

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE 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 Research and Innovation Integrity and Ethics Policy, 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
- The University's policy documents on Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Data Protection
- Research Ethics Approval Application review form
- The Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- Terms of Reference for Research & Knowledge Committee and Research Integrity & Ethics Committee

1. Definition of Research

Drawing on the UK funding bodies' definition used in the Research Excellence Framework (REF), 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 policy 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 postgraduate research students in the course of their duties and relations with the University. Work conducted as part of professional practice undertaken outside the auspices of the University is the responsibility of the practitioner but must comply with the expectations made of staff and students in their respective codes of conduct.

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

3. Guiding Principles

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

The Handbook for Research Integrity and Ethics provides 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:

- underpin all of its work with common values of rigour and integrity;
- conform to all ethical, legal and professional obligations incumbent on its work;
- nurture a research environment that supports research of the highest standards of rigour and integrity;
- use transparent, robust and fair processes to handle allegations of misconduct; and,
- 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 handbook on Research Integrity and Ethics explains 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 Handbook, 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.

4.1 Low Risk

Where the online review process has revealed the activity to be low risk, the online review form will store the information submitted and no further action is required of the researcher and the activity can proceed without further approval.

Low risk applications from both PGR students and staff will be noted at the Research Integrity and Ethics Committee.

4.2 Medium Risk

Where the online review process has revealed the activity to be medium risk, approval of the ethics review is required before the activity can commence.

In the case of a PGR student, the submission of the online ethics review form will trigger an email request for confirmation of readiness for submission from the student's Director of Studies. Once confirmed, the application will be considered at the next Research Integrity and Ethics Committee meeting. The activity can only commence once the RIEC has given its approval.

In the case of a member of staff, the submission of the online ethics review form will trigger an email request for approval from the member of staff's line manager. Once approved, no further action is required of the researcher and the activity can proceed without further approval. Medium risk applications from staff will be noted at the Research Integrity and Ethics Committee.

4.3 High Risk

Where the online review process has revealed the activity to be high risk, approval of the ethics review is required before the activity can commence.

In the case of a PGR student, the submission of the online ethics review form will trigger an email request for confirmation of readiness for submission from the student's Director of Studies. Once confirmed, the application will be considered at the next Research Integrity and Ethics Committee meeting. The activity can only commence once the RIEC has given its approval.

In the case of a member of staff, the application will be considered at the next Research Integrity and Ethics Committee meeting. The activity can only commence once the RIEC has given its approval.

4.4 Changes to approved projects

Authorisation to proceed with a research project under any of the risk categories described above is only valid if the project remains consistent with the information submitted with the online ethics review. When project changes result in any of the answers to the review questions being different, further approval may be necessary. Researchers will be required to summarise changes made to the review via an email to the RIEC servicing officer.

Version Control

| Version Number | Author | Purpose / Change | Date |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | David Prior | PGR student applications incorporated | 01/09/21 |
| 1.1 | David Prior | Version control added | 22/09/22 |
| 1.2 | Katy Shannon | Update to research committee titles | 23/11/22 |