



## **Research Ethics Policy and Procedure**

**Promoting good practice  
and preventing misconduct**

**December 2016**

**Updated January 2019**

The Arts University Bournemouth is committed to the provision of a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where unfair discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness. It has developed and implemented an Equality and Diversity Plan to guide its work in this area. All the University's policies and practices are designed to meet the principles of dignity, respect and fairness, and take account of the commitments set out in the Equality and Diversity Plan. This policy has been subject to an equality analysis to ensure consideration with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Date of last EA review: 12/2016

The Arts University Bournemouth has based its Research Policy and Procedures on the Code of Practice issued by the UK Research Integrity Office. Copyright is retained by the UK Research Integrity Office, and this material may not be used for commercial gain without prior, written permission. For further information, visit the website at [www.ukrio.org](http://www.ukrio.org).

The Code of Practice also reflects the commitments of the *Concordat to support research integrity* published by Universities UK.

## **1. Scope**

- 1.1 This Policy governs the ethics of research across the university. It is applicable to all research activity at the University irrespective of funding or location of the research undertaken and applies to all researchers employed by, studying at, or supported through the University. It applies equally to staff and students (both postgraduate and undergraduate), and specifically forms part of the terms and conditions of service of all academic staff.
- 1.2 Researchers as defined above should refer to this Policy before undertaking any research project, whether as a sole researcher or as part of a collaboration. All applications for support for research (whether for a Research Fellowship, support for a research qualification, or financial support for a specific project), and all research student applications must be considered against the Policy before approval. All student project proposals must be considered against the Policy before their Learning Agreement or project plan is approved.

## **2. Purpose of the Policy**

- 2.1 This Research Policy has been designed to nurture a research environment, encourage good conduct in research and help prevent misconduct, in order to assist researchers (staff and postgraduate research degree students) and taught students at postgraduate or undergraduate level) to conduct research of the highest quality. It provides general principles and standards for good practice in research, and must be referenced by any member of staff or student before planning a research project or research activity.
- 2.2 The Policy is organised in the following Sections:
  - a) Section A contains broad Principles and Standards which define the responsibilities and values in the conduct of research that individual researchers and research groups should comply with.
  - b) Section B describes the procedure for obtaining ethical approval at the University.
  - c) Section C defines what constitutes minimal and more than minimal risk, including exemplars.
  - d) A one-page Recommended Checklist for Researchers can be found at the back of this document. This is a non-technical checklist summarising the key points of good practice in research. The Checklist is based on the more detailed Standards given in section A
- 2.3.0 Research is defined by AUB as a process of investigation leading to new knowledge and insights effectively shared through practice, theory and AUB's maker culture.

- 2.3.1 It defines a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It also defines its aims and objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions, issues or problems to be addressed.
- 2.3.2 It specifies a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. Why is it important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed? What other research is being or has been conducted in this area? And what particular contribution will this project make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area?
- 2.3.3 It specifies the research methods and methodologies for addressing and answering the research questions, issues or problems. How, in the course of the research project, will these questions be answered, or the problems solved? What is the rationale for the chosen research methods and why are they the most appropriate means by which to address the research questions, issues or problems?
- 2.3.4 This is consistent with the AUB definition of the UK funding bodies' definition, used in the Research Excellence Framework 2014.
- 2.4.0 Similarly, for the purposes of this Policy, "researchers" refers to any person who conducts research, including but not limited to: as an employee including those who are not contracted as researchers, but undertake research as part of their work; an independent contractor or consultant; a research student; a taught postgraduate or undergraduate student; a visiting or emeritus member of staff; or a member of staff on a joint honorary contract.
- 2.4.1 Throughout this guidance, "researchers" is used to mean any individual or group undertaking research, where at least one of the researchers is employed by, studying at or supported by the Arts University Bournemouth.

### **3.0 Principles**

- 3.0.1 The guiding principles of the Research Ethics Policy are non-maleficence and beneficence, indicating a systematic regard for the rights and interests of others in the full range of academic relationships and activities.
- 3.0.2 Non-maleficence is the principle of doing, or permitting, no foreseeable harm including infringement of rights as a consequence of the research. It is the principle of doing no harm in the widest sense. Beneficence is the requirement to serve the interests and well-being of others, including respect for their rights. It is the principle of doing good in the widest sense.
- 3.0.3 The University sets out the following principles for good practice in research:

- Excellence
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Cooperation
- Accountability
- Support for new researchers
- Safety.

The University and its researchers will be guided by these principles when implementing and complying with the core Standards described in 4.0.

- 3.0.4 All researchers should adhere to these Principles, which set out the responsibilities and values relevant to research. While some elements may seem self-evident, and there is some overlap, these Principles aim to encourage all involved in research to consider the wider consequences of their work and to engage critically with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges that are inherent in the conduct of high quality research. Each of the Principles is elucidated below.
- 3.1 **EXCELLENCE:** The University and its researchers will strive for excellence when conducting research and aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality. This Policy, its Principles and its Standards are intended to support these goals.
- 3.2 **HONESTY:** The University aims to create and maintain a culture of research that fosters and supports honesty in research. *Researchers* should be honest in relation to their own research and that of others. They should do their utmost to ensure the accuracy of data and results, acknowledge the contributions of others, and neither engage in misconduct nor conceal it.
- 3.3 **INTEGRITY:** The University and its researchers will comply with all legal and ethical requirements relevant to their field of study and endeavour to declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to research and where necessary take steps to resolve them. This includes dealing honestly with all participants and any other interested parties; informing participants of any changes to the proposed project; acknowledging the work of others, especially where this is the work of research students; and publishing or otherwise using results which have not been changed or falsified in any way not previously made clear to participants<sup>1</sup>. Any researcher who does not comply with the principle of integrity will be subject to the University's Disciplinary Procedure or Student Disciplinary Policy, as relevant.
- 3.4 **COOPERATION:** The University and its researchers aim to promote the open exchange of ideas, research methods, data and results and their

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<sup>1</sup> A project may, for instance, involve the manipulation of images given voluntarily and with full consent. Where informed consent has been given for this manipulation, no issues arise

discussion, scrutiny and debate, subject to any considerations of confidentiality.

