

UCEN Manchester Research Ethics Policy & Procedure

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Whilst taking into account regulations within partner Universities and awarding organisations, this policy makes clear the processes that must be adopted within higher education across UCEN Manchester in relation to research ethics. This procedure is a reflection of UCEN Manchester's commitment to ensuring students, programme leaders, department team leaders, heads of school and directors are given appropriate guidance to achieve intended learning outcomes involving research for a module/unit or programme with rigour, fairness and probity and relates to undergraduate and postgraduate study.

1. Introduction

This policy makes clear UCEN Manchester's expectations regarding conduct in relation to research ethics. UCEN Manchester has established a policy and procedure for the governance of research ethics in which the UCEN Manchester Curriculum Quality and Standards Committee reports to the UCEN Manchester Academic Board and has responsibility for the oversight of relevant ethics issues arising from research, the formulation of relevant policies and procedures, and the consideration of significant or complex issues arising from particular research.

2. Scope and purpose

The policy has been written for all researchers (staff or students) and research supervisors at UCEN Manchester, who have a responsibility to undertake research activities with the highest possible standards of integrity and practice. This policy applies to all researchers and supervisors who are engaged in research projects at any level, and any research undertaken by staff or students (undergraduate or postgraduate) of UCEN Manchester should be subject to ethical scrutiny. Researchers are required to demonstrate that this scrutiny has occurred, and research supervisors have overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate ethical scrutiny of their students' research occurs, and must advise on the processes and procedures, and on the paperwork required.

This 'Research Ethics Policy and Procedure' outlines the standards for research and the responsibilities of those involved. It is designed to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks and standards. UCEN Manchester expects all those engaged in research to observe and uphold these principles which are designed to enhance research quality and integrity.

Where research is undertaken in conjunction with a third party, UCEN Manchester expects all members of the collaboration to comply with the ethical codes in place at both UCEN Manchester and the partner institution or organisation. Should there be an absence of an ethical code or a lower requirement in place at the third party, the UCEN Manchester policy will prevail.

3. Principles

UCEN Manchester has an obligation to ensure that:

1. research is predicated by a research proposal; this may be provided by an HEI/awarding body or by UCEN Manchester (see appendix 1 – UCEN Manchester Research Proposal Form A1);
2. research complies with:
 - a. statutory requirements.
 - b. applicable codes of ethical practice.
 - c. codes of conduct and guidelines set out by relevant professional bodies.
 - d. LTE Group policies including:
 - Data Protection Policy;
 - Anti-Bribery Policy;
 - Gift and Hospitality Procedure;
 - Fraud and Irregularity Policy;
 - Disclosure and Conflict of Interest Policy.
3. research is conducted in a way that safeguards the health and wellbeing of those conducting or participating in the research or who may be impacted by the research. Wherever possible, risks should be identified in advance so that they can be evaluated, monitored and appropriately managed.

4. conclusions from research are published and disseminated appropriately.
5. those conducting research:
 - a. are impartial;
 - b. are independent;
 - c. have been appropriately trained;
 - d. give consideration to the commercial, political, cultural or ethical sensitivity of particular types of research;
 - e. declare offers of donations, gifts and hospitality in accordance with LTE Group policies.
6. the dignity of those participating in or a subject of the research is respected – including:
 - a. supplying information to participants about the project; this may be provided by an HEI/awarding body or by UCEN Manchester (see appendix 2 – UCEN Manchester Participant Information Form A2);
 - b. the opportunity to consent to participate, withdraw from or refuse to take part in projects; this may be provided by an HEI/awarding body or by UCEN Manchester (see appendix 3 – UCEN Manchester Participant Consent Form A3);
 - c. ensuring that participation is on the basis of fully informed consent;
 - d. maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding the security of data – including anonymisation, future use and disposal of data as appropriate (see appendix 4 – UCEN Manchester Security of Data Guidance A4);
 - e. due regard for the vulnerability of any individual or group – including children, young people and vulnerable adults.

4. Ethical approval

All substantive research assignments and projects require an assessment to be undertaken and documented to determine whether or not ethical approval is necessary for the research proposal and the level at which that approval is required: Lecturer/Supervisor (**as Designated Reviewer**), Director/Head of School (**as Designated Curriculum Lead Reviewer**) or Vice Dean (**as Designated UCEN Manchester Lead Reviewer**). If you are unsure whether your research requires ethical approval, you should check with your supervisor in the first instance. Your supervisor may then consult with the Designated UCEN Manchester Lead Reviewer.

Responsibility for undertaking the ethical scrutiny of research proposals will depend on the nature of the research. While demonstrating that ethical scrutiny of research projects has occurred is the responsibility of supervisors or researchers, not all research projects will need to be comprehensively reviewed. Projects with no human participants or very low risk human participant projects can be approved following some basic checks.

