University of Bath

BITE SIZE GUIDE TO ETHICS IN RESEARCH

We must apply the highest ethical standards in our research:

- To ensure compliance with Research Councils that require research to be conducted according to ethical principles
- To promote the aims of the research to extend knowledge and avoid errors or misrepresentation
- To foster trust in collaborative working
- To demonstrate that public funding has been used for proper purposes
- To help build public support for research
- To reflect human values and concern for animal welfare
- To protect the University’s reputation nationally and internationally

Where can I find guidance on ethical matters?

Guidance on ethical principles and procedures can be found in the following places:

- University’s Institutional Code of Ethics (http://www.bath.ac.uk/about/values/ethics/code-of-ethics.html)
- University’s Code of Good Practice in Research (http://www.bath.ac.uk/opp/docs/code-of-good-practice-in-research-integrity.pdf)
- University’s Procedure for inquiring into allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship (http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/pdf/ethics/allegations-of-misconduct-in-research-procedure.pdf)
- Academic integrity (students) (http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/enhance-learning-experiences/academic-integrity.html)
- University’s Department Ethics Officer and Second Reader Role Definitions (http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/bodies-and-committees-senate/ethics/dreoroledefinitionV4May2010.pdf and http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/governance/ethics/)
- Mental Capacity Act (http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/ethics/mca.html)
- Human Tissue Act (http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/governance/ethics/hta.html)
- Professional body guidance (http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/ethics/)
- UUK Concordat to support Research Integrity (http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx)

Researchers should always act with honesty, integrity, accountability, openness, minimal risk to participants, collaborators and themselves, sensitivity to cultures and environments.

How do I review the ethical implications of projects?

For all research grant proposals:

- Complete the EIRA 1 form Ethical Implications of Research Activity (http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/ethics/)
  
  This should be completed by Principal Investigators (PIs) for all research proposals. The PI will pass the completed template to a Second Reader and then on to the Head of Department (to accompany RS1 and the research grant proposal). The completed signed template should then be passed to the Departmental Research Ethics Officer (DREO), who will review issues for action and inclusion in Departmental Annual Monitoring Report. (The DREO is also available to advise on identifying/assessing ethical issues and completion of this form.) Where significant ethical issues arise on which additional guidance is required, this can either be given within the Faculty/School (particularly where there is an Ethics Committee) or by the University Ethics Committee.

- Queries on the University ethics process can be sent to: ethics@lists.bath.ac.uk
Whilst not required for other types of project, it is recommended that ethical review or completion of the EIRA 1 form is undertaken for unfunded research, extension to projects, travel grants, consultancies and other types of projects and external partnerships.

If your research will involve the recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS, then you will need to submit an application to the NHS through IRAS, see: https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/

If blood or tissue samples are to be obtained from participants, then you will need to be aware of obligations under the Human Tissue Act, see further information at http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/governance/ethics/hta.html

What other resources are available to me?

There are a number of online courses run through the Researcher Development Unit

- Introduction to Ethics in Research (http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/rdu/courses/pgskills/modules/RP00289.htm)
- Research Ethics and Governance (http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/rdu/courses/researchersatbath/modules/RP00258.htm)

Who are the key University individuals involved in ethics?

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)  Professor Jane Millar
Chair of Ethics Committee  Professor Marjorie Weiss
Chair of SSREC (Social Science Research Ethics Committee)  Dr Chris Ashwin
Chair of REACH (Research Ethics Approval Committee for Health)  Dr Gordon Taylor
Psychology Ethics Committee  Dr Michael Proulx
Executive Assistant (Research)  Ms Emma Perry (Health Research Sponsorship)
Faculty/School Ethics Officers and Departmental Research Ethics Officers (http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/bodies-and-committees-senate/ethics/dreos.html)
University Secretary  Mr Mark Humphriss

If in doubt about the ethical propriety of research, contact one of the above. If questions relate to safety and well being, there is a list of contacts at: http://www.bath.ac.uk/hr/stayingsafewell/contacts.html

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What Issues Should I Consider when Reviewing a Research Project?

(Ethics presentation, PGCAPP programme for new lecturers)

Funder

- Source – *The University does not engage with funders that may compromise the University’s reputation for impartiality, integrity and disinterested inquiry. The University does not accept funds from the tobacco industry or engage in research damaging to the public interest or the common good.*
- Future use – *If you can foresee that the outcomes of your research could be used for applications incompatible with human values or adversely affect animal welfare, then you should not proceed.*

Recruitment of Participants

- Vulnerability – *Are participants from a vulnerable group? (children, people with learning disabilities?)*
- Power dynamics – *Could potential participants feel coerced into having to participate?*
- Data protection – *Will personal identifiable information be kept confidential?*
- Information – *What information will be provided to potential participants to aid their decision making?*

Enrolling

- Time to decide – *Will potential participants be given enough time to decide whether or not they want to participate?*
- Informed consent – *Will they be given the information needed to make a truly informed decision about participating?*
- Capacity to consent – *Does the potential participant have the capacity to consent?*
- Ability to withdraw – *Is the potential participant aware that they can withdraw and know how to do this?*

Safety & integrity

- Confidentiality – *Will personal information be kept confidential?*
- Protecting information – *Will study information be kept securely? What measures will be taken?*
- Protecting participants – *Will the research process expose the participant to any potential harm?*
- Protecting researchers – *Will the research process expose the researchers to any potential harm?*
- Manage risks – *How will potential risks to participants and researchers be managed and by whom?*
- Integrity – *Is it necessary to access all the material to achieve an effective outcome?*

Dissemination

- To those involved – *Will participants have access to the research findings?*
- To translate into practice – *How will the findings be translated into practice?*
- To key stakeholders – *How will the findings be disseminated to key stakeholders?*
- Freedom to publish – *Do you have full freedom to publish? There should be no restrictions imposed by the funder with regard to method or outcome, if research is conducted within normal scientific and research conventions.*