

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INTEGRITY AND ETHICS POLICY

Research and Innovation are core to Falmouth's academic culture and the University is committed to advancing and safeguarding the highest standards of governance in all its research and innovation activities. This document defines the scope of the University's Code of Practice on Research Ethics, sets out the guiding principles, and outlines the obligations and responsibilities for conducting research in an ethical manner. This document is part of the University's framework for supporting good practice in research which includes the following information:

- Handbook for Research Integrity and Ethics, for Staff and Post-Graduate Research Students and Handbook for Research Integrity and Ethics, for Students on Taught Programmes
- Terms of Reference for Research and Innovation Committee, Research Degrees Committee and Research Integrity & Ethics Committee
- The University's policy documents on Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, and Data Protection
- Full Review for Ethical Approval form and Ethics Check-list
- The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

1. Definition of Research

Drawing on the UK funding bodies' definition used in the Research Excellence Framework, research is defined here as 'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of new ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.'¹

2. Scope of the Research and Innovation Integrity and Ethics Policy

This Code applies to all research undertaken under the formal auspices of the University. It applies to all research associated with the University irrespective of the source of funding or the physical location of the work. It applies to research carried out by staff and students in the course of their duties and relations with the University. Work conducted as part of professional practice carried out beyond the academy is the responsibility of the practitioner.

The Code applies to pedagogic enquiry and interventions which are beyond the normal agreements for educational purposes between teacher, student and institution.

¹ Described in Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (2011)
www.ref.ac.uk/2014/pubs/2011-02/

3. Guiding Principles

Handbooks for taught programmes and for Staff and Post-Graduate students provide guidance on the application of the principles outlined in this policy in these two categories of research. All University documentation reflects the University's firm commitment to the five core principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. By adopting the values of the concordat, the University commits to:

1. underpin all of its work with common values of rigour and integrity;
2. conform to all ethical, legal and professional obligations incumbent on its work;
3. nurture a research environment that supports research of the highest standards of rigour and integrity;
4. use transparent, robust and fair processes to handle allegations of misconduct; and,
5. continue to monitor, and where necessary improve, the suitability and appropriateness of the mechanisms in place to provide assurances over the integrity of research.

Upholding these values necessitates that the common principles of integrity, honesty, rigour, openness and transparency lie at the heart of everything we do. This will be reflected in every stage of research and innovation activity, from research design and the preparation of funding proposals, to dissemination of outcomes.

Under each of these themes, the handbooks on Research Integrity and Ethics explain what is expected of researchers, detailing the legal and professional frameworks we must comply with, expressing the University values and outlining the processes researchers must use to develop their projects.

In all cases, staff and students must adhere to relevant University policies and the structures and processes outlined in the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbooks, which safeguard the rights and dignity of everybody involved in research and innovation projects, minimise negative impact on the environment and observe obligations towards funders, partners, the law and society at large.

4. Conducting an Ethical Review

ALL research undertaken under the auspices of the University must be subject to ethical review. The first stage of review is a self-evaluation check-list.

4.1 Low Risk

For Students on Taught Programmes: Where the answer to all of the questions on the check-list is 'no', the check-list should be signed by the student and by their assigned supervisor or Module Leader and kept for the duration of their course.

For Post-Graduate Research Students: Where the answer to all of the questions on the check-list is 'no', the check-list should be signed by the student and by their Director of Studies and kept for the duration of their enrolment.

For Staff: Where the answer to all of the questions on the check-list is 'no', the check-list should be signed by the member of staff and kept for the duration of the project.

4.2 Medium Risk

For Students on Taught Programmes: Where the answer to all of the questions in the 'high risk' section of the checklist is 'no', but the answer to one or more questions in the 'medium risk' section of the checklist is 'yes', students are required to submit a full ethics review form to the relevant Module Leader. Medium Risk projects can be signed off by a Module Leader and will be noted at subject level meetings.

For Post-Graduate Research Students: Where the answer to all of the questions in the 'high risk' section of the checklist is 'no', but the answer to one or more questions in the 'medium risk' section of the checklist is 'yes', students are required to complete a full ethics review form. This should be submitted to the student's Director of Studies. Medium Risk projects can be signed off by a Director of Studies and will be noted at the Research Degrees Committee.

For Staff: Where the answer to all of the questions in the 'high risk' section of the checklist is 'no', but the answer to one or more questions in the 'medium risk' section of the checklist is 'yes', staff are required to complete a full ethics review form. This should be submitted to the appropriate Research Programme Leader. Medium Risk projects can be signed off by a Research Programme Leader and will be noted at Programme Leader meetings.

4.3 High Risk

For Students on Taught Programmes: Where the answer to one or more of the questions in the 'high risk' section of the checklist is 'yes', students are required to complete a full ethics review form and submit to their Module Leader. When the Module Leader is satisfied with the ethics review, it should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee. Note that high-risk projects would only be approved in exceptional circumstances for students on taught programmes.

For Post-Graduate Research Students: Where the answer to one or more of the questions in the 'high risk' section of the checklist is 'yes', students are required to complete a full ethics review form and submit to their Director of Studies. When the Director of Studies is satisfied with the ethics review, it should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee.

For Staff: Where the answer to one or more of the questions in the 'high risk' section of the checklist is 'yes', staff are required to complete a full ethics review form and submit to the relevant Programme Leader. When the Programme Leader is satisfied with the ethics review, it should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee.

5. Committee Structure