There are a number of straightforward procedures where it may not be necessary for research to undergo full ethical review. However, in some cases the researcher still has a responsibility to consider ethical issues, to take note of any relevant codes of practice, and to confirm approval for their research proposal from their supervisor. Research which may come under this category includes:

- using new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
- library studies;
- secondary data analysis;

- questionnaires and interview schedules where there are no major issues relating to confidentiality, sensitive information or controversial subject matter, and which do not involve potentially vulnerable participants;
- research already granted permission by other ethics committees.

In some subject disciplines, researchers and supervisors may be required to follow research codes of conduct and guidelines specified by a relevant professional body, and this should be taken into account when completing a research proposal (see appendix 5 – Professional Body Codes of Conduct and Guidelines A5).

The researcher or supervisor, in the case of student research, has the responsibility for deciding which professional codes and of conduct and guidelines apply to their research, and what authorisation, if any, should be sought. If researchers or supervisors are in doubt as to what is appropriate they should seek advice from the Designated UCEN Manchester Lead Reviewer.

Where required, ethical approval must be secured before any data collection is started. Where personal data (as defined in the Data Protection Act (2018) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR)) is to be collected or otherwise processed for the purpose of the research, then ethical approval must be secured in advance. LTE Group's Data Protection Policy applies in respect of the processing of personal data for research purposes.

5. Rejection of ethical approval

In cases of rejection of requests for ethical approval of a research proposal, the researcher will be informed and be supplied by the supervisor with an indication of the deficiencies of the proposal with an opportunity for a further resubmission.

Appeals against the rejection of a proposal can be made to the next level of authority in the approval process (see appendix 6 - UCEN Manchester Procedure for Research Ethics Approval A6). There is no route for appeal against the rejection of a proposal by the UCEN Manchester Ethics Review Panel.

6. Monitoring and compliance

In cases where a researcher is suspected of being in breach of this policy or the terms of the ethical approval, UCEN Manchester will take action at the appropriate level to resolve the matter. Resolution may involve other UCEN Manchester or LTE Group regulations, including but not limited to the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures or Data Protection Policy.

UCEN Manchester will undertake appropriate sampling and monitoring of research-related activity to ensure that appropriate and effective use of the ethical approval process is being made.

UCEN Manchester will undertake appropriate sampling and monitoring of research projects that have received ethical approval to ensure compliance with the initial approval. Updates will be provided to the UCEN Manchester Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee.

7. Suitability of funders/collaborators

UCEN Manchester does not knowingly collaborate with, or accept any monies from, sources of funding where the aims of the bodies concerned:

- are illegal under UK law;
- are contrary to the research, education or wider aims or objectives of UCEN Manchester;

- may damage the reputation of UCEN Manchester.

Anyone with concerns regarding the nature of a potential funding body or collaborator should contact the Designated UCEN Manchester Lead Reviewer.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – UCEN Manchester Research Proposal Form A1

Appendix 2 – UCEN Manchester Participant Information Form A2

Appendix 3 – UCEN Manchester Participant Consent Form A3

Appendix 4 - UCEN Manchester Security of Data Guidance A4

Appendix 5 - Professional Body Codes of Conduct and Guidelines A5

Appendix 6 - UCEN Manchester Procedure for Research Ethics Approval A6

UCEN Manchester Research Proposal Form A1**Research activity requiring ethics consideration and approval**

(This form should be retained for the purposes of assurance of compliance and audit for the duration of the research project.)

Researcher Name:	
Researcher Email Address:	
Course/Year (if applicable):	
Module (if applicable):	
Title of Research Project/Study:	
Start date for the project:	
End date for the project:	
Brief description of proposed activity and its objectives (e.g. numbers involved, research location/s). If applicable, be specific about any involvement of children, young people, or vulnerable adults:	
Ethical issues identified:	
How these will be addressed:	
Will this proposal involve any health and safety risks to yourself or others, for example, lone working in unsafe locations?	
Will this proposal include any security sensitive information? If yes, please explain below:	
Checklist for applicant:	
1. Have you attached completed drafts of your Participant Information Form (A2) and Participant Consent Form (A3) or equivalents? ☐	

2. Have you read and ensured compliance with the UCEN Manchester Security of Data Guidance (A4)? ☐	
If applicable to your research: I have read and understood the Professional Body Codes of Conduct and Guidelines (A5) [please indicate the relevant framework below]:	
Researcher Undertaking I hereby confirm that I will conduct my research in line with the guidelines indicated. I also confirm that I am proposing to undertake this research project in the manner described. I understand that no research activity should start until consent is granted. I understand that once consent is granted, I may not make any substantial amendments to this project without further consent from my supervisor and participants – for example in widening or changing the participant group or significantly changing a questionnaire.	
Signature of researcher:	Date:
Authorisation:	
Signature of supervisor (Designated Reviewer):	Date:
Signature of Designated Curriculum Lead Reviewer (where required):	Date:
Signature of Designated UCEN Manchester Lead Reviewer (where required)	Date:
Signature from Ethics Review Panel (where required):	Date:

UCEN Manchester Participant Information Form A2

Research Project Title:

What is the purpose of the project?

