

Annex to the Research Ethics Policy

Application of the Policy to research projects for taught degrees

1. Across the institution it is frequently the case that students registered for taught awards undertake research projects which involve human participants in places of work and in schools or other educational settings. Undertaking a substantial project involving human participants at undergraduate or master's level raises certain issues associated with research ethics and 'informed consent' in particular.
2. The *Research Ethics Policy*, in common with policies active in many other institutions, is formulated in such a way as to be far reaching and all inclusive in scope and, in the strictest of interpretations, suggests that 'informed consent' should always be obtained from all human participants, or their parents or guardians in the case of children. However, given the large number of such projects which are undertaken each year, this process would be prohibitively time-consuming and would, in practice, be likely to lead to the discontinuation of an activity from which students derive important benefits. In order to ensure that it remains possible to sustain research projects within the curricula of taught programmes, a proportionate response to the provisions of the *Policy* is needed. The following measures have been developed to meet this requirement, whilst ensuring that the important ethical principles embodied in the *Policy* are observed.
3. The *Research Ethics Policy* indicates that 'informed consent' need not be obtained if the research is part of 'normal professional practice for the researcher'. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that all research projects which form part of taught programmes should be formulated in such a way as to be readily identified with 'normal professional practice'.
4. However, the following procedures must be observed in all cases.
5. A full copy of the *Research Ethics Policy* must be included as an appendix in all relevant documentation (e.g. the module handbook of an 'individual study' or other course modules as appropriate). All students must sign a declaration to confirm that they have read the *Policy* and adhered to the guidance that it contains. The signed declaration must appear at the start of their own submitted work.
6. Ethical considerations must be included in formal teaching in advance of any 'substantial' research project taking place.
7. When planning their research projects, students and their University College supervisor must meet to identify, evaluate and address any ethical implications arising. If any aspect of the project suggests that the work to be undertaken is ethically unsuitable, that study will not be allowed to take place as conceived and designed. In such instances, the student will be informed by the supervisor and directed to revise or reconsider his or her work as appropriate.
8. In order to ensure that there is a record that agreement has been reached between student and supervisor, a formal research proposal must be drawn up and signed by both parties and a copy retained by both parties.

9. Where a student or supervisor is uncertain about the ethical suitability of a research project, they should always seek the advice of the Head of Research who may ultimately refer the matter to the Research Ethics Standing Group. In such an event, the project will be delayed until an outcome is determined. This should be considered and taken into account well in advance of any research being undertaken.
10. The research proposal must in all cases also be presented to the manager, supervisor, mentor, head teacher or class teacher in the place of work, school or other educational setting and signed in advance of any research being undertaken. This act acknowledges general approval and confirms that the research proposed is considered entirely appropriate and 'routine'.
11. Prior to starting any form of research in a place of work, a school or elsewhere, students must in addition adhere to the *Research Ethics Policy* in its entirety, beginning with providing information about the research project for the human participants who may then decide to withdraw. Where it is considered appropriate by the place of work, school or other setting, a letter should be sent to the parents or guardians of the human participants involved providing information about the research project. While not seeking 'informed consent' *per se*, the parents or guardians may then make further enquiries or withdraw their children as they see fit.
12. It should be emphasised that the provisions in this annex apply only to taught programmes. They do not apply to PhD students or EdD students entering the thesis stage of their work who should seek ethical approval in advance in all instances.