

# Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy

Leeds Trinity University expects all research and knowledge exchange activities carried out at the University, or in its name, to be undertaken to the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. This policy sets out the principles underlying ethical research and knowledge exchange at the University and should be read in conjunction with the relevant ordinances and regulations, and other policies, procedures or guidance issued by the University. It will be reviewed annually by the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee and approved by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

## 1. Principles and application

Research at the University should be conducted in full compliance with the UK Research Integrity Office code of practice for research [UKRIO » 1.0 Introduction](#), in that it should be in accordance with the principles of academic excellence, community, integrity, inclusiveness and professionalism. It must be conducted with respect for participants, and in full compliance with legislative, regulatory body and funder requirements.

All researchers must complete the university's research ethics self-assessment form and submit this to the Chair of their School or Institute's Research Ethics and Integrity Committee before commencing any programme of research. For the avoidance of doubt, research is defined as "a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction" (Research Excellence Framework (2019/01), Guidance on Submissions, p.90).

If completion of the self-assessment form indicates that full ethical review is required, then an ethics application must be submitted to a School or Institute Research Ethics Committee. No research or knowledge exchange project (or stage of a research project) may be conducted unless, and until, the project (or that stage) has been granted ethical approval by a Leeds Trinity (School/Institute or University) Research Ethics and Integrity Committee or other appropriate external body (see below) or the completion of the University's research ethics self-assessment document directs that ethical approval is not required. However, in cases where LTU staff engage in

external projects, for example as co-authors, but have no access to raw data, there is no requirement for the self-assessment document to be submitted. In addition, the following research must be reviewed by the appropriate School or Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committee:

- a. Research involving human participants, their personal data, tissues or body fluids.
- b. Research that has the potential to have an adverse environmental impact
- c. Research that poses a reputation risk to the University or its researchers Routine audit or evaluation of University business (e.g. evaluation of teaching) is excluded from this policy unless this is to be published externally, constitutes scholarship, increases knowledge and understanding of education and educational processes or is to be utilised in the creation of impact for any University activity.

This policy applies to everybody carrying out research or knowledge exchange under the auspices of the University, whether on its premises or elsewhere. This includes, but not limited, to all staff (including honorary or emeritus fellows/professors and visiting staff), postgraduate researchers and all registered students (whether undergraduate or postgraduate). It is the responsibility of the principal investigator, research supervisor (postgraduate research) or project supervisor (undergraduates) to ensure that all researchers (including external collaborators) are aware of and fully comply with this policy. Heads of Schools or Institutes have a responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy within their School or Institute.

This policy is linked to and operates in conjunction with conditions of employment for the relevant Staff groups and other related University policies and procedures including, but not limited to, those for [academic misconduct](#), [research misconduct](#), the Protocol for research degree candidates. Failure to abide by this policy may lead to the matter being considered under the University's [disciplinary procedures](#).

## 2. Ethical review by other Bodies

Research undertaken by Leeds Trinity researchers at other Institutions or Organisations within the UK should comply with this policy and also follow the guidelines of appropriate professional bodies. LTU staff merely reviewing a manuscript or becoming involved for specific analysis purposes without access to raw data may not need to be named in ethics applications to other institutions or organisations. This should be determined by the other institution or organisation's policy. However, to avoid duplication, the University may accept ethical approval by that Institution or Organisation provided the appropriate School or Institute Research Ethics Committee is informed (supported by evidence) and carries out a 'light touch' review.

Where required by law (e.g. Human Tissue Act) or where the research involves the NHS (e.g., but not limited to, patients, their data, records, tissue or body fluids), confirmation should be sought from the relevant NHS Research Ethics Committee, normally through the Integrated Research Application System.

Research undertaken outside of the UK must be approved by a Leeds Trinity Research Ethics Committee as well as being compliant with the legal and ethical requirements of the host country.

The University is not licenced to undertake studies using research animals regulated by Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Any such studies should be undertaken at Institutions which hold the appropriate licences and be reviewed by that Institutions Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body. The relevant School or Institute Research Ethics Committee should be notified that such studies are being undertaken and be provided with details of the requisite personal and project licences.

Nor is the University licenced to store human tissue. Any study requiring this must be undertaken at an Institution which hold the appropriate licence and the relevant School or Institute Research Ethics Committee should be notified that such studies are being undertaken and be provided with details of the requisite personal and project licences.

