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The role of ethical review in research governance

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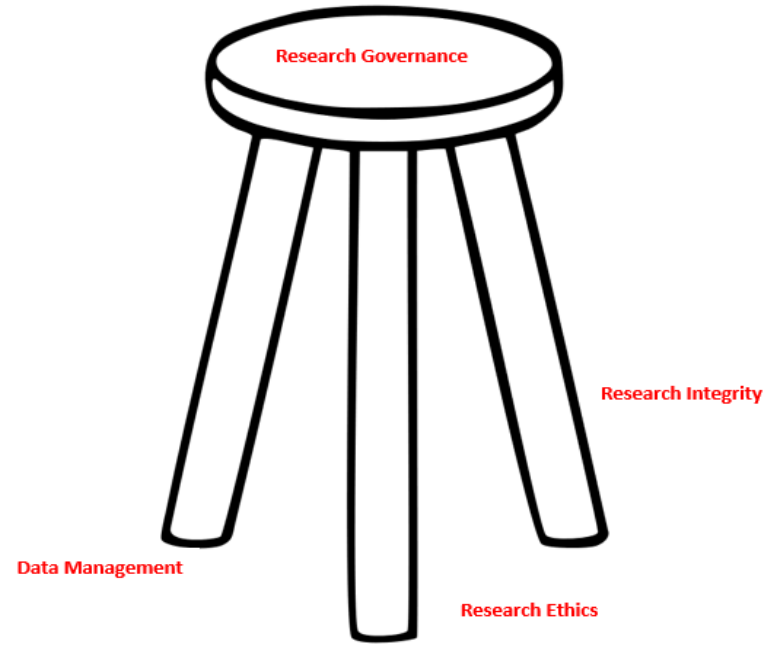
14th February 2020

**INSPIRING
PEOPLE**



Research Governance

- Research integrity
- Ethics
- Data management





Governance

Broadly agreed framework of regulations, principles and standards of good practice that exist to achieve and continuously improve research quality

Training for students and staff in relation to issues of research integrity and research ethics.

Systems to review and monitor issues of integrity including research misconduct.

Systems to review applications for ethical approval

Systems and processes in relation to Data Management



Research Data Management

Research data management (or RDM) is a term that describes the organization, storage, preservation, and sharing of data collected and used in a research project.

It involves the everyday management of research data during the lifetime of a research project (for example, using consistent file naming conventions).

It also involves decisions about how data will be preserved and shared after the project is completed (for example, depositing the data in a repository for long-term archiving and access). <https://pitt.libguides.com/managedata>



Integrity

Inwards focus on professional standards and responsible research conduct.

Honesty, rigour, transparency, care and respect.

Embed a culture of integrity – awareness/training

Systems to deal with allegations of research misconduct

Commitment to strengthen integrity capacity at institutional level





Ethics

- Why do we need it ?
- What influences it ?
- How do we do it?



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Historically ethics.....

- Philosophically, can be linked to the works of Aristotle – Nichomachean Ethics (350 BCE) – and the pursuit of the good or virtuous life. (see also Confucius – Lunyu/Analects ca. 500 BCE)

Knowing what constitutes ethical research is important for all people who conduct research projects or use and apply the results from research findings.

All researchers should be familiar with the basic ethical principles and have up-to-date knowledge about policies and procedures designed to ensure the safety of research subjects and to prevent sloppy or irresponsible research, because ignorance of policies designed to protect research subjects is not considered a viable excuse for ethically questionable projects.

Therefore, the duty lies with the researcher to seek out and fully understand the policies and theories designed to guarantee upstanding research practices. (University of Minnesota, 2003)



Developments in the Social Sciences

In order to maintain a climate of trust in the **practice and outcomes of social research**, it is inevitable that **systems of ethical assurance will be established** and will need to be **maintained** by all those engaged in work of this nature. The **trust** of the **public, professional colleagues**, those who **commission** and **fund research** and **those being studied** requires an **effective system of ethical review**, clear lines of responsibility and a **manageable degree of independent overview**.
(Iphofen, 2011: p.5)

Iphofen, R. (2011) *Ethical Decision Making in Social Research: A Practical Guide*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan



What does it mean in practice?

International agreements or Concordats, National Frameworks, Institutional Regulations,

Setting up **training for students and staff** in relation to issues of research integrity and research ethics.

Set up **systems to review and monitor issues of integrity** including research misconduct.