- 3.5 **ACCOUNTABILITY:** The University and its researchers recognise that in and through their work, they are ultimately accountable to the general public and must act accordingly. They should ensure that any research undertaken complies with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project, and allows for proper governance and transparency. Researchers should follow the requirements and guidance of any professional bodies in their field of research. Researchers who are members of a regulated profession should also follow the requirements and guidance of the body regulating their profession.
- 3.6 **SUPPORT FOR NEW RESEARCHERS:** The University aims to provide opportunities for development for researchers, and the necessary resources to enable them to conduct research to the required standards. New researchers will be allocated a research mentor by the Principal Lecturer for Research and Knowledge Transfer in their subject area, to support them in identifying unmet needs for training and development, and to guide them to the relevant assistance with funding applications. Researchers should ensure that they have the necessary skills, training and resources to carry out research, in whatever form this takes including autonomous work, working as part of a research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields, and report and resolve any unmet needs identified. Students who are undertaking research for the first time will be introduced to the concepts of research, and the principles outlined above, to support them as they commence research activity.
- 3.7 **SAFETY:** The University and its researchers aim to ensure the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all involved in research and avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects, participants, researchers and others. They should report and address any concerns relating to the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of those involved in research. Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

#### **4.0 Standards for organisations and researchers**

- 4.0.1 Researchers must not compromise the overriding principles of non maleficence and beneficence, legal obligations and any pre-existing rights in the conduct of research.
- 4.0.2 All researchers must comply with all legal and ethical requirements and other guidelines that apply to their research. This includes ensuring that their project has research ethics approval (for staff, by submitting research proposal for ethics review by the Research Ethics Adviser in their School in the first instance and abiding by the outcome of that review, and for students through discussion with their Unit Leader). They should also ensure that research projects are approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.

- 4.1.0 The University will:
- a) ensure that good practice in research forms an integral part of its research strategy or policy;
  - b) provide training, resources and support to postgraduate researchers and taught students to ensure that they are aware of the Research Ethics Policy;
  - c) encourage its researchers to consider good practice in research as a routine part of their work.

- 4.1.1 Researchers must:
- a) recognise their responsibility to conduct research of high ethical standards;
  - b) be aware of the University's policies and procedures on good practice in research, including the provisions of this Policy;
  - c) make sure that their research complies with these policies and procedures, and seek guidance when necessary;
  - d) work with the University to ensure that they have the necessary training, resources and support to carry out their research; and
  - e) suggest to the University how guidance on good practice in research might be developed or revised.

## 4.2 Leadership and supervision

4.2.1 The University endeavours to promote and maintain an environment which fosters and supports research of high ethical standards, mutual co-operation, professionalism and the open and honest exchange of ideas. Researchers should foster a culture where good conduct in research is promoted and inappropriate conduct is identified and addressed.

4.2.2. The University will provide direction and supervision of research and researchers, setting out clear lines of accountability for the organisation and management of research. It will support supervisors and researchers in meeting the legal and ethical requirements of conducting research. It endorses the *Researcher Development Statement*, encourages the career development of researchers and provides mentoring for new researchers. It will also offer support to those charged with the supervision and development of other researchers. It supports the principles of the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*.

4.2.3 Researchers involved in the supervision and development of other researchers should be aware of their responsibilities and ensure that they have the necessary training, time and resources to carry out that role, and request support if necessary.

4.2.4 The University has designated the Head of Research Development as the first point of contact for queries regarding research integrity and early career researchers. Others who are developing their research careers can seek advice from the Research Office when required.

#### 4.3 Research design

4.3.1 When designing research projects, the University and its researchers will seek to ensure that:

- a) the proposed research addresses pertinent question(s) and is designed either to add to existing knowledge / understanding of the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it;
- b) the design of the study is appropriate for the question(s) being asked and addresses the most important potential sources of bias;
- c) the design and conduct of the study, including how data will be gathered, analysed and managed, are set out in detail in a pre-specified research plan or protocol;
- d) all necessary skills and experience will be available to carry out the proposed research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields;
- e) sufficient resources will be available to carry out the proposed research and that these resources meet all relevant standards; and
- f) any issues relating to the above are resolved as far as possible prior to the start of the research.

4.3.2 The University (where appropriate) and its researchers will conduct a risk assessment of the planned study to determine:

- a) whether there are any ethical issues and whether ethics review is required;
- b) the potential for risks to the organisation, the research, or the health, safety and well-being of researchers and research participants.

4.3.3 Where the design of a study has been approved by ethics, regulatory or peer review, the University and its researchers will ensure that any subsequent alterations to the design are subject to appropriate review to determine that they will not compromise the integrity of the research or any terms of consent previously given.

4.3.4 The University will set up systems to ensure that when there are risks that proposed research or its results may be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful, those risks are identified and addressed. Whilst acknowledging that this would be unusual in its primary subject areas, the institution will endeavour to make these systems known to researchers and provide guidance and support to researchers on projects where such risks are identified.



