Code of Practice for Research

Introduction

Loughborough University is a research intensive institution. The University undertakes, promotes and disseminates research of the very highest international quality and aims to engage with business, public and voluntary organisations to create social, cultural and economic impacts from its research.

The University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in the conduct of its research as embodied in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019). All those engaged in research at the University are responsible for observing the principles in the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Code of Practice for Research (2009) in all aspects of their research from initial concepts through to final dissemination of outcomes.

The UUK Concordat and the UKRIO Code of Practice are integral to the University's Ethical Policy Framework which applies to all of the University's activities and all members of the University community.

Research leaders are accountable for ensuring adherence to this framework in respect of the nature, conduct, dissemination and foreseeable end-use of research and the behaviour of researchers. Researchers are expected to make objective research decisions and, where difficult ethical issues are encountered, demonstrate courage and consistency in those decisions with the backing of the institution as a whole.

Researchers should seek research partners who share the University's ethical principles, as demonstrated through their own ethical behaviour and commitment to relevant international ethical principles.

Research Integrity

The University's rigorous approach to research is underpinned by the commitments described in the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019). As an institution, we are therefore committed to:

1. maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research

2. ensuring all research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

3. supporting 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

4. using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise

5. working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly

The principles established by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) [Code of Practice for Research](#) (2009) have been designed to encourage good conduct in research and prevent misconduct. The University expects all researchers to act in accordance with its principles:

1. Excellence – Researchers should strive for excellence and aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality.

2. Honesty – 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, nor conceal, misconduct.

3. Integrity – Researchers must comply with any legal and/or ethical requirements relevant to their study. They should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to research and where necessary take steps to resolve them, including those associated with publication.

4. Co-operation – Researchers should promote the open exchange of ideas, research methods, data and results and their discussion, scrutiny and debate. This is subject to any considerations of confidentiality.

5. Accountability – Researchers should recognise that in and through their work they are ultimately accountable to the general public and should act accordingly. Any research undertaken should comply with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project, and allow for proper governance and transparency. Researchers should follow the requirements and guidance of any professional bodies in their field of research and members of a regulated profession must follow the requirements and guidance of the body regulating their profession.

6. Training and Skills – Researchers should ensure that they have the necessary skills, training and resources to carry out their research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields. Any identified unmet needs should be reported and resolved.

7. Safety – Researchers should ensure the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of all involved in research, avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects, patients, participants, researchers and others and report any concerns. Researchers should ensure that any risks that could impact on the safety of those involved in research, whether researchers, participants or others are assessed and effectively managed to reduce the risk of injury or harm to themselves, the wider community or environment.

In accordance with the Code, authorship of all publications must be fairly attributed.

Loughborough University Ethical Principles

The University's Research Committee is responsible for establishing and reviewing guidance on the conduct of research. The University's Ethics Committee is responsible for ensuring that the conduct of research is consistent with the statement of ethical principles included in the [Ethical Policy Framework](#).

Research must be conducted in accordance with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, the Human Tissue Act (2004), Mental Capacity Act (2005), Data Protection Act (1998) and Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

Research which is carried out overseas should also comply with the legal and regulatory requirements of the country/countries involved.

Researchers must comply with all legal requirements relating to non-proliferation and dual-use, particularly export controls. Export controls apply to the transfer (by any means) of goods, technology, software and/or knowledge from the UK to a destination outside the UK that may be used for military or Weapons of Mass Destruction purposes. Failure to adhere to the requirements of the Export Controls legislation is a criminal offence.

Researchers are required to comply with the conditions of their research funders' data policies and should ensure published results always include information on how to access the supporting data. For further information see the University's Research Data Management Policy

Our ethical principles go beyond statutory, regulatory or funders' requirements, and all research activities, funded or unfunded, must adhere to the ethical principles. The principal investigator (or project supervisor where studies are conducted by students) is responsible for ensuring that appropriate ethical review is undertaken and appropriate approvals are in place. The Ethical Policy Framework includes an Ethics Quick Check which is intended to support those responsible for ensuring compliance with the ethical principles. In some cases, additional approvals will be required and these are signposted in the Quick Check.

All necessary ethical permissions must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research or prior to funding application where this is a requirement of the funder.

Furthermore, any member of the University community may challenge the institution if in good faith they feel that we have fallen short of the standards set out in the Ethical Policy Framework in relation to organisational or individual ethical behaviour. Initially, this should be discussed locally, for example with a tutor, supervisor, line manager, department / section head or Dean, but if a resolution cannot be found then contact should be made with the responsible person (see Appendix 3 of the Ethical Policy Framework) for the area of activity in which the challenge is made. Potential or actual conflicts of interest should be dealt with in the same way. If a resolution still cannot be found then this responsible person will ensure that the matter is passed to the Ethics Committee for resolution. Retaliation or retribution against any person making such a challenge will not be tolerated and shall attract disciplinary action.

Dedicated Ethical Approval Processes

For certain areas of work, the Ethics Committee has established dedicated processes:

- Approvals for research with human participants are delegated to the Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee.
- Research with the NHS will require HRA approval and may require NHS REC approval. Please contact the Research Governance Officer for advice.
- Before undertaking or planning to undertake research activity that involves animals/animal tissue or cells, either on campus, off campus, with or by third parties as a research collaboration, researchers should contact researchpolicy@lboro.ac.uk so that checks can be undertaken to ensure that the activity is fully compliant with the relevant legislation.
- Researchers involved in Research with Military Applications, Dual Use Technologies or Security Sensitive Research should follow the procedure for approval of such studies which is available at in the Ethical Policy Framework.

Research Misconduct Policy

The University is committed to 'using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise'. Research misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism or the falsification of data, will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

These processes are detailed in the University's Research Misconduct Policy. Staff and students should report any concerns relating to research activities undertaken under the University's auspices according to the procedure laid out in this policy.

Useful links

Ethical Policy Framework – which includes the ethical quick test for research and enterprise projects.

Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee – includes ethical approval forms and templates.

Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Participants

University HTA Licence Compliance Quality Manual

Research Misconduct Policy

Research Data Management Policy

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Useful guidance

Guidance on applying for ethical approval for research within the NHS

Health and Safety Policies

Compliance with Data Protection Requirements

Conducting Interviews Off-Campus and Working Alone

Data Collection and Storage

Exposure to Hazardous Substances

Exposure to Ionising Radiation

Making Payments to Participants

Studies Using Pre-Existing Data

Use of Pharmaceutical Drugs

Using Electronic Methods or Social Media for Research

Working with Children and Young People

External Links

[Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (2019)

UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) [Code of Practice for Research](#) (2009)

[Human Tissue Authority](#)

[Health Research Authority](#)