

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 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
- Terms of Reference for Research and Innovation Committee, Research Degrees Committee and Research Ethics Committee
- The University's policy documents on Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Data Protection
- Research Ethics Approval Application Check-list and Full Application Form
- The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

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 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 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

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

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

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

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 6 years from the point of the activity finishing.

4.2 Medium Risk

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

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.

4.4

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 checklist or ethics review. When a project changes in any way that would result in an answer to the checklist being different, a new checklist or full ethics review, will need to be completed.