4.3.5 Researchers should try to anticipate any risks that the proposed research might produce that could be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful. Researchers should refer any articulated risks in the first instance to the Research Ethics Adviser in their School and take relevant action to minimise those risks.

#### 4.4 Collaborative working

4.4.1 The University and its researchers will pay particular attention to projects which include participants from different countries or where work will be carried out in another country due to the additional legal and ethical requirements and other guidelines that may apply (see also section 4.1).

4.4.2 The University aims to work with partner organisations to ensure the agreement of, and compliance with, common standards and procedures for the conduct of collaborative research, including the resolution of any issues or problems that might arise and the investigation of any allegations of misconduct in research if they occur.

4.4.3 Researchers should be aware of the standards and procedures for the conduct of research followed by any organisations involved in collaborative research that they are undertaking. They should also be aware of any contractual requirements involving partner organisations, seeking guidance and assistance where necessary and reporting any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them.

4.4.4 Researchers should try to anticipate any issues that might arise as a result of working collaboratively and agree jointly in advance how they might be addressed, communicating any decisions to all members of the research team. In particular, agreement should be sought on the specific roles of the researchers involved in the project and on issues relating to intellectual property, publication, and the attribution of authorship, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research.

4.4.5 When conducting, or collaborating in, research in other countries, AUB researchers should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly, co-researchers based abroad who participate in UK-hosted research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their own country.

#### 4.5 Conflicts of interest

4.5.1 The University and its researchers recognise that conflicts of interest (i.e personal or institutional considerations, including but not limited to financial matters) can inappropriately affect research. Conflicts of interest must be declared to the Research Ethics Adviser in the first instance and the line manager must be notified in order to avoid poor practice in research or potential misconduct.

- 4.5.2 When addressing a conflict of interest, it must be decided whether it is of a type and severity that poses a risk of compromising the validity or integrity of the research, in which case researchers should not proceed with the research, or whether it can be adequately addressed through declarations and/or special safeguards, relating to the conduct and report of the research.
- 4.5.3 Researchers should agree to abide by any direction given by the University and/or the Research Ethics Committee and/or the Research Ethics Adviser in relation to a conflict of interest.
- 4.6 Research involving human participants, human material or personal data
- 4.6.1 The University and its researchers should make sure that any research involving human participants, human material, animals or personal data complies with all legal and ethical requirements, as expressed in this Policy.
- 4.6.2 The University will make sure that its researchers are aware of all of the above processes and have access to all relevant guidance and legal and ethical frameworks.
- 4.6.3 Researchers should submit research projects involving human participants, human material, animals or personal data for review by the Research Ethics Adviser in the first instance, who may refer the matter to the Research Ethics Committee. Researchers must abide by the outcome of those reviews.
- 4.6.4 Researchers should inform research participants that data gathered during the course of research may be disseminated not only in a report but also in different forms for academic or other subsequent publications and meetings, albeit not in an identifiable form, unless previously agreed to, and subject to limitations imposed by legislation or any applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.
- 4.7 Autonomy and consent
- 4.7.1 The physical and personal autonomy of all human participants should be respected. Participants should not be misrepresented, by action or implication, or their rights in other ways infringed.
- 4.7.2 Active participants in the research (that is, where the individual can be identified through name, image or other personal information) must give informed consent and their right to privacy should be guaranteed. Where possible, written consent should be secured. (Please refer to the separate guidance on participant information and consent forms, available on the Intranet).
- 4.7.3 Informed consent includes ensuring that the subject is aware of the nature, purpose and intentions of the research.
- 4.7.4 Equally, the means by which participants are recruited should be carefully assessed in relation to possible rewards for participation
- 4.7.5 Children, young persons and vulnerable adults cannot normally give informed consent. Parents are required to give consent for any research involving children

under 18. Disabled adults may be permitted to give consent for certain types of research, but in some cases informed consent may be given by a guardian or carer. In exceptional circumstances, the permission of the courts may be required.

- 4.7.6 Where participants are not identified as individuals, consideration should be given to their human rights (including the right not to be misrepresented).
- 4.7.7 Where there are third parties marginally involved, in the research, for example as members of the public in an observer capacity, or where groups of people are involved, informal consent might be more appropriate than formal consent.
- 4.7.8 Where the nature of the research is such that informing participants before the work is carried out might render the results invalid, for example within aspects of the social and cognitive sciences such as perception, there must be appropriate explanations following the study. In these circumstances, justification for this course of action is required to be submitted for approval to the Research Ethics Committee. Researchers must provide convincing reasons why such research should proceed without the necessary informed consent. Researchers should not mislead participants if it is thought that prior permission will not be obtained.

#### 4.8 Additional legal and ethical considerations

- 4.8.1 Alongside the considerations outlined explicitly above, researchers must be aware of the environment in which their research is taking place. For example, if the research is conducted in public, the researcher must take due account of the laws of public decency; and must have due regard to religious and cultural sensitivities. Any issues should normally be explored fully in the proposal.
- 4.8.2 The researcher will need to balance the parameters of academic freedom and free speech with their responsibilities to the community. This includes taking due account of the Prevent duty, and the need to ensure that people are safeguarded from being drawn into terrorism. The Code of Practice on freedom of speech makes clear the University's expectations in this regard. If the researcher is in any doubt about how this might impact on his/her work, he/she should seek advice from the Dean, or the University Secretary."
- 4.8.3 Research into security-sensitive, radical or extreme material must include a risk assessment that has been reviewed and approval granted by the University before the research can commence. This should reference the storage, transmission and disposal of such material and reference Universities UK's Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities: guidance.