In all cases where ethics approval has been granted through another body (e.g. NHS, Prison service etc.) there is a requirement adhere to the local health and safety policies of that body in addition to LTU.

### 3. Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-committee Remit

1. To oversee the development and execution of policy and procedures relating to research ethics and conduct;
2. To consider approval of the ethical dimensions of research proposals from staff, postgraduate researchers and students which exceed the remit of School Ethics Committees;
3. To consider appeals against School Ethics Committees' decisions on research proposals from staff, postgraduate researchers and students. Appeals will only be considered by the University REISC relating to its own decisions or processes, or in cases where the decision of the SRIEC initial appeal (see below) is still disputed;
4. To log the outcomes of, and monitor the progress of, cases across the University, in accordance with institutional policy;

5. To provide an annual summary report to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee in relation to 2 – 4 above;
6. To provide a forum for chairs of School Ethics Committees to facilitate consistency of practice;
7. To conduct an annual audit of the work of School Ethics Committees, for report to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee;
8. To provide the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee with regular summary reports on its activities and recommendations for changes to policies and procedures.

## Membership\*

- Chairs of School Ethics Committees (ex officio)\*
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Manager (ex officio)
- Up to two members independent of the University, to be approved by RKEC  
One postgraduate researcher nominated by the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies
- The Committee Secretary (from Research and Knowledge Exchange Office staff).
- The Chair: to be appointed from the membership of the REISC and approved by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
- \*The Vice-Chair shall be elected from within this group.

Total core membership: 7/8

The Sub-Committee may co-opt other members from time-to-time as it requires, including members external to the University.

## Notes

Quorum 4/5 members

Frequency: Minimum of four meetings per academic year.

## 4. School or Institute Research Ethics Committees

Each School or Institute is required to establish a Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. It is the responsibility of the Head of School/Institute to ensure that their School or Institute has a properly constituted Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. School Research Ethics and Integrity Committees (SREIC) are subcommittee of the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (REISC). Their primary function is to take responsibility for making decisions on research, module, and knowledge exchange applications for ethical approval that have been submitted by staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers and students across the School.

The general Terms of Reference of School/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees are as follow:

1. The Committee shall have responsibility for making decisions on applications for ethical approval that have been submitted by members of staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers and by students across the School. In the case of undergraduate student projects or project modules, this may be via block approval of groups of projects.
2. The Committee shall keep under review the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy and where necessary make recommendations to REISC regarding any issues that arise.
3. In particular, the Committee shall ensure that the School complies with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy in the following ways:
  - a) to establish procedures to ensure activities conducted by staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers or students comply with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy.
  - b) recognise where advice and guidance are required from colleagues outside of the Committee, including the option of referral of applications to REISC, and if necessary, call upon experts to assist with advice and reviewing activities;
  - c) provide guidance to Principal Investigators or supervisors where it is considered that the documentation submitted is insufficient for the Committee to make an informed decision;
  - d) under the guidance of University procedures relating to health and safety, ensure that, so far as may be possible and reasonable, health and safety risks are minimised both to participants and researchers occasioned by, or associated with, research conducted from within the School;
  - e) where a Principal Investigator or supervisor is uncertain about the ethical implications of a proposal, provide further guidance as to the appropriate type of ethical review required;
  - f) ensuring compliance with the University's Research Data Management Policy and taking advice where necessary from the University's Data Protection Officer, to ensure that researchers comply with data protection procedures and legislation;
  - g) conduct an audit of a minimum of 10% of approved applications per annum and annually report results to REISC regarding ethics activities of the School, outcomes and any issues of concern;
  - h) ensure that there are no conflicts of interest when making decisions;
  - i) to maintain records of ethical permissions for activities conducted by staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers or students, including self-assessment forms and those that have been approved by other ethical

review bodies or organisations, for the appropriate period specified in the School GDPR Asset Register;

- j) to ensure that new committee members receive an induction to the processes of the Committee and, where necessary, that any existing members receive ongoing development specific to their needs;
- k) to consider initial appeals against SREIC decisions, the process of reaching the decision or if circumstances have changed.
- l) to disseminate good practice

4. The Committee will liaise with other relevant units of the University (such as the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office) regarding the provision of research ethics training and dissemination of good practice to raise awareness of research integrity and ethics amongst staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers and students within the School.

