



SALC Research ethics training (2013/14) –
Dr Jenny Hughes

Aims of today:

- To increase awareness of research ethics principles
- To encourage connections between disciplinary norms and internationally recognised principles of research ethics
- To offer guidance on School and University research ethics procedures

Two case studies ...

What ethical issues immediately come to mind, when considering the first two research projects on the handout?

‘Research ethics is a world-wide set of principles governing the way any research involving interaction between the researcher and other humans or human tissue or data relating to humans, is designed, managed and conducted’

University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

‘The University is required, as a responsible research institution, to conduct its research and, where relevant, its teaching, in accordance with the highest scientific and ethical standards ... The dignity, rights, safety and well being of human participants must at all times be considered, respected and safeguarded. This includes research subjects, their tissue, organs or personal data.’ (UREC)

All projects conducted by University staff or students that involve human participants in a way that might harm, disturb or upset them (however slight the possibility) or where they can be deemed to be in a vulnerable or disadvantageous situation, must receive approval from a recognised research ethics committee.

(UREC)

An ethics committee will assess whether:

- the research is justified, i.e. is the research likely to add to the existing knowledge base;
- it is of sufficient standard - including whether the researchers are qualified to carry out the roles proposed;
- are the risks posed to participants outweighed by the potential benefits of the research?;
- the research appears to comply with all statutory and other guidance;
- data management and handling appears to comply with the relevant legislation;
- financial arrangements appear sound.

Autonomy
Beneficence
Non-maleficence
Confidentiality
Integrity



Nuts and bolts

Applying for ethical approval

What level of review do I need?

Research that takes place in unpredictable and volatile environments, engages with vulnerable or dependent people, asks participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress and/or otherwise presents more than a minimal level of risk to researcher or research participants must be screened by the SALC Research Ethics committee and then forwarded to the University Research Ethics Committee for review.

Research with adults and children (carried out in an accredited setting such as a cultural institution, school or youth club and accompanied by a carer or professional with a duty of care), that does not ask participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress, and that otherwise presents a minimal level of risk to researchers and/or research participants, can be reviewed by the School Research Ethics committee.

SALC Research Ethics Template allows the School to approve research that:

- Engages with healthy adults;
- Engages with healthy children and young people in a professional setting accredited to work with children and young people, such as a cultural institution, school or youth club, and only when the child is accompanied by a parent/carer or professional with a duty of care;
- Follows standard procedures and research methods relevant to its discipline;
- Does not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress (the research topics are either not contentious or sensitive at all, or a reasonable person would agree the topic is of legitimate interest and may result in distress in rare instances);
- Presents a minimal level of risk to researchers and/or research participants.

Flow chart of process:

- Do I need ethical approval? (discuss with research supervisors/mentors; submit ethics declaration form) →
- Can I apply via the SALC Research Ethics Template or do I need to apply to the University Research Ethics Committee (use the Template as a diagnostic tool)? →
- Fill in Template or UREC form →
- Draft accompanying documents →

- Review application with research supervisors (if needed) →

- Submit to Research office (daniel.bylo@manchester.ac.uk) for screening (UREC forms) or review (Template)

What happens next?

Template applications will be reviewed at the next committee

UREC applications are screened by Chair of SALC Ethics Committee and Research Director before being signed off and forwarded to UREC

What happens after that?

Template applications – the applicant will receive an email either confirming approval or asking for amendments (the email will normally arrive within 3 working days of the committee; amendments can normally be dealt with via Chair's action)

UREC applications – the applicant will receive an invitation to attend a UREC in order to discuss queries arising from the application (it takes up to 3 weeks to process a UREC application)

The application form



Sections of the form (Template and UREC:)

- A. Administrative information
- B. Details of Project
- C. Details of participants
- D. Consent
- E. Risks and safeguards
- F. Data protection and confidentiality
- G. Conflict of interest
- H. Reporting arrangements
- I. Funding and sponsorship

(UREC form also has a 'Medical intervention' section)

SALC Ethics Template

- 9. What is the academic justification for the research? *(Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)***

7. Where will the data collection take place?

The data collection takes place in one or more of the following: *(Tick all that apply)*

In a public space, building or institutional setting (for example, a high street, campus, cultural institution or private residence) in the UK. The School's generic risk assessment for off-site research in the UK has been reviewed and approved by the researcher and supervisor (for postgraduate research) and appended to this application.

