University Centre Leeds

Leeds City College

Higher Education

Research Ethics Policy

Owner: HEDO

Introduced: August 2017

Last review: September 2019

Next review: September 2021

Endorsed by: HE Quality and Enhancement Committee & HE Academic Board

Scope and Purpose of Policy

This policy applies to all staff and students of Leeds City College who contribute to higher education research at Leeds City College and they are responsible for ensuring that all research is conducted in accordance to this policy. They are entitled to research ethics procedures and guidelines that are clear, accessible and compliant with the requirements of the awarding body.

Its purpose is to ensure that the HE research ethics procedures are implemented consistently across the College and sets out the principles underpinning ethical research conduct. All research must be conducted according to the requirements of awarding bodies and the standards and obligations of ethical, legal and professional frameworks. In addition, the HE Research Ethics Policy and procedures are fully informed by the revised QAA Quality Code Advice and Guidance for Research Degrees (although not offering research degrees the good practice contained here underpins our approach to developing students' research skills), the Research Excellence Framework 2014, The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (UUK 2012), and the Research Councils United Kingdom (RCUK) Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct February 2013 (updated April 2017).

Definition of Research

Two general definitions of research have been used to inform this Research Ethics Policy. These are from the Research Excellence Framework 2014 and the Frascati definition of research from the relevant Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) manual.

Research Excellence Framework 2014:
- *'Research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared'*
- *'It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.'*
- *'It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, products and processes . ….'* - www.ref.ac.uk

The OECD Frascati Manual Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development (2015) states that:

"*Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge –including knowledge of mankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge.*" - www.oecd.org/sti/frascatimanual

'Research' for the purposes of this policy is to be understood as:

- Original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding
- Work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors
- Scholarship
- The invention and generation of ideas, images, performance, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights

- The use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.

Policy Statement

The College is responsible for the academic standards, quality and ethical practice of the programmes it designs and delivers and is therefore accountable for:

❑ Providing research ethics procedures and guidelines that are clear, accessible and compliant with the requirements of the awarding body.

❑ Ensuring consistent implementation of research ethics procedures and principles for each higher education award.

❑ Evaluating how academic standards, ethical principles and professional conduct are maintained throughout all research activities to encourage effective learning and a high quality learning experience.

❑ Ensuring that External Examiner feedback is utilised effectively to inform future research practice and enhancements to processes.

Policy	Higher Education Research Ethics Policy	References
Principles	The key principles that underpin this Research Ethics Policy are: ❑ **Integrity, propriety and legal compliance** Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken with adherence to standards of integrity, ethical propriety and legal compliance. ❑ **Partiality and 'public good'** Any conflicts of interest or partiality must be disclosed and the independence of research must be clear. The publication of research results must be conducted fairly and with the public good taking precedence over private. ❑ **Safety and protection of rights** Research must avoid harm to all research participants, researchers, non-participating members of the public and the environment. This includes the protection of the rights, safety, dignity and wellbeing of all participants. ❑ **Informed participation** Research participants must normally be informed as fully as possible about the purpose, intended uses and methods of the research including what their participation entails and any risks and benefits involved. The information should be accurate, clear and easily understood by the potential participant, who should have the capacity to understand what is involved in their participation. ❑ **Participant consent** Research participants must consent to participate in a voluntary way, free from coercion, undue influence or manipulation and the use of inducements must be carefully monitored. ❑ **Participant anonymity** Participant anonymity and the information they provide must be respected, unless illegal behaviour is discovered. All data must be collected, processed, stored and disposed of, in accordance with current legal requirements. (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR, 2018)	Research Degrees Guiding Principles 1, 2, 6
Process and Procedures	The college has devised a process of ensuring the ethical integrity of research. The process identifies the procedures that must be followed to obtain ethical clearance for all research. It guides researchers down two main paths depending on the nature and scope of their research:	Research Degrees Expectation for Quality Core Practice 1, 2, 3