Set up **systems to review applications for ethical approval**



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ACADEMY of SOCIAL SCIENCES

The National Academy of
Academics, Learned Societies and
Practitioners in the Social Sciences

FIVE ETHICS PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

1. Social science is fundamental to a democratic society and should be inclusive of different interests, values, funders, methods and perspectives.
2. All social science should respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values, and dignity of individuals, groups and communities.
3. All social science should be conducted with integrity throughout, employing the most appropriate methods for the research purpose.
4. All social scientists should act with regard to their social responsibilities in conducting and disseminating their research.
5. All social science should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm.





Additional Frameworks

- ESRC Research Ethics
- BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct.
 - Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research
- British Sociological Association
- Social Research Association
- British Society of Criminology
- BERA 2018
- Association of Social Anthropologists
 - Ethical navigator





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Ethical review: from applications to approval

Guidance, information and training

The application process

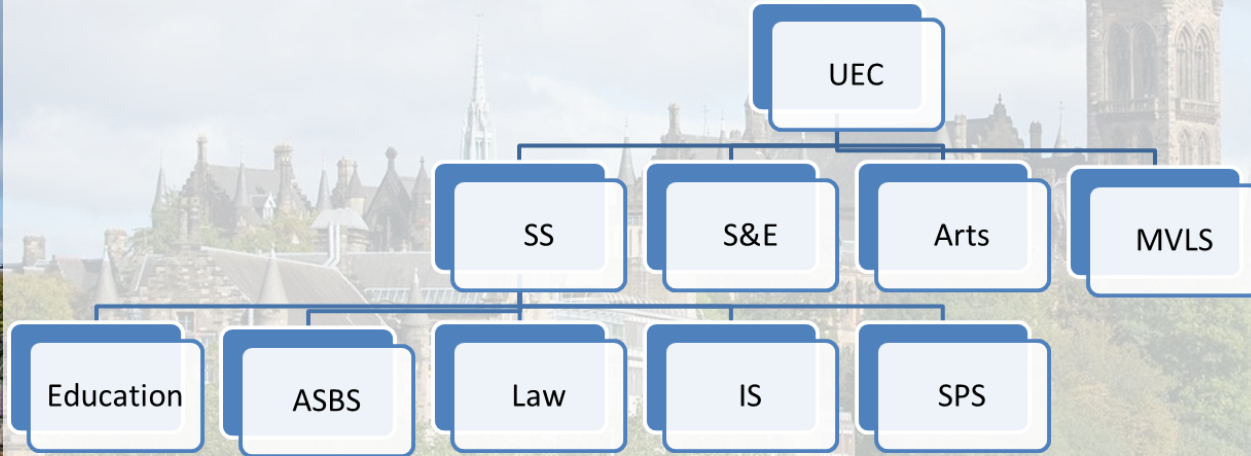
**The review process and resubmission
criteria**

Amendments and Appeals

Recent developments (GDPR; Social media/networking)



Glasgow structure





Guidance, information and training

College ethics webpage:

- Information for applicants
 - FAQs
- Forms and Guidance notes
- Ethics Contacts
- College Research Ethics Committee
- Ethics Training Resources
- Useful Links

Face to face sessions delivered to PGR and Staff twice/year**



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Training resources:

MRC e-learning: **Research data and confidentiality** (online)

MRC **Good Research Practice**

Research, GDPR and Confidentiality: tutorial, quiz

<https://mantra.edina.ac.uk/> RDM

The UofG online **Introduction to GDPR training course** is a requirement for all University of Glasgow staff and PGR students**

Information security awareness training on Moodle



Create Draft Application

Download Templates

My Tasks (0)

My Applications

- Draft

- Active

- Completed

Student Applications

- Draft

- Active

- Completed

Reviewer

- Active Applications

- Completed Applications

Search Applications

Ethics Committees

Help

University of Glasgow Research Ethics System

Welcome Muir Houston

The Research Ethics System enables University of Glasgow staff and students to create and submit ethics applications for non-clinical research involving human subjects. This system works best using Internet Explorer, Firefox and Google Chrome.

Please be aware that the system is unavailable 3.15am to 4.15am every day for routine maintenance.

[Getting Started](#)

[Creating an Application](#)

[Submitting an Application](#)

[Viewing an Application](#)

[Resubmitting an Application](#)

[Further Information](#)

Getting Started

The application form and associated documents are available to download via the *Download Templates* menu item.

Creating an Application

To create an initial application click on *Create Draft Application* menu item (if you are a student you **must** have an agreed supervisor to be able to create an application). Once your draft application is created you can upload, edit and delete your documentation via the *My Applications-Draft* menu item. You can exit the system at any time and return to your application at a later date to update and modify your application before submission.