4.8.4 Researchers should abide by the Code of Ethics of any professional body or subject association of which they are members. They should also be aware of any Research Ethics Policy or Code of Ethics which applies to potential and actual collaborators on the project and/or other participants. Where the location of the research is external to the University it is essential that the regulations, procedures, practices and guidelines which are relevant in these situations are taken into account.

#### 4.9 Animals

4.9.1 Researchers are expected to show due respect to all sentient subjects of research (be they active or passive), and to avoid suffering of any kind.

#### Data Protection

4.10

4.10.1 Participants' confidentiality and anonymity should be maintained, and their personal privacy protected. The identity of participants should not be revealed unless written permission is obtained prior to the research being carried out.

4.10.2 All data gathered as part of a research project must be kept securely, in accordance with the terms of data protection legislation. Appropriate steps must be taken to minimise the risk of individuals being identified through stored research information; on no account should any information be left accessible through a website interface; an open access terminal; or a hard drive.

#### 4.11 Health and safety

4.11.1 The University will ensure that all research carried out under its auspices, or for which it is responsible, fulfils all requirements or health and safety legislation and good practice. The University and its researchers should bear in mind that certain types of research, for example social research in a conflict zone, can present particular issues of health and safety. They should ensure that all research which involves potentially hazardous or harmful material or which might cause harm to the environment complies with all legal requirements and other applicable guidelines.

4.11.2 In any research project, researchers must be aware of the University's health and safety policies and procedures, and must act in accordance with them. Where appropriate a risk assessment should be conducted at an early stage to ensure the protection of all participants in the research. Advice on health and safety matters can be sought from the Senior Health and Safety Officer and the website.

#### 4.12 Insurance

4.12.1 In any research project, researchers must be aware of the limitations of the University's insurance policies, and must act in accordance with them. Advice on the coverage of insurance policies can be sought from the Facilities Manager.

Researchers should ensure that all research projects have sufficient arrangements for insurance and indemnity prior to the research being conducted. The Research Office will offer advice if the proposed activity may fall outside the current insurance arrangements.

#### 4.13 Intellectual property

4.13.1 The University has an Intellectual Property Rights Policy – Staff and an Intellectual Property Rights Policy - Students, both of which set out the arrangements relating to any contracts or agreements relating to research, including provision for ownership and use of intellectual property. Intellectual property includes, but is not limited to: research data and other findings of research; ideas, processes, software, hardware, and artistic and literary works, including academic and scientific publications.

4.13.2 Researchers must ensure they are aware of, and comply with, the terms of the applicable Intellectual Property Rights Policy, which can be found on the Intranet. Queries can be addressed to [jpr@aub.ac.uk](mailto:jpr@aub.ac.uk).

4.13.3 Joint ownership of work by students and supervisors should only occur when a substantive contribution has been made by the supervisor. Issues arising from industrial placements and the protection/registration of materials should also be considered.

#### 4.14 Environmental issues

4.14.1 Due consideration should be given to the possible impact on the environment of any research proposal. In general, the University would expect any research project to be at least impact-neutral. The use of hazardous substances is covered by the guidance on health and safety (below).

#### 4.15 Finance

4.15.1 The University and its researchers should ensure that the terms and conditions of any grant or contract related to the research are adhered to.

4.15.2 The University has issued guidelines regarding the purchasing or procurement of all materials, equipment or other resources including those to be used for research, and the hiring of staff for research projects. These guidelines include statements on the ownership of resources and the rights of staff to use them. The University also has procedures for the monitoring and audit of finances relating to research projects. These guidelines and further information can be obtained from Finance.

4.15.3 Researchers must comply with organisational guidelines regarding the use and management of finances relating to research projects. They must co-operate with any monitoring and audit of finances relating to research projects and report any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them.

#### 4.16 Collection and retention of data

- 4.16.1 The University expects its researchers to comply with all legal ethical, funding body and organisational requirements for the collection, use and storage of data, especially personal data, where particular attention should be paid to the requirements of data protection legislation, as outlined in the Data Protection Policy
- 4.16.2 Data should be kept intact for any legally specified period and otherwise for three years at least, subject to any legal, ethical or other requirements, from the end of the project. It should be kept in a form that would enable retrieval by a third party, subject to limitations imposed by legislation and general principles of confidentiality.
- 4.16.3 If research data is to be deleted or destroyed, either because its agreed period of retention has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, it should be done so in accordance with all legal, ethical, research funder and organisational requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.
- 4.16.4 The Research Office of the University will develop procedures, resources (including physical space) and administrative support to assist researchers in the accurate and efficient collection of data and its storage in a secure and accessible form.
- 4.16.5 Researchers should consider how data will be gathered, analysed and managed, and how and in what form relevant data will eventually be made available to others, at an early stage of the design of the project.
- 4.17 Monitoring and audit
- 4.17.1 The University and its researchers should ensure that research projects comply with any monitoring and audit requirements. Researchers charged with carrying out such monitoring and audits will have sufficient training, resources and support to fulfil the requirements of the role.
- 4.17.2 The University will monitor and audit research projects to ensure that they are being carried out in accordance with good practice, legal and ethical requirements, and any other guidance, adopting a risk-based and proportional approach.
- 4.17.3 Researchers should consider any requirements for monitoring and audit at an early stage in the design of a project.
- 4.17.4 Researchers must co-operate with the monitoring and audit of their research projects by applicable bodies and undertake such when required. They must co-operate with any outcomes of the monitoring and audit of their research projects. If they become aware of a need for monitoring and audit where it is not already scheduled, they should report that need to the Head of Research Development3w, in the first instance.
- 4.18 Peer Review