In a public space, building, or institutional setting (for example, a high street, campus, cultural institution or private residence) in an international setting *not* on the list of countries/regions that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against 'all or all but essential travel' to. The School's generic risk assessment for off-site research in low risk international settings has been reviewed and approved by the researcher and supervisor (for postgraduate research) and appended to this application.

Where data collection takes place in an institutional setting, approval from the host site has been sought, and a letter of support is appended to this application.

In an online environment.

Please describe where your data collection will take place (be specific – for example, give names of institutions and community sites):

12.1 Does the research involve the administration of any physically invasive procedures, or physical or psychological testing? *(Please tick all that apply)*

The research does not involve the administration of any physically invasive procedures, or physical or psychological testing.

12.2 Does the research involve interviewing participants or focus groups?

Yes No If No, proceed to 12.3. If Yes, please describe briefly how they will be conducted (*tick all that apply*)

The research involves interviews, elicited conversations and/or focus groups with adults or children (in an accredited institutional setting and in the presence of carers or professionals with a duty of care) who have given informed consent to take part in the research (this may include online interviews as well as face to face interviews).

The topic guide for the interview, focus group or elicited conversation is appended to this application.

This research does not require the disclosure of personal, potentially distressing information or any risk of disclosure of illegal activities.

Please expand on the use of interviews, elicited conversation and/or focus groups in your research:

Key questions - 13.1

13.1 What do you consider to be the main ethical issues which may arise with the proposed study? *Tick all that apply.*

- Issues of informed consent - research participants' awareness of the reasons why the research is taking place and what will happen to information they provide.
- Issues of confidentiality - research participants may feel that their views or identities will be exposed in undesired ways.
- Where researchers are engaged in projects in sites outside of the University, there are additional risks relating to personal safety of the researcher.
- Research participants may find research activities tiring or intrusive.
- Some topics explored - for example, explorations of religious beliefs and practices, the representation of specific communities in art and literature, questions of cultural difference, the production and reception of provocative exhibitions or performances - may provoke strong feelings in respondents.
- The research takes place across cultural boundaries, presenting specific challenges relating to communication and cultural awareness.
- The research will not carry risk of criminal or other disclosures requiring action (for example, involving safeguarding of children or vulnerable/dependent adults).

Key questions - 13.2

13.2 What steps will be taken to address the issues raised in question 13.1?

- A participant information sheet has been developed for the research project and is attached here
- Participants will give written or verbal consent to participate in the study after they have reviewed the participant information sheet.
- Where projects have multiple stages, informed consent will be obtained for each phase of the work.
- Where the research engages children and young people, a CRB check has been undertaken either via the University or the host institution.
- Where research participants cannot read English, the information sheet will be translated into a language understandable to them.
- Where the research takes place across cultural differences, researchers will develop awareness of cultural norms in the research site/community and act in ways that are respectful of these at all times. Researchers will manage encounters so as to minimise power imbalances that may occur, including making research participants aware of their right to withdraw from the research without giving an explanation.
- The research project takes place off-campus and a risk assessment is appended to this application.

Key section –

Section E: Risks and safeguards

Risk and risk assessments – key issues

- Causing offence (issues of access/inclusion; discussing topics that may provoke strong responses)
- Lone working
- Working in private residences
- Working in international sites
- Health and safety

Final tips on filling in the approval form:

- Be succinct – short, clear answers are more effective than long explanations. Don't cut and paste wholesale from research proposals
- Make sure your application makes sense to an interested layperson – avoid technical terms, for example
- Be pragmatic – we need to know what you are going to do, why, with whom, when and where (we don't need extended critical or theoretical explanation, however interesting this is!)

Accompanying documents:

- The participant information sheet
- Consent form
- Consent letter(s) from third parties
- Risk assessment
- Questionnaires or interview questions

Deadline for submission of ethics applications are
two weeks prior to each committee:

9th October

13th November

29th January

19th March (MA Research Outline
deadline is 18th February)

7th May

11th June

Further information

School research ethics:

<http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/graduateschool/documents-resources/research-ethics/>

University research ethics:

<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/ethics/>

If in doubt, send a query to:

daniel.bylo@manchester.ac.uk

Q&A

