

# Research Regulations



## **1. Aims and Overview**

This document is designed to help you, the researcher, understand the basic principles of ethical research, determine whether you need formal ethical approval for your research and guide you through the ethics procedures, provide information on the repository and academic integrity.

Research contributes to knowledge in the field. Evaluation is not a binary opposite of research. Evaluations often required for service or intervention delivery might need ethical approval if requiring user input. On the other hand, business insights evaluations utilising data provided to the business does not require ethical approval and can be self-certified.

It is essential that all research undertaken by University of Law staff, students or associates conform to ethical standards as guided by regulatory bodies and University standards. If your research involves human participants, formal ethical clearance must be obtained through the University of Law's Ethics Sub-Committees. All studies undertaken under the auspices of the University must conform to principles of ethical research.

All researchers must either self-certify that their study does not involve human participants, or ethical approval must be received from the relevant Ethics Sub-Committee before data collection from human participants.

Failure to comply with this Statement of Practice may result in disciplinary action, for staff and students. University of Law students should refer to the University's Student Discipline Regulations and staff refer to the Staff Conduct Regulations.

Ethical research protects the participant and the researcher. Ethical research must do no harm to participants or the researcher and the safety of all is paramount when conducting research.

In the context of any study, ethical practice



You want to investigate whether the doctrine of joint enterprise achieves its intended objectives. The research is reliant purely on primary sources of law and secondary sources (i.e. no human participants are used in the research).

You intend to conduct research into the Financial Reporting Council's guidance on board effectiveness. You work as a company secretary and have experienced the shortcomings of an ineffective board. You will only use materials available in the public domain and will not discuss your employer, or the discussions taking place in your employment, in this research.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you can rely on self-certification or not, you are **must** contact the relevant Ethics Sub-Committee ([ethics@law.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@law.ac.uk)) and proceed to the Formal Approval Stage (see section 1.3).

**All cases of self-certification must be sent**

- 1.3.4 The University is responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of and comply with the University's regulations governing studies involving the use of Human Participants.
- 1.3.5 The regulations and procedures set out in this document have been approved by the Academic Board.

#### **1.4 Purpose**

- 1.4.1 The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that any study involving the use of Human Participants is conducted in accordance with proper ethical standards.
- 1.4.2 These standards are defined in order to ensure that:
  - i the study is well- designed;
  - ii participants are safeguarded against procedures which may be harmful in any way;
  - iii confidentiality is maintained in respect of the identity of those participating in a study and of any personal information which participants may disclose in the



always use reliable



independence

### **3. Planning and conducting research**

Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 3: The University of Law is committed to supporting a research culture of integrity and good governance.

- i. Researchers should devise a research project with a clear rationale and articulate the critical factors of success in conducting the research project. These factors may include the research design, methodology, data collection, data analysis and key milestones. All information should be available to demonstrate viability of the research is in place before the commencement of the project.
- ii. In planning and conducting research, the researcher must have undertaken a risk assessment before commencing their project. This must comply with University of Law Health and Safety policy.
- iii. The relevant parties must grant all approval/permissions to conduct the research; that is, the ethics committee, participating organisations, or regulatory or funding bodies, before the project can commence
- iv.

### 3.1 Research Integrity

Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 1: The University takes its starting point from the definition of research integrity provided by Universities UK 'The Concordat to Support Research Integrity' (2019)

3.1.1 **Honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings

3.1.2 **Rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results

3.1.3 **Transparency and open communication** in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public

3.1.4 **Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record

3.1.5 **Accountability** of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short



In addition to this cooling off period, you must ensure that potential participants have all relevant documentation (to include as a minimum the Explanatory Statement and the Informed Consent form) at least 24 hours prior to their participation in the research.

If researchers are using anonymous questionnaires, it is recommended that the

researchers and adapted as necessary. You must keep signed consent forms securely as evidence of obtaining consent (where applicable).

### **3.3 Permission from stakeholders**

Where a researcher wishes to conduct research with a specific group of participants (eg employees, clients, contractors etc) or documents not in the public domain, permission to access those participants or documents is required.

Permission should be sought from the highest-ranking person in the organisation or a senior officer who has been delegated the responsibility and accountability for approval and overseeing research in the workplace.

If a researcher is unsure of who has authority to permit research, then as a matter of best practice they should write to the most senior person in the relevant organisation.

A template Permissions Letter is provided at <https://www.law.ac.uk/policies/> under “

### **3.5 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality relates to the protection of the data collected.

Your process of obtaining, recording, storing, etc personal data in connection with your study must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation. The Explanatory Statement and Informed Consent Form should clearly explain to participants how the data will be stored and what security measures will be in place in order to maintain its confidentiality.

It is also important to realise that the final research paper may be read by a number of people who are outside the researcher's control. You need to appreciate fully the level of confidentiality that you can or cannot guarantee.

### **3.6 Anonymity**

Anonymity is the ability of the researcher to remove the identity of participants from the data. At its most basic, an2 reW\* Tf1 0 0 1 438.91 690.22 Tm0 g0 G[ )JTJETQq0.000008871 0



### **3.13 Publication**

Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 3: The University of Law supports researchers in the planning and undertaking of their research and encourages all



**Falsification:** inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery and/or consents.

**Plagiarism:**

Social Research Association  
University of Bath  
University of East Anglia  
University of Leeds  
University of Sheffield  
York St John's University

Version

## **Appendix A: Ethics Approval Flowc**

## **Appendix B: Definition of terms**