- 4.18.1 The University will ensure that its researchers are aware that peer review is an important part of good practice in the publication and dissemination of research and research findings; the assessment of applications for research grants, and in the ethics review of research projects.
- 4.18.2 The University encourages its researchers to act as peer reviewers for meetings, journals and other publication, grant applications and ethics review of research proposals, and supports those who do so. The institution recognises the obligations of peer reviewers to be thorough and objective in their work and to maintain confidentiality, and will not put pressure directly or indirectly, on peer reviewers to breach these obligations.
- 4.18.3 Researchers who carry out peer review should do so to the highest standards of thoroughness and objectivity. They should follow the guidelines for peer review of any organisation for which they carry out such work.
- 4.18.4 Researchers should maintain confidentiality and not retain or copy any material under review without the express written permission of the organisation which requested the review. They should not make use of research designs or research findings from a paper under review without the express permission of the author(s) and should not allow others to do so. Researchers acting as peer reviewers must declare any relevant conflicts of interest.
- 4.18.5 While carrying out peer review, researchers may become aware of possible misconduct, such as plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, or have ethical concerns about the design or conduct of the research. In such cases they should inform, in confidence, an appropriate representative of the organisation which requested the review, such as the editor of the relevant journal or chair of the relevant grants or ethics committee.
- 4.19 Publication and authorship
- 4.19.1 The University expects its researchers to accept their duty to publish and disseminate research in a manner that reports the research and all the findings of the research accurately and without selection that could be misleading.
- 4.19.2 The University will ensure that sponsors and funders of research respect the duty of researchers to publish their research and the findings of their research; do not discourage or suppress appropriate publication or dissemination; and do not attempt to influence the presentation or interpretation of findings inappropriately.
- 4.19.3 The University will provide training and support to guide researchers in the publication and dissemination of research and the findings of research that involves: confidential or proprietary information; issues relating to patents or intellectual property; findings with serious implications for public health; contractual or other legal obligations; and/or interest from the media or the general public.
- 4.19.4. Researchers should address issues relating to publication and authorship, especially the roles of all collaborators and contributors, at an early stage of the design of a project, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements,

roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research. Decisions on publication and authorship should be agreed jointly and communicated to all members of the research team.

- 4.19.5 Authorship should be restricted to those contributors and collaborators who have made a significant intellectual or practical contribution to the work. No person who fulfils the criteria for authorship should be excluded from the submitted work. Authorship should not be allocated to honorary or “guest” authors (ie those that do not fulfil criteria of authorship). Researchers should be aware that anyone listed as an author of any work should be prepared to take public responsibility for that work and ensure its accuracy, and be able to identify their contribution to it.
- 4.19.6 Researchers should list the work of all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship in an acknowledgements section. All funders and sponsors of research should be clearly acknowledged and any competing interests listed.
- 4.19.7 Researchers must clearly acknowledge all sources used in their research and seek permission from any individuals if a significant amount of their work has been used in the publication.
- 4.19.8 Researchers must adhere to any conditions set by funding or other bodies regarding the publication of their research and its findings in open access repositories within a set period.
- 4.19.9 Researchers should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest in relation to their research when reporting their findings at meetings or in publication.
- 4.19.10 Researchers should be aware that submitting research reports to more than one potential publisher at any given time (i.e. duplicate submission) or publishing findings in more than one publication without disclosure and appropriate acknowledgement of any previous publication (i.e. duplicate publication) is unacceptable.
- 4.19.11 Researchers who are discouraged from publishing and disseminating their research or its findings, or subjected to attempts to influence the presentation or interpretation of findings inappropriately, should discuss this with the Head of Research Development in the first instance, so that the matter can be resolved.

#### 4.20 Research misconduct

4.20.1 The University, in its Research Ethics Policy, defines what it considers to be misconduct in research. Following the position of the UK Research Integrity Office, this definition of misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Fabrication;
- b) Falsification;
- c) Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement;
- d) Plagiarism;



- e) Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for:
- i) avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to:
    - humans;
    - animals used in research; and
    - the environment; and
  - ii) the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

- 4.20.2 The University has adopted the UKRIO *Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research*, which is a standard process for investigating alleged misconduct that is thorough and fair to all parties. This will ensure that any such allegations are investigated thoroughly and fairly and in a timely manner. All researchers should be aware of this procedure.
- 4.20.3 The University will identify and make known on an annual basis those members of staff who have responsibility for investigating allegations of misconduct in research and whom researchers and external organisations, such as journals, can contact with any concerns about the conduct of research. The University will ensure that staff who investigate allegations have the necessary training, resources and support to fulfil the requirements of the role.
- 4.20.4 The University will make it clear to researchers that any misconduct in research is unacceptable and should be reported; that researchers who are found to have committed misconduct in research will be subject to disciplinary proceedings; and that where researchers are members of a regulated profession, cases of serious misconduct in research will be referred to the body regulating their profession. They should also make it clear that researchers who are found not to have committed misconduct will be supported and appropriate steps taken to restore their reputation and that of any relevant research project(s).
- 4.20.5 The University will support those who raise concerns about the conduct of research in good faith and not penalise them. This is in accordance with the University's *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy*, which can be found on the Intranet.
- 4.20.6 Researchers should be aware of what constitutes misconduct in research and report any suspected misconduct through the relevant procedure of the organisation as soon as they become aware of it. They should recognise that good practice in research includes reporting concerns about the conduct of research and should co-operate with any investigation of misconduct in research when requested. Researchers should work with the University to support those who raise concerns in good faith about the conduct of research and those who have been exonerated of suspected misconduct.

