University Centre Peterborough

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

Introduction

University Centre Peterborough (UCP) is committed to ensuring that all research undertaken in its name is carried out to the highest level of ethical standards. We do this by informing researchers of the overarching principles of research integrity and honesty, and promoting compliance with relevant legislation and policy requirements.

This document sets out UCP's general policy on the ethical conduct of research. Students and staff must be read this policy conjunction with the *Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval at University Centre Peterborough*, which is available at: https://canvas.ucp.ac.uk/courses/886

This Research Ethics Policy, and the associated supporting and advisory documents, apply to all students, staff and groups as defined below, and to all types and stages of research. The policy complements that of Anglia Ruskin University, who, as the accrediting body, have approved UCP's policies and procedures for ethics.

It is important that researchers at UCP understand that they are responsible for complying with all legislation relevant to their research, including that which is enacted after research has commenced (and may necessitate new approvals). This policy and associated documents are intended to provide guidance, but cannot replace the individual responsibility that each researcher bears in this respect.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, research is defined as 'the attempt to derive generalisable new knowledge by addressing clearly defined questions with systematic and rigorous methods'[1] and 'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.'[2]

We define 'researcher' to mean all undergraduate students, taught postgraduate students and staff of University Centre Peterborough who are undertaking research. In addition, it includes anyone involved in conducting research with UCP, whether on or off our premises or in collaboration with our staff and/or students, including on a consultancy basis. This includes those doing research on a collaborative basis, even if another institution is the lead HEI/organisation and/or the researchers are not employed by UCP. The policy also covers students of UCP who are conducting research, whether on our premises, or elsewhere under our auspices.

> **UCP thanks ARU for their support and for permitting the use and adaptation of their documentation and resources by UCP.**

---

[1] *UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research (2020)*: https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/
[2] *REF2021 Guidance on submissions,* available at: https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1447/ref-2019_01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf

Underpinning Principles

When planning, undertaking and disseminating research, researchers should consider the following seven principles:

Beneficence
Researchers should consider how their research might benefit individuals or groups through the generation of new knowledge or an additional contribution to existing knowledge. The educational value realised by students by carrying out research, even though they do not generate new knowledge, or make an additional contribution to existing knowledge, is also a valid benefit, but such lower-level benefits should be realised by projects of lower ethical risk.

Non-maleficence
Researchers should undertake research with due regard to minimising the risks of physical, emotional, social and economic harm to all those involved. It is important to remember that it is not possible to eliminate all risks. There needs to be a balance between the potential benefits of a research project and the possible risks. Researchers should ensure that strategies are in place should anyone be harmed as a result of participating in a study.

Fidelity
Researchers should seek to build a trusting relationship with research participants. By agreeing to participate in a study, research participants are entrusting themselves to the researcher, who subsequently has an obligation to safeguard the welfare of participants in the research setting.

Justice
Researchers should always seek to be open minded toward potential research participants. That is, they should operate with the assumption that there are no individuals or groups in society who cannot be involved in their research.

Veracity
Researchers should generally be truthful and not deceive research participants. As part of the process of giving informed consent, research participants should be fully informed about what the research is about (it is, however, accepted that this would not be possible for some types of research project, but justification needs to be provided for this and risks to participants carefully addressed).

Autonomy
Apart from when the nature of the research makes this impossible, researchers should ensure that participants give informed consent freely before and during their participation in the research. Special care should be taken in recruiting participants who might be considered vulnerable. Where appropriate, researchers must comply with the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019.

Confidentiality
Researchers should seek to maintain confidentiality within the limitations of research. It is recognised that there are some circumstances where confidentiality may need to be breached, for example disclosure of the risk of harm to a research participant or others. Researchers should have strategies in place to address cases where disclosure is appropriate.

Ethical Obligations on Researchers

UCP requires its researchers to uphold the highest ethical standards, as set out in this policy. UCP considers that all research should be conducted with ethics of respect for:
- the person
- knowledge
- democratic values
- the quality of educational research
- academic freedom[3]

This means that they must conduct their research, wherever it takes place, in a way which:
- respects the autonomy, rights and welfare of participants
- minimises risk to participants and researchers
- respect participants' rights to withdraw from the research at any time
- appropriately manages personal data.