Policy	Higher Education Research Ethics Policy	References
	❑ **Ethical Authorisation** Ethical authorisation is required for research which consist entirely of literature review, desk or library-based research, or for research which does not generally involve human or animal participants. This authorisation is granted by the appropriately appointed Research Supervisor. ❑ **Ethical Approval** Ethical Approval is required for all research involving human. Approval is granted by a Research Ethics Committee after the appointed Research Supervisor has authorised for approval to be obtained. (Please see Research Ethics Procedures for full detail)	Guiding Principles 1, 2, 6 [RCUK Section 1](#) [REF](#) [UUK](#)
External Moderation	External Examiners consider ethical considerations as part of their review of assessments and will be appointed for a standard period of tenure for each award. For awards validated by a HEI: • The academic regulations of the institution will be implemented in relation to appointment, training, the examining process and requirements and reporting mechanisms; • Information relating to the process will be provided by the HEI; For awards validated by Leeds City College: • The Leeds City College Higher Education Academic Regulations will be implemented in relation to appointment, training, the examining process and requirements and reporting mechanisms; (see the Assessment and Moderation Handbook, and the External Examiner Handbook for full details) To ensure the quality of its provision and maintain the standards of its awards, the College places significant reliance on its External Examiners by: • Requiring them to provide informed, independent and impartial judgements and advice to the College; • Drawing upon their professional advice and expertise and giving serious and active consideration to their reports;	

Policy	Higher Education Research Ethics Policy	References
	The purposes of the External Examiner process are to: • Verify that standards are appropriate for the award; • Report on the standards of achievement and verify that academic standards are comparable to other institutions in the sector; • Ensure that fairness and equity are evident in the assessment process, marking, grading and classification of student performance, and that decisions are made in accordance with the relevant Academic Regulations; • Provide externality of opinion and objective advice on the processes involved in learning, teaching and assessment; • Identify, where appropriate, examples of good practice and areas for enhancement (Please see Assessment and Moderation Handbook for full detail of the process for Leeds City College awards).	
Staff development and training	The College requires that all members of staff involved in either their own research or that of students are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. Research Supervisors will be appropriately qualified, trained and meet the requirements of the awarding body, and the standards and obligations of the Quality Assurance Quality Code and appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks. The College will seek to ensure that, where applicable, other educational providers, work place and placement learning partners have effective measures in place to monitor and assure the proficiency of their staff involved in the support of learners.	Research Degrees Expectations for Quality Core Practices 2, 3 Guiding Principle 3 RCUK Section 1 REF UUK
Equality and Diversity Statement	This policy will be implemented in accordance with the College's Policy on Valuing Diversity and with consideration of assessment guidelines set out by awarding bodies and where appropriate, the Quality Code. The College is committed to: ❑ Ensuring appropriate consideration for specialist research facilities and equipment for students with disabilities ❑ Providing clear and timely information for students on research ethics procedures in	Expectations for Quality Core Practice 3

Policy	Higher Education Research Ethics Policy	References
	relation to candidates with disabilities and candidates who require special consideration ❑ Ensuring that research ethics procedures provide equal opportunity for all candidates to demonstrate their achievement of the required learning outcomes for research Where the Higher Education Academic Appeals Procedure applies to any learner conducting research with a disability the College will make particular reference to any reasonable adjustment that has been made or should be made for that individual. Higher Education Academic Appeals will also be monitored in relation to race, gender and disability.	
Regulatory requirements of awarding and professional bodies	The College requires that all staff are aware of and operate under the specific regulatory requirements of its awarding bodies and, where appropriate, professional bodies. The College has developed appropriate internal policies and procedures that cover major requirements.	UUK
Monitoring and Review	The College will regularly monitor and review this policy and its associated procedures to ensure continued adherence to ethical, legal and professional frameworks and assess the effectiveness of its implementation and outcomes.	Expectations for Quality Common Practice UUK
Appeals	If an application for ethical consideration is rejected, it will normally be referred back to the applicant with the