## SECTION B Ethics Review and Approval

### Governance

- 1.1 Academic Board, as the most senior academic committee of the Arts University Bournemouth holds overall responsibility for the academic activities of the University, including the conduct of staff and students involved in research. Detailed oversight of research ethics is devolved to Research Ethics Committee (REC), who in turn reports to Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee (RKT), which reports to Academic Board on a regular basis.
- 1.2 Academic Board, on behalf of the University, has confirmed its commitment to ensuring that its staff act in accordance with the principles described in the [Concordat to support Research Integrity](#) launched in July 2012 by Universities UK. The Concordat outlines what is expected of researchers and their employers to ensure the highest standards of research, in particular by:
  - o maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
  - o ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
  - o nurturing a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers;
  - o using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct;
  - o working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.
- 1.3 The University is committed to delivering these outcomes, and this Research Policy sets out the framework through which we deliver our commitment to research integrity.
- 1.4 Each School will appoint a Research Ethics Adviser. This will be an established member of staff who is able to offer advice and guidance to staff and students on matters of research ethics. Normally, the Research Ethics Adviser will also be the School's representative on the University's Research Ethics Committee, to ensure consistency of advice.
- 1.5 Any queries about the provisions of the Policy should be referred in the first instance to the Research Office.
- 1.6 The Policy is introduced to all new staff as part of the induction process, and the Chair of Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for this. The Policy is also referenced in any relevant training programmes. At induction each new member of staff is allocated a research mentor to support them in understanding the mechanisms for research practice at the AUB.

## 2. Approval process

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all researchers to ensure that the research undertaken meets the requirements of the Policy and is not in breach of it at any stage.
- 2.2 Projects should not commence unless ethical approval has been obtained.
- 2.3 Any research proposal must include a clear statement of the ethical implications of the research, and the methods and procedures to be adopted in undertaking the project. An Ethical implications of research activity form (EIRA) can be used for this purpose. This will include an explanation of how confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be maintained. The approving authority (which may be the Course Leader, Line Manager, Research Ethics Adviser or the Research Ethics Committee) will consider whether all ethical issues are properly taken into account, and may recommend or specify certain changes to the project. In exceptional circumstances, it may interview the researcher(s) to seek additional information about the project.
- 2.4 If the proposal is not approved, the researcher(s) may be invited to re-structure the research project for re-submission. The approving authority will offer feedback in support of such a decision. A researcher may appeal against a decision not to approve the project by submitting his/her case to the Research Ethics Committee; the decision of the Research Ethics Committee is in all instances final, and no appeal is permitted.
- 2.5 A failure to disclose information in a timely fashion to the relevant approving authority may constrain a researcher's ability to continue with the identified project; or in the case of a student may inhibit his/her progression and qualification. It should be noted that failure to disclose significant information, which is clearly of relevance to ethical considerations and may have influenced the decision of the approving authority, will be considered a disciplinary matter (for staff or students).
- 2.6 The ethical dimensions of a research project may change during the course of a project. Researchers must monitor developments for ethical implications and **seek approval, or approval of changes** when changes affect ethical dimensions significantly. For example, the category of risk may change if the researcher decides to include personal data in their research.

## 3.0 Members of staff

- 3.1 All members of staff should seek advice, as required, from the School Ethics Adviser.
- 3.2 If the research project is unfunded, members of staff should determine the level of risk. Projects deemed to represent minimal risk can be conducted without further ethical approval taking account of the principles and standards set out in this policy. In most cases, the line manager is entitled to approve a project outline as having minimal ethical risk, with the counter-signature of the School Ethics Adviser.

- 3.3 Where the research is likely to be deemed more than minimal ethical risk, an EIRA form should be completed and reviewed by the School Ethics Adviser in the first instance who will forward any application potentially deemed to be more than minimal ethical risk, or where the level of risk cannot be determined, for consideration by Research Ethics Committee.
- 3.4 If the research is related to an application for University support e.g. Research support and Research Fellowships, applications, should be considered in the first instance by the Research Ethics Adviser. Applications deemed to represent more than minimal risk, or where the level of risk cannot be determined, should be referred to Research Ethics Committee.
- 3.5 New applications for support to undertake a research qualification should also be considered by Research Ethics Committee so that the University is assured that it is supportive of the research being proposed. Staff will need to obtain the requisite ethical approval from the institution at which they are studying which AUB will monitor through the annual report for continuation funding.
- 3.6 Where research is being conducted by members of staff in more than one institution, the research should gain formal ethics approval in one of them. The decision on which is the most appropriate should take into account the location of the principal investigator and the formal ethics review structures in place in each institution. If ethics approval is given by another institution, this does not remove the responsibility of researchers to comply with the University's Research Ethics Policy.
- 3.7 Any application to an external funding source must be approved by Research Ethics Committee. In urgent circumstances, the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee is authorised to take Chair's action, following consultation with at least one full member of the Committee. Any such action must be reported to the next meeting of the Research Ethics Committee.

#### **4.0 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students**

- 4.1 PGT students should refer to the guidance on research ethics given in course handbooks.
- 4.2 Minimal risk  
Projects that are deemed to be *minimal risk* can be approved by the Unit Leader.
- 4.3 More than minimal risk  
Projects that are deemed to be *more than minimal risk* must be referred to the School Ethics Adviser for approval.
- 4.3.1 If there are more than three projects being undertaken that are deemed to be *more than minimal risk*, the unit leader should provide a sample to the School Ethics Adviser. The sample should be representative.
- 4.3.2 Where the School Ethics Adviser is unsure or unable to give approval, the projects should be referred to Research Ethics Committee.

4.4 Projects which are particularly sensitive or complex or which pose significant risk to the reputation of the University must be referred to Research Ethics Committee.