Why have I been chosen?

Do I have to take part?

What do I have to do?

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

Will all my personal data be kept confidential?

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Who is the supervisor for the research, and who can be contacted for further information?

Name and contact details of researcher:

UCEN Manchester Participant Consent Form A3

Research Project Title:

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☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Form A2 related to this research and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without consequence.

☐ I understand that all my responses will be anonymised so nobody will know who I am.

☐ I give permission for members of the teaching team to have access to my anonymised responses.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of participant:	
Signature of participant:	Date:

Name of researcher:	
Signature of researcher:	Date:

UCEN Manchester Security of Data Guidance A4

UKGDPR impacts on how you collect, store and use the data you have collected from human participants.

- If your phone is password-protected, you may use it to collect data.
- You must only use encrypted memory sticks to transport data.
- Data that has been collected (e.g, Word transcripts, Excel spreadsheets) should be password protected.
- You must ensure your digital devices (laptops, tablets etc.) are password protected.
- You must use your UCEN Manchester email for all communications relating to your research. You must not use your personal email.
- You must store your data, any transcriptions and related assignments on your UCEN Manchester student hard drive. Best practice is to transfer all your data onto your UCEN Manchester student hard drive, as it is backed up there and kept secure.
- You must not use your personal cloud storage.
- You must use pseudonyms for individuals and agencies, organisations and settings unless you have written confirmation (e.g. from a professional) that they are happy to be named.
- You must retain your raw data until the end of the academic year or until you have passed the module. You should then securely destroy the data.

Professional Body Codes of Conduct and Guidelines A5

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (2016)

[Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions](#)

- British Association of Social Workers (2021)
[Code of Ethics](#)
- British Educational Research Association (2024)
[Ethics and guidance](#)
- British Psychological Society (2021)
[Code of Human Research Ethics](#)
- British Society of Criminology (2015)
[Statement of Ethics for Researchers](#)
- British Sociological Association (2017)
[Statement of Ethical Practice](#)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
[Research Ethics checklist](#)
- Engineering Council and The Royal Academy of Engineering (2017)
[Statement of Ethical Principles](#)
- Department for Education (2023)
[Research with Children and Young People](#)
- UK Data Service: (Managing data)
[Managing data: tools and templates](#)

This is a non-exhaustive list. You should speak to your supervisor about any other relevant codes of conduct and guidelines.

Those registered with the Health and Care Professions Council or Nursing and Midwifery Council should also refer to:

- Health and Care Professions Council (2024)
[Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics](#)
- Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015, updated 2018)
[The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives](#)

UCEN Manchester and LTE Group policies

- UCEN Manchester
[Research Ethics Policy and Procedure](#)
[Respectful Relationships and Behaviour Policy](#)
- LTE Group
[Data Protection Policy](#)
[Anti-Bribery Policy](#)
[Gift and Hospitality Procedure](#)
[Counter Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan](#)
[Disclosure and Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

UCEN Manchester Procedure for Research Ethics Approval A6

Proposal for research discussed
between researcher/supervisor

Researcher completes Research
Proposal Form A1 or equivalent

Lecturer/supervisor checks proposal
against research RAG criteria

Mostly secondary research

Supervisor signs off research
proposal if happy that the
research is not 'high risk' and
any ethical issues have been
identified and mitigated by
student

**Lecturer (Designated
Reviewer) to assess and sign
off proposal**

Secondary research

May involve some primary
research

May be ethical issues

Lecturer/supervisor may not
be confident to sign off

**Director/Head of School
(Designated Curriculum Lead
Reviewer) to assess and sign
off proposal**

Primary research

Involvement of human
participants

Health and safety

Designated Curriculum Lead
Reviewer is unhappy to sign
off without guidance (high
risk activity)

**Vice Dean (Designated UCEN
Manchester Lead Reviewer)
to assess and sign off
proposal**

Ethics Review Panel

Designated UCEN Manchester Lead Reviewer does not sign off –Supervisor/student can appeal to
Ethics Review Panel, convened by Group Quality Director (Higher Education)

Panel members: Vice Dean; Group Quality Director (Higher Education)

Ethics Review Panel decision is final

Quality and Standards Committee

Designated UCEN Manchester Lead
Reviewer reports outcomes

UCEN Manchester Academic Board

Vice Dean of UCEN Manchester
reports outcomes from QSC minutes