



Human Research Ethics

Professor Bernd Carsten Stahl

Director, Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility

Chair, Faculty of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee

What is ethics?

- good / bad – right / wrong
- provides practical guidance
- allows reflection and justification of right / wrong
- is as old as humanity
- has an academic history of at least 2500 years
- builds on different, sometimes contradictory sources
 - intuition
 - ethical theories
 - religion
 - ...

What is the role of ethics in research?

Intention

- Improve the world through research

Product

- Consequences of research (positive or negative)

Conduct

- Authorship, intellectual property, plagiarism
- Correctness, fabrication, negligence

Process

- Conduct of research, governance, compliance, reputation
- **Treatment of humans as sources of data (HRE)**

Why is HRE relevant in DMU research?

1. Gathering information from human beings through: Interviewing, Surveying, Questionnaires, Observation of human behaviour
2. Using archived data in which individuals are identifiable
3. Researching into illegal activities, activities at the margins of the law or activities that have a risk of injury
4. Supporting innovation that might impact on human behaviour

Attention:

Different regulations apply when you undertake research involving human tissue.

An application for HTA-related approval is available on the website.

Human Research Ethics, Basics

- “It is university policy that any scholarly activity involving interaction with and observation of human subjects must be subjected to a human research ethics review.”
- This includes undergraduate and postgraduate and staff research projects.
- Researcher (student) fills in the form
- Supervisor suggests outcome
- Research student and staff proposals are all authorised by FHREC
- Possible outcomes
 1. no ethical issues
 2. minor ethical issues which have been addressed and concerns resolved
 3. major ethical issues which have been addressed and concerns resolved
 4. ethical issues that have not been resolved

The approved ethics review form should be included as an appendix to the project report.

Differences taught students, research students, staff

- All must undergo ethics review
- Taught students are reviewed by 1st / 2nd supervisor
 - outcome should be included in appendix
 - submission to FHREC only if outcome is 3 or 4
- All research students must fill in form, signed by supervisor, authorised by FHREC
- All staff projects must be reviewed, signed by line manager, authorised by FHREC.
- This is a university requirement, not optional

The Form

Staff/Student Name

Programme (if relevant)

Title of Research Project

Brief description of proposed activity and its objectives:

Ethical issues identified: How these will be addressed:

To which ethical codes of conduct have you referred?

These are specific to each Faculty

**and if you have a query please ask your supervisor or
Faculty REC for advice.**

Detailed requirements

- 1 Respondents' co-operation in a research project is entirely **voluntary** at all stages. They must not be misled when being asked for co-operation.
- 2 Respondents' **anonymity** must be strictly preserved. If the Respondent on request from the Researcher has given permission for data to be passed on in a form which allows that Respondent to be identified personally:
 - the Respondent must first have been told to whom the information would be supplied and the purpose for which it will be used, and also
 - the Researcher must ensure that the information will not be used for any non-research purpose and that the recipient of the information has agreed to conform to the requirements of the Code.

Detailed requirements

- 3 The Researcher must take all reasonable precautions to ensure that Respondents are in no way **directly harmed or adversely affected** as a result of their participation in a research project.
- 4 The Researcher must take special care when interviewing **children and young people**. The Faculty HREC will give advice on gaining consent for studies involving children or young people.
- 5 Respondents must be told (normally at the beginning of the interview) if **observation techniques or recording equipment** are used, except where these are used in a public place. If a respondent so wishes, the record or relevant section of it must be destroyed or deleted. Respondents' anonymity must not be infringed by the use of such methods.
- 6 Respondents must be enabled to check without difficulty the **identity and bona fides of the Researcher**.

List of accompanying documentation to support the application:

- (1) A copy of the research proposal (Terms of Reference, Registration Form)
- (2) The details of arrangements for participation of human subjects (including recruitment, consent and confidentiality procedures and documentation as appropriate)
- (3) A copy of all the documentation provided to the volunteer to ensure the clarity of information provided
- (4) Copies of appropriate other ethical committee permissions (internal or external) or supporting documentation
- (5) If appropriate: a list of proprietary drugs or commercial drugs to be used in the proposed investigation including formulation, dosage and route of administration and known adverse side effects
- (6) A statement of your competence to carry out this research as a student or a brief one page curriculum vitae for each applicant, including recent publications (staff only)
- (7) Other documentation as advised necessary:

Further information

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/pg-and-research/human-research-ethics/technology/human-research-ethics.aspx>