4.5 Projects cannot commence until ethical approval has been given.

## **5.0 Research degree students**

5.1 Ethical approval is governed by University of the Arts London (UAL). Students should refer to UAL's research degrees' handbook and regulations for guidance on ethical approval and consider this with their Director of Studies. Applications for registration, which are approved during the first year of study, are first considered by AUB Research Ethics Committee who make a recommendation on the level of risk before final review by Research Degrees Committee (RDC) which has devolved authority to approve applications deemed to represent minimal ethical risk. Applications deemed to represent more than minimal risk are referred to UAL Research Ethics Sub-Committee (RESC).

## **6.0 Issues relating to Pedagogic research**

6.1 There are particular issues associated with pedagogic research. The University wishes to encourage research into learning and teaching, or the student learning experience, and accepts that projects of this type can lead to a better understanding of the learning environment, and hence improvements for all students. For example, this could include study of the staff and student experience, curriculum content, teaching and learning methods, learning resources, course management, and teaching and learning facilities.

6.2 Research is often of relatively small scale, is conducted within the professional practice setting, and will include the informed consent of those involved.

6.3 Where the research is to be conducted within the University as part of the normal professional teaching and learning context, informed consent will be required. If it is intended to use student work, or images of students or of their work, as part of a report or publication, this consent must be given in writing; otherwise, informal consent would be sufficient. Individual staff and student members have the right to refuse to participate. However, there is no significant risk to such an activity, and it can be approved at local level.

6.4 Reference to the Research Ethics Committee is required only where issues of confidentiality and/or data protection are involved which lead to a "new agreement" between the researcher and student group, such as in cases where the researcher is not the teacher of the group of students and hence does not normally have access to personal information about them.

## 5.0 Recommended checklist for researchers

The checklist lists the key points of good practice in research for a research project. More detailed guidance can be found in sections 3 and 4 of the Code of Practice for research.

*You should refer to this checklist before conducting your research, and bearing in mind that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research.*

- 1 Does the proposed research address pertinent question(s) and is it designed either to add to existing knowledge / understanding of the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it?
- 2 Is your research design appropriate for the question(s) being asked?
- 3 Will you have access to all necessary skills and resources to conduct the research?
- 4 Have you conducted a risk assessment to determine:
  - a whether there are any ethical issues and whether ethics review is required;
  - b the potential for risks to the organisation, the research, or the health, safety and well-being of researchers and research participants; and
  - c what legal requirements govern the research?
- 5 Will your research comply with all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines, including AUB Research Ethics Policy and those from other organisations and/or countries if relevant?
- 6 Will your research comply with all requirements of legislation and good practice relating to health and safety?
- 7 Has your research undergone any necessary ethics review (see 4(a) above), especially if it involves animals, human participants, human material or personal data? (See AUB Research Ethics Policy).
- 8 Will your research comply with any monitoring and audit requirements?
- 9 Are you in compliance with any contracts and financial guidelines relating to the project?
- 10 Have you reached an agreement relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?
- 11 Have you reached an agreement relating to collaborative working, if applicable?

- 12 Have you agreed the roles of researchers and responsibilities for management and supervision?
- 13 Have all conflicts of interest relating to your research been identified, declared and addressed?
- 14 Are you aware of the guidance from all applicable organisations on misconduct in research?

**When conducting your research:**

- 1 Are you following the agreed research design for the project?
- 2 Have any changes to the agreed research design been reviewed and approved if applicable?
- 3 Are you following best practice for the collection, storage and management of data?
- 4 Are agreed roles and responsibilities for management and supervision being fulfilled?
- 5 Is your research complying with any monitoring and audit requirements?

**When finishing your research:**

- 1 Will your research and its findings be reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?
- 2 Will all contributions to the research be acknowledged?
- 3 Are agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship being complied with?
- 4 Will research data be retained in a secure and accessible form and for the required duration?
- 5 Will your research comply with all legal, ethical and contractual requirements?

## **ANNEX 1: Guidance on Determining the level of Ethical Risk**

### **Minimal risk**

Minimal risk is defined as an absence of any significant risk to anyone involved in the research, or any others affected by it directly or indirectly, that is reasonably foreseeable.

#### Examples of projects with minimal risk

##### **A study involving interviewing domain experts**

A researcher plans to interview eight artists/curators/designers for her thesis. She offers a letter of introduction about the project, gains written informed consent for the interview from each interviewee, later check the contents of the transcription with each interviewee, allows the interviewee to withdraw comments/approve the interview record.

The interviews will be used as attributed statements with the thesis. A recognised approach from oral history/social sciences/ethnography/art and design criticism and history is part of the methodology. The interviews will involve travel in the UK and abroad, the researcher has discussed her travel plans and personal safety with her supervisors.

##### **A study which collect information via anonymous questionnaires**

Two collaborating artist-researchers plan to conduct a survey of responses to their artwork in a public space or gallery. They gain the consent of the venue for this survey, which will be done by placing a questionnaire for responses in the space.

The questionnaire does not ask for names/addresses/emails/phone numbers. but perhaps it does ask for age/gender/class/race of respondents. Filling in the questionnaire and leaving it in the gallery operates as 'consent' to take part. The questionnaire offers information about why the study is conducted and how it is going to be used. A separate notice and information sheet is also provided in the location stating why the survey is being conducted and how it will be used in a research project.