Submitting an Application

Applications should be submitted via the *My Applications-Draft* menu item using the submit options on screen. **Please note:** Once your application is submitted for review you will no longer be able to edit or delete your documentation.





The review process

Two levels:

PGR and Staff – College Committee

UG and PGT – School Forum

Outcomes:*

Application Approved

Major Recommendations

Minor Recommendations

Application Rejected

Resubmission:

Major – both reviewers

Minor – Lead reviewer only

Appeals





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A nighttime photograph of the Glasgow Arch Bridge, a cable-stayed arch bridge with a prominent white arch and pinkish-purple lighting. The bridge spans the River Clyde, with city buildings and lights visible in the background and reflected in the water.

Example forms discussion and feedback



Main sections on application form

Section 2 – Ethical Risks: Have any potential risks been identified and appropriate methods or processes in place to minimise these risks?

Section 4 – Justification: Why should the research proceed what are the possible short and longer term benefits expected; what is the potential impact and on whom; do potential benefits outweigh potential risks..

Section 5 – Research Methods: Data collection and analysis methods; time commitment and confidentiality

Section 6 – Confidentiality and data handling: Methods of protecting confidentiality and anonymity for each method applied (including limits to confidentiality and possible sharing of data linked to PIS/Consent/Privacy Notice); storage and security – including encryption of data and methods of transmission)

Section 7- Retention and disposal: distinction between personal data and research data – see guidance on [Risk classification of personal data](#)



Main sections on application form

Section 8 – Dissemination: outputs, publications, thesis, conference paper, etc.

Section 9 – Archiving and reuse: how and to whom and linked to PIS and consent

Section 10 – Participants: Recruitment details, number(s), age, how, incentives, dependent relationship?

Section 12 – Permission to access participants: special process for Glasgow staff and students – if required can be forwarded once approval obtained by before fieldwork or data collection begins

Section 13/14 – Informed consent and Participant Information Sheet (PIS)/Plain Language Statement (PLS) special considerations: language, age, vulnerability; form of consent and evidence

Section 17/18 – Health and Safety and Risk – to participants and self – context: – war zone – medical – emergencies – civil unrest; vulnerability to researcher and participants; location outside of organisational premises – distress to participants – counselling – contacts – PVG required?

PLS and Consent (see also Privacy Notice)

- Information about **the nature and purpose of the research**;
- A statement that **participation is voluntary**, including the **choice to opt out of the research at any time**;
- Information about the **data collection** method and the **option to agree/refuse to being recorded** (if applicable);
- A description of **the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained and an option to choose anonymity**;
- A description of **any possible risks or discomforts** to the participant;
- A description of **any possible benefits** to participant or others;
- **Contact details** for any questions about the research;
- An **option to agree or refuse to participate** (signature of participant, date, signature of witness/researcher);
- A **description of the intended uses**, and **disposal/storage/access and documentation procedures** for data including an **option to agree/disagree with these procedures**.



Limits to confidentiality: UEC stipulated clauses

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.

Confidentiality may be limited and conditional – and the researcher has a duty of care to report to the relevant authorities possible harm/danger to participant or to others.

Assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

+ Sample considerations



Data storage, sharing and access

Increasingly funders require data to be archived and made available to other genuine researchers with varying conditionality attached

Is this stated on PLS?

Did you get specific consent for this?

If yes, what are archival and access issues and conditions of use?

<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/legal?index=6>

<https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data/handbook/>



Some common issues

Alignment/coherence across documentation

Limits to confidentiality

**Archiving, storage, reuse and access
conditions**

**Missing required information or
documentation**

Details lacking where required



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**Protocol for research dealing with non-standard human data
– Social Media, Online, Social Networking, Secondary data,
Big Data.**

Traditional ethics processes and forms not 'fit' for Big
Data and Social Media

Proliferation of 'Big Data' and increasing interest both
corporate and academic

Big Data and ethics

- Libby Bishop (2017). Big data and data sharing: Ethical issues. UK Data Service, UK Data Archive. https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/604711/big-data-and-data-sharing_ethical-issues.pdf
- Often differ from traditional research data in that they have not been generated specifically by researchers for research purposes. As a result, the usual ethical protections that are applied at several points in the research data life cycle have not taken place.
- The speed of development in Big Data and associated phenomena, such as social media, has surpassed the capacity of the average consumer to understand his or her actions and their knock-on effects. We are moving towards changes in how ethics has to be perceived: away from individual decisions with specific and knowable outcomes, towards actions by many unaware that they may have taken actions with unintended consequences for anyone. (Zwitter, 2014)



Social media and online ethics

- What constitutes 'privacy' in an online environment?
- How easy is it to get informed consent from the participants in the community being researched?
- What does informed consent entail in that context?
- How certain is the researcher that they can establish the 'real' identity of the participants?
- When is deception or covert observation justifiable?
- How are issues of identifiability addressed?
- How do country-specific legal requirements (eg for data protection) apply in internet-mediated research that crosses national boundaries?

