Code of Practice on Research Ethics, sets out the guiding principles, and outlines the obligations and responsibilities for staff and students conducting research and knowledge exchange in an ethical manner. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Code may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

This code is part of the University's framework for supporting good practice in research and is linked to the following University documents:

Research Governance and Standards Policy

Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research

Research Ethics Checklist

Guidance for Research Ethics Approval

IT Acceptable Use Policy

Data Protection Policy

Intellectual Property Policy and Regulations

1 DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

1.1 The definition of research used by the University Research is defined as *a process of creative inquiry that leads to new understandings effectively shared.*

1.2 The definition of research includes the following:

- **Scholarship:** the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information.

1.3 For the purposes of the Code of Practice on Research Ethics the following will also be included:

- **Consultancy:** the development and interpretation of existing knowledge for specific applications.
- **Professional practice:** the interpretation and application of knowledge within a professional setting.

2 Guiding Principles

2.1 The guiding principles of this Code are **respect for persons, justice, and beneficence.**

2.2 **Respect for persons** recognises the capacity and rights of all individuals to make their own choices and decisions. It refers to the autonomy and rights to self-determination of all human beings, acknowledges their dignity, freedom and rights. An important component of this principle is the need to provide special protection to vulnerable persons.

2.3 The principle of **justice** obliges the researcher to distribute equally the risks and benefits of

participation in research. Any risks to persons participating in research must be weighed against any potential benefits - to the participants or the researchers, and also the wider benefits to society of the knowledge gained. As with the principle of respect for persons, there is a need to protect vulnerable groups.

- 2.4 **Benefit** is the principle of doing good in the widest sense. It requires researchers to serve the interests and well-being of others. In so doing, researchers comply with the principle of not doing or permitting, any foreseeable harm, including infringement of rights, as a consequence of research activities. Recognising potential harm as a result of research activity involves identifying **risk**; assessing and mitigating risk aims to reduce the probability of the occurrence of risk, or the severity of the consequences of the risk.

3 **Obligations, Rights and Responsibilities**

Legal and procedural requirements

- 3.1 Researchers should comply with the legal requirements and possible repercussions associated with research activity.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of researchers to conduct their research in line with the guiding principles set out above. Compliance implies giving due consideration to the ethical dimensions of any research undertaking, and this, in turn, implies that the researcher undertakes an assessment of risk in relation to these guiding principles. The University provides guidance on the assessment of risk in the NUA Guidance for Research Ethics Approval.
- 3.3 Researchers are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with the University's procedures for scrutinising, approving and monitoring research activity and for complying with them.
- 3.4 Researchers are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in conducting, publishing or exhibiting the outcomes of their research. This includes formally acknowledging the contributions and assistance of others, collaborating partners, honouring contractual agreements, copyrights, and the ownership of intellectual property and avoidance of any practice likely to mislead as to the origin, validity, novelty or ownership of what is presented.
- 3.5 Researchers must consider other rules of conduct that may apply to their research and ensure compliance. For example, particular codes of practice and rules of engagement apply to work in archives, museums and galleries. Research in areas that are security sensitive must mitigate the risks to the researcher involved in accessing and/or storing and/or disseminating material that may be regarded as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts. Work in hospitals and other medical institutions may require proposals for research to be approved by an NHS ethics committee.
- 3.6 Researchers are expected to comply with the Code of Ethics and/or standards of professional practice of any professional body or subject association of which they are members. They should also be aware of any code of ethics, which applies to potential and actual collaborators on the project and/ or other participants. Where the location of the research is external to the University it is essential that the regulations, procedures, practices and guidelines, which are relevant in these situations, are taken into account.

General principles

- 3.7 Researchers must not compromise the overriding principles of benefit and risk, legal obligations and any pre-existing rights in the conduct of research.
- 3.8 Researchers must weigh up the potentially conflicting risks and benefits of a particular piece of research.
- 3.9 Researchers should consider the ethical implications of the research and the physiological, psychological, social, political, religious, cultural and economic consequences of the involvement of participants. Researchers should be sensitive to different cultures and belief systems when conducting the research.

- 3.10 Where the researcher is not fully competent or sufficiently informed to make a fair judgment about the conflicting needs and interests of direct and indirect participants, it is essential that specialist advice is sought (see procedures below).
- 3.11 The **independence of research** must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicitly declared.
- 3.12 In research involving active participants, the prior documented **informed consent** of a participant (or their guardian/gatekeeper) is essential.
- 3.13 Consent regarding about the publication, dissemination, and exploitation of research including any non-disclosure agreements and intellectual property rights must be clearly set out prior to the conduct of the research.
- 3.14 Prior to gaining informed consent the researcher should ensure that participants are fully informed of the nature and the purpose of the research in advance of the participation.
- 3.15 Where research gathers information from individual persons from which they can be identified, there is an obligation for the researcher to respect the person's **privacy**, rights to **confidentiality** and if the information is recorded in any medium as data the researcher must address **data protection** and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Issues of confidentiality and privacy are distinct from each other and from data protection. Researchers are responsible for considering each of these in their assessment of the ethical dimensions of their research. For further guidance: (link to):
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/the-research-provisions/>