### **Research involving more than minimal risk**

The following types of research are likely to fall into this category:

- Research involving vulnerable groups, for example children and young people under 18, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship.
- Research involving sensitive topics such as:
  - Sexual behaviour
  - Illegal or political behaviour
  - Experience of violence, abuse, exploitation and/or other racist or sexist behaviour
  - Mental health
  - Physical health and treatment.
- Research involving groups where the permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members e.g. ethnic or cultural groups, native peoples or indigenous communities.



- Research involving deception or which is conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out.
- Research involving access to records of personal or confidential information concerning identifiable individuals.
- Research which would induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain.
- Research involving intrusive interventions such as vigorous physical exercise.
- Research involving security sensitive material.

Participants would not normally encounter such interventions, which may cause them to reveal information which causes concern, in the course of their everyday life.

### **Case Study 1: Working with vulnerable groups**

My research project involved working with and photographing vulnerable trans-sexual groups. It raised serious issues on questions of:

- Confidentiality
- Anonymity
- Informed consent
- Integrity of representation
- Reflexive methodology
- The need for constant, ongoing and responsive ethical review
- Personal relations built up through research process.

The participants were selected from this marginalised social group and sensitive personal data was collected. Through dissemination of the research findings participants risk exposure of their transsexual status and possible subsequent repercussions.

Ethical considerations informed the research throughout and were built into the formal structures of consent. I worked with my participants in a way that was highly responsive to their needs. They were consulted throughout the research process with respect to how they viewed the photographs of themselves that we produced. It is usual for the photographs presented in research outputs to be those that have been selected by the participants rather than by me. Participants have the final word in the selection and editing process – this applies to interview extracts as well as photographs. With regard to obtaining permission to use photographic portraits of a person, interview extracts and personal data I obtain permission each and every time I wish to use material in a research output. If a participant is in any way hesitant about the material being used I will not use it.

However, the way that I look at this is that I am not just working on a research project – I am handling very sensitive areas of people's actual lives in a long term dialogue. While I may have a particular investment in specific research material being used/shown the people who are providing that material could be putting their lives at risk.

Rigorous informed consent was at the core of the research. Participants are given details of the project, what it will require from them and my plans for dissemination before agreeing to take part in the research. Participants are given the option of

using a pseudonym and for their data/photographs to be kept confidential (using a code name in my records). Nobody other than myself has access to my research data and I do not pass information on to any other party. I only work with people who are able to give informed consent.

### **Case Study 2: Graffiti on the South Bank**

This was a research proposal which sought to interview around 30 producers of legitimate graffiti at the South Bank Undercroft. Participants were to be interviewed about their opinions and ideas regarding activities and future possibilities for the Undercroft, and also where relevant, their own graffiti habits and key trends in graffiti practices. The key issues were:

- Confidentiality
- Illegality of activities investigated

Researchers working in pairs would take notes, and with consent, record the interviews. The findings would be fed as general observations and recommendations to the site managers, and would also be used to build experience for Research Council funding bids on graffiti.

The following risks to respondents were anticipated. Even though no personal details were to be recorded, potential risk would be for participants to reveal illegal practices such as inappropriate placement of graffiti and theft of spray cans (where participants were victims or had heard of other incidents); in theory, regular attendees could be traceable by police. However, these were property crimes of a relatively minor nature and it was judged acceptable to give the participants an undertaking of confidentiality and that no identifying information would be passed to the site owners/managers (South Bank Centre) or the police.

It was felt inappropriate to require a written consent form, because respondents' identity would never be known and over-formality (in their sight) deterred them and would have impinged on the quality and value of the work and results. A light-touch combined oral information and consent procedure was developed, supplemented by a printed information sheet. Signed consent forms would negate the anonymity. The very fact of giving responses to the interview was deemed evidence of consent in these circumstances – but given the crime sensitivity, responses/judgements on participants' age, consent to be interviewed, consent to be recorded and consent for recording to be kept post-transcription were to be noted (without name, of course) as appropriate on a checklist by the second interviewer of the pair.

### **Case Study 3: Internet research**

My research, for a practice-based PhD, involved engaging online presences in social networking sites under a pseudonym. It aimed to explore the ways in which identity is constructed online. There were key areas of ethical concern which proved extremely problematic and difficult to address because my proposed procedures were deemed to lack the required transparency. The following issues raised ethical questions:

- Researching online in social networking spaces under a pseudonym
- Using private emails in my thesis and thus copyright concerns
- Asking for informed consent in retrospect (after the emails had been exchanged) for using these emails in my research
- Working with a combination of both participants and collaborators.

These factors raised major questions about:

- Transparency of the research process

- What constitutes 'deception' in the research process
- Processes of informed consent
- Confidentiality

My research was such that it cannot be revealed as such in advance to those involved. One of the challenges marking the project was that I had hoped to develop a community of online presences into a community of offline friends. This plan, however, was abandoned, in part because it proved too difficult to get ethics approval. Instead, the research focuses on how the pseudonymous author 'Lucy' presented herself through her interactions with other profiles online. These other profiles are not really asked to 'do' anything in the research, beyond become the pseudonym's 'contact/friend', respond to the occasional email and engage in other typical modes of exchange in online social networking sites upon Lucy's prompting. I felt strongly that the response to my research *required a constructive approach to risk which both protected participants but also allowed the development of researchers committed to ethical research*. In practice this proved extremely difficult to achieve with protracted negotiations on the ethical aspects of my research. The solutions which were put in place to enable the research to proceed in an ethically acceptable way were as follows:

I agreed not to use private emails in the thesis. REC agreed to waive informed consent from social network users, as there was no way to determine if consent was indeed informed and whether or not the user who initially gave their consent was the same user operating the user profile believed to have given consent. The Committee agreed to recognize online profiles as representations of identity. This is in contrast to perceiving them as actual people.