## Membership

Individual School can set the frequency of meetings appropriate to meet their needs (typically, up to 6 meeting) per academic year. They consist of the following core membership:

- Chair of the School Research Ethics and Integrity Committee
- X academic members of the School (to be determined by the number needed to represent the range of subjects being covered)
- A member of academic staff from another School
- A postgraduate researcher may be included within the SREIC's membership, but should not be involved in considering reserved business e.g. decision making about PGR applications.

Members of the Committee shall serve for a term of three years with the option to renew their membership once (serve a maximum 6 years).

The Committee may co-opt other members from time-to-time as it requires.

The quorum for Committee meetings is half of members plus either the Chair, or Vice Chair.

## Mode of Operation

Applications are received by email to [ethicscommittee@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:ethicscommittee@leedstrinity.ac.uk) in line with published deadlines that precede the scheduled Committee meeting dates. In exceptional circumstances when, for good reason, applications need rapid consideration, the Chair (or nominated other such as Vice-Chair, Chair of other School/Institute Committee or REISC in the case of conflicts of interest) may act after consultation with no fewer than two members of the Committee. Consideration of a minor amendment to an approved proposal may be dealt with by the Chair (or nominated other as previously). The Committee shall be informed promptly of decisions made under such circumstances.

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Committee Chairs may also include further information for example regarding turn round time for applications and how decisions are communicated to applicants in individual SREIC ToRs.

During academic year 2020-21, an electronic ethics submission system will be trialled, within SHSS initially, running in parallel with submission by e-mail as described above.

## 5. Complaints

Investigations of allegations of misconduct or unethical conduct on the part of staff, postgraduate researchers or students will follow the University protocol for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research and student academic and professional misconduct policy and procedures respectively.

Leeds Trinity University Research Ethics and Integrity Committee Approved by RKEC 10/6/2

## Research Ethics Policy Notes

The following document should be read in conjunction with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy.

### Introduction:

Before beginning a programme of research or knowledge exchange, LTU participants (staff, fellows, postgraduate researchers or students) need to consider the potential ethical issues that may arise, which may be either be specific to the discipline or situation in question, conceptual as well as practical. They also need to ensure that they abide by related university policies including, but not limited to Health and Safety, data protection and research integrity.

The following checklist, in no particular order of priority, highlights some of the areas for consideration, particularly for research or knowledge exchange human subjects, tissue or data, where there is risk to society, animals or the environment, or where the research or knowledge exchange activity may pose a reputational risk to the University or its staff, fellows, postgraduate researchers or students. It should be read alongside guidance provided by relevant professional bodies or learned societies.

For undergraduate final year projects, particularly those where block permission for groups of projects or a final year project module is sought, additional School or Institute specific guidance will be made available by School or Institute Research Ethics Committees

### Regulations and guidance:

- Adherence to the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy and other related policies
- Ethical review by other external bodies where dictated by statute
- Adherence to the University policies on academic conduct and research integrity • Adherence to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)
- Adherence to statutory requirements
- Adherence to discipline-specific codes and guidance or those of other outside bodies

## Research involving human participants:

- Fully informed, voluntary consent with the unconditional right of withdrawal of participation and/or of data
- Financial incentives or participants expenses
- Support for and protection of individuals (including consideration of gender or cultural needs)
- Additional protections for minors or vulnerable adults
- Physical and psychological health and safety of participants
- Management and reporting of adverse events
- Appropriate policy and practice concerning confidentiality, anonymity or acknowledgement of research participants
- Anonymity and security of research data
- Retention, future use or disposal of data and samples in line with consent
- Clear complaints procedure
- Procedure for disclosure of information to legal or other authorities (e.g. illegal activity, potential harm to minors or vulnerable adults etc.)

## Other considerations:

- Research design
- Ownership of research
- Risk versus benefit
- Risk to people, society, environment or animals
- Reputational risk to individuals (including the researchers), the University or other organisations
- Intellectual property issues
- Publication of research results/dissemination of results
- Funding sources, financial and confidentiality agreements with funders or sponsors • Conflicts of interest
- Monitoring and audit
- Support and training for junior researchers and other staff