

# College of Arts, Humanities and Business

## Research Ethics Guidelines and Policy Statements

The University subscribes to nine key principles relating to ethical research and expects all researchers to abide by these principles.

1. All research carried out involving human subjects should abide by the guidance set out in the Declaration of Helsinki. <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/>
2. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality as stated in the University's Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Integrity and Quality Assurance in Research. [https://www.bangor.ac.uk/research-innovation-and-impact-office/research\\_integrity&ethics.php.en](https://www.bangor.ac.uk/research-innovation-and-impact-office/research_integrity&ethics.php.en) (under Codes of Practice)
3. All participants must be fully informed of the purpose, methods, and intended possible uses of the research, and what risks (if any) are involved.
4. The confidentiality of materials and information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
5. Human research participation will normally be voluntary.
6. Risk to human research participants must be minimized.
7. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.
8. All research involving animals must adhere to the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement.
9. Approval for carrying out research with ethical implications is by independent peer review.

### Training

Training, where required, will be available for individual researchers and members of the Ethics Committee.

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### Ethical Review

The University's Ethics Committee has devolved the responsibility for ethical review and the approval process to College Ethics Committees.

### BU Research Degree Programmes

Each Head of School/Research Group is responsible for ensuring that research performed in their organizational unit by research students is carried out to a high standard and conforms to best practice. All students registered for a research degree programme

should acquaint themselves with norms of good practice in their discipline and conduct research accordingly.

## **Policy Statements**

### **1. Primary Considerations**

In any research involving human participants the consent, dignity, rights, safety and well being of participants are primary considerations. Researchers have a responsibility of care towards individuals participating in the research and are accountable for their well being. The Chair of the Research Ethics Committee may, when presented with a particular ethical concern, refer to the Chair of the University's Ethics Committee.

Efforts should be taken to:

- Minimise the number of human participants used based on statistical good practice
- Minimise all the potential risks to the well-being of research participants
- Maximise the quality and impact of the research and its relevance

### **2. Legal Requirements**

The research must adhere to all legal requirements and guidelines produced by the appropriate professional bodies. The Data Protection Act 1998 states that all information gained from research regarding individuals should be kept strictly confidential and securely stored for the length of time required by legislation or by guidance produced either by funding bodies or professional bodies, whichever is the most onerous. Unless the individuals are informed in advance and explicit consent obtained, research data should not be presented in a manner that could potentially identify any individual.

### **3. Consent**

Valid and informed consent is required from all participants in research with the exception of research involving deception. Research participants should be aware of the potential risks and benefits, if any, associated with their involvement. They must also understand that their involvement is entirely voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time. Data and/or materials collected are only to be used for the agreed purpose, and researchers must realise that any other purpose would require further informed consent from the participants.

An approved consent form is available for download from the CAHB Ethics website.

### **4. Minors & Vulnerable Adults**

Research on minors and vulnerable adults, e.g. those with mental health problems or learning disabilities, should be undertaken with great care and will always require approval. Researchers must satisfy themselves that there is a real need to involve these groups in the research and be able to justify this to the Research Ethics Committee. Researchers must bear in mind that there are a number of specific consent issues relating to research on minors and vulnerable adults and briefings should be clearly and carefully drafted. It is important that those giving consent are involved at all stages, but especially if problems arise during the research. Advice on these issues might be available from relevant associations and support groups. Researchers (with guidance from the Research Ethics Committee) must also comply with legal obligations before proceeding with research (such as obtaining clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau prior to commencing research involving minors). The role and responsibilities of individuals on whom the research participant is dependent (e.g. parents, carers, and supporters) must be clearly explained.

## **5. Research outside the UK**

Research to be undertaken outside the UK, or involving partners from outside the UK, carries an additional level of responsibility and scrutiny and researchers should consider fully all legal and professional requirements. Researchers should bear in mind the differences between the civil, legal and financial position of national and foreign researchers and academics. Where the research is carried out entirely overseas researchers should familiarise themselves with the legislative requirements of the country in question.