

GAP/2009/0521

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

**Research Ethics and Research Governance at Lancaster:
a code of practice**

Research at Lancaster shall be conducted in line with the principles set out below, and shall at all times be legal and transparent, and place the responsibility and accountability on the principal investigator or research supervisor. All researchers, but especially principal investigators and research supervisors, have that responsibility.

2. Collaborative research partnerships

2.1 Research partnerships and collaborations are welcomed between researchers locally, nationally and internationally, provided that:

- (a) all members of the research partnership or collaboration and all others involved, including students, adhere to codes of ethical practice as laid down by member institutions or other organisations, including Lancaster;
- (b) members and other workers shall receive no undeclared benefits from

3. Ethical behaviour: general guidance

- 3.1 Ethical behaviour includes openness as the norm, including information about methodology and findings, except on occasions when the funder or sponsor of the research lays down conditions about dissemination to which the researcher and his/her institution give their assent in advance.
- 3.2 The principal investigators have a key stake in maintaining ethical conduct in their own research and in that of staff and students in their charge, including discipline-specific expertise and judgement of what is ethically appropriate in the field concerned.
- 3.3 The research undertaken must be lawful, must comply with national legislation, and should seek to comply with all relevant national and international codes of ethical practice, and with the Human Rights Act.
- 3.4 The dissemination of research findings (subject to 3.1) must be transparent and open to peer review and public comment where applicable. The findings must be presented honestly and accurately, should avoid the withholding of any material information, and should wherever possible be made accessible to non-specialists.
- 3.5 Agreement by staff to enter into confidentiality clauses in whole or in part (subject to 3.1 above) should be given only where strictly necessary; for example when commercial, security or personal data are involved, should wherever possible be time-limited, and should not lead to damage to the careers or lives of research workers or research participants.

4. Responsibility for other persons

- 4.1 Lancaster University respects the safety, wellbeing and human rights of those with whom we interact. Respect means that we will not tolerate actions or omissions that expose these people – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – to abuse, harm or neglect. The University operates a [safeguarding framework](#) designed to promote good practice and protect those with whom we interact. Those operating under this policy are required to be aware of its contents and to implement these in the fulfilment of the University's work. Advice and guidance on how this framework operates in relation to this policy is available from the [Head of Research Quality & Policy](#).
- 4.2 The University has a legal obligation to ensure that harassment on the grounds of Protected Characteristics does not take place as this is discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. Protected Characteristics include age, disability, gender identify and expression, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The University operates a [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and expects those operating under this policy to be aware of its contents and to implement those in the fulfilment of the University's work.

- 4.3 Research shall not be undertaken that involves an undue risk to the health, safety or well-being of any person involved. Risks shall where possible be identified in advance, evaluated, and monitored, and accepted if found to be reasonable and manageable.
- 4.4 The importance of training appropriate to the research undertaken is paramount, especially where independent or individual fieldwork is involved, and irrespective of the status of the person involved.
- 4.5 Where a principal investigator or other senior researcher delegates responsibility for aspects of the research, the competence of the person(s) to whom the delegation is made should be assured.
- 4.6 The University shall maintain and uphold a culture in which difficulties and errors in research methods, procedures or findings can be discussed promptly and openly, without inappropriate recrimination and with an anticipation of active support for the researcher(s) involved.
- 4.7 Respect for participants and animal subjects, having regard to the vulnerability of any individual or group, is a fundamental principle, and procedures shall be drawn up in advance about these matters (see Procedures and Implementation, Appendix 3). Alternatives to their involvement, especially of animals, should in all cases be considered.
- 4.8 Significant changes in methodology or mode of dissemination after the research has commenced, having implications that the principal investigator judges to have a direct impact on the ethical status of the project, shall be notified and where appropriate approved, via the same process as for the original project approval, and prior to implementation.
- 4.9 As part of the research grant approval process, all principal investigators shall complete a checklist that commits them to the appropriate actions in respect of their own conduct and that of other persons.

5. Conduct towards external bodies

- 5.1 The University has no limitation on the range of legal external bodies with whom research might be conducted. Nevertheless, it pays particular attention to the ethical duties laid on it by UK Research and Innovation, the UK National Health Service, the relevant UK and EU legislation in force from time to time, and by the tenets of the present document.
- 5.2 Researchers shall behave ethically towards external bodies with which they are

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5.4 Researchers shall act appropriately in respect of access to premises, personnel, information or expertise of any external body or its members.

6. Research misconduct

6.1 The University, while anticipating that all its members will act ethically, nevertheless has safeguards in place for use in the event of [alleged or actual research misconduct](#) or malpractice, and to prevent corrupt practices and professional misconduct.

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whether a colleague, or a student whose work is submitted to the member of staff, or a person who is not a member of the university;

- misappropriation of work, including copying or paraphrasing, by a member of staff from another source (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.), whether in unpublished or published form (including electronic sources) of another person, without appropriate acknowledgement or, where appropriate, approval;
- duplication of existing or almost identical work by the staff member

For the avoidance of doubt misconduct in research includes acts of omission as well as acts of commission.

The University's Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research can be found here [insert hyperlink when updated policy finalised]

- 6.3 Statute 22, Complaints and Disclosures, in conjunction with the procedures set out in Ordinance 8, give safeguards to employees of the University who make a complaint or disclosure, including in matters relating to research.
- 6.4 There is a University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), reporting to the Research Committee. Its remit includes a responsibility to consider issues of privacy, confidentiality and ethical behaviour between researchers and human subjects, the inadvertent disclosure of information about illegal activities, and the ethical responsibilities of the University's researchers, including flaws in procedures or practice. The University is committed to bringing active external members onto the committee, to ensure that there is external verification of the university's procedures and practices.
- 6.5 Faculty research ethics committees (FRECs), report to the University Research Ethics Committee. Faculty research ethics committees, through the associate deans for research, have access to the University Research Ethics Committee for guidance on matters that are causing significant concern, and give guidance on specific items referred to them.

June 2021

Bibliography

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CIHE and Brunel, *Managing Ethical Issues in Higher Education* (undated)

UKRIO, *Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research* (August 2008)

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