In order to ensure that research activities are conducted in line with the underpinning principles described above, UCP provides a robust and independent ethical review process that is proportionate to the potential risk of the research. Ethics applications are treated as confidential.

Researchers are required to fully participate in the ethical review process. Our documentation is intended to outline both what is permitted and what is not permitted so that the parameters are clear. We encourage student researchers to apply for approval within 6 weeks of starting their final year of study and outcomes are communicated to their supervisors within 5 working days of STEP meetings.

Researchers who are involved as research partners with other organisations should ensure that ethical approval has been given by a properly constituted ethics committee and that such approval fully covers their own involvement in the research. Whilst duplication of ethical review is avoided wherever possible, researchers should check with their Step 1 or Step 2 Ethics Panel (STEP) Chair whether ethical approval from UCP is also required.

Researchers must also obtain any other permissions and agreements, as required. Researchers are responsible for seeking additional insurance for their research if required and complying with professional and other codes of practice and legislation relating to their research.

It is the responsibility of researchers to familarise themselves with this Research Ethics Policy and the *Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval at University Centre Peterborough*. Supervisors, as co-researchers with their charges, are expected in addition to assist their students in becoming familiar with this Research Ethics Policy, *the Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval at University Centre Peterborough*, and the ethical review process.

All students, supervisors of undergraduate and taught postgraduate students and ethics committee members are required to undertake recognised ethics training. Supervisors and

---

[3] *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (*BERA, 2018),* available at:
https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018

students who do not need to apply for ethical approval, as detailed in the *Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval,* are exempt from the training.

Compliance with ethics policy and procedures

Failure to comply with our ethics procedures can result in an allegation of misconduct. An investigation may be undertaken to determine the nature and severity of the breach and the penalty that should be prescribed.

Research misconduct – in which case the Guidance for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research is relevant. RIDO should be informed of cases that have been resolved informally; those that cannot be resolved informally should be escalated to the DVC R&I at ARU.

https://web.anglia.ac.uk/anet/academic/public/academic_regs.pdf

https://web.aru.ac.uk/anet/rido/ethics/about/researchintegrity.phtml

A disciplinary offence – in which case UCP's student or staff disciplinary procedures will apply:

Student Disciplinary procedures are outlined in the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students, at: https://ucp.ac.uk/supporting-you/ucp-policies

The Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure is available to staff via Happeo (Quality > Policies > HR)

GDPR

Research must comply with the Data Protection Act (2018). Where research involves using personal data, under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) participants must be informed of the following:

- The identity and contact details of the controller and the data protection officer
- The purpose of the processing and the lawful basis for the processing
- The categories of personal data that will be collected
- The recipients of the personal data
- Details of any transfers to countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and safeguards
- The retention period for the data
- The participant's data rights
- The contact details for lodging a complaint or data request

The above information must be provided within a Participant Information Sheet, a template for which is available via the Canvas Research Ethics site: https://canvas.ucp.ac.uk/courses/886

UCP adopts a risk-based approach to the collection of personal and special category data. Our Data Protection Officer is consulted on research that falls outside of parameters

defined by our *Further Data Protections* document. The procedures for reporting a data breach, which include completion of the Data Breach Report Form, are detailed within Policy GDPR01, available via https://ieg.ac.uk/published-documents

Complaints

Initial enquiries or expressions of concern about the research ethics processes at University Centre Peterborough can be made via the SREP Executive Secretary in the first instance – ethics@ucp.ac.uk

Complaints arising from research activity should be dealt with through the appropriate University Centre Peterborough procedures. Information on the complaints procedure may be found with the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students, at: https://ucp.ac.uk/supporting-you/ucp-policies

Further Information
Students and staff can find operational information on the above expectations and requirements, including further links, contact details etc in the *Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval at University Centre Peterborough*, available at:
https://canvas.ucp.ac.uk/courses/886
First time users of Canvas will need to self-enrol via link
https://canvas.ucp.ac.uk/enroll/NMFDP7

Date 26/7/23
V5