ESRC – internet mediated research



Swatman (2012) on privacy:

Is the space being researched seen as private by its users?

Are they aware they are being observed?

Is everything what it seems?

**Are Fred X and Mary Y really who they claim to be?
Age? Gender, Bots?**

How do researchers ensure their participants really are anonymous?

IP addresses are (usually) traceable; Tweets may contain identifiers...



Ethics in social media research: where are we now?

Early on in the research we quickly realised that many of the learned society ethical resources were of little guidance, given their focus on non-digital data. Where addendums on using Internet data were written, they had little to say about social media. Papers were being published in reputable journals with tweets quoted verbatim, with unacceptable and ineffective methods of anonymisation, and without informed consent from users¹. Research on users' views of the repurposing of their social media data consistently shows that the majority wish to be asked for informed consent if their content is to be published outside of the platform which it was intended for².

Association of Internet Researchers (AOIR) - 2012: Ethical decision-making and Internet research 2.0: recommendations from the AoIR ethics working committee

2012: This chart provides a useful starting point for internet researchers to consider ethics.

AOIR 2002: Ethical decision-making and Internet research: Recommendations from the AoIR ethics working committee

Williams, M.L., Burnap, P. and Sloan, L. (2017) Towards an Ethical Framework for Publishing Twitter Data in Social Research: Taking into Account Users' Views, Online Context and Algorithmic Estimation, Sociology 51(11) tweet publish or not.pdf

Townsend, L. and Wallace, C. (2017), "The Ethics of Using Social Media Data in Research: A New Framework",

Woodfield, K. (Ed.) The Ethics of Online Research (Advances in Research Ethics and Integrity, Vol. 2), SMEF.pdf
International Journal of Internet Research Ethics Issue 3.1, December 2010

Research Ethics the Journal of the Association for Research Ethics

And some caution advised:

#SocialEthics: A guide to embedding ethics in social media research

The road to representivity – a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on sociological research using Twitter

Research using Social Media; Users' Views (Beninger et al., 2104)

Unlocking the value of social media – a review of research ethics (DEMOS, 2015)



General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

GDPR strengthens individuals' rights and brings new requirements on organisations to demonstrate accountability, matched by new penalties for non-compliance. The UK Government has brought GDPR into UK law as part of a Data Protection Act 2018.

Privacy notice – template available with guidance notes – legal basis of processing – what you do with it and who you share it with – linked to PIS

Data management Policy – templates available – data – documentation – ethics and IP – storage and organization – archive and long-term preservation – sharing – responsibilities

Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) - legal requirement when personal data processing is likely to result in a high risk. Please check the one-page University's information risk guide for further information on risk classification.

You may need to complete a draft DPIA. Where appropriate, consult the University DP Office dp@glasgow.ac.uk and relevant stakeholders and experts if required



Specifically

Privacy notice – template available with guidance notes – legal basis of processing – what you do with it and who you share it with – linked to PIS

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Amendments to approved application

Notify the committee/forum, and obtain approval, if there are proposed:

- **Changes to the study design.**
- **Changes to procedures undertaken by participants.**
- **Changes/addition to the key study documents.**
- **Changes to key/senior supervisory staff**
- **Changes to time-scale.**



“Social scientists do not have an unalienable right to conduct research involving other people (Oakes, 2002). That we continue to have the freedom to conduct such work depends on us acting in ways that are not harmful and are just. Ethical behaviour may help assure the climate of trust in which we continue our socially useful labours (AAAS, 1995; Jorgensen, 1971; Mitchell and Draper, 1982; PRE, 2002; Walsh, 1992). If we act honestly and honourably, people may rely on us to recognize their needs and sensitivities and consequently may be more willing to contribute openly and fully to the work we undertake.” (Israel and Hay, 2006: p3)

Israel, M. and Hay, I. (2006) *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*, London: Sage.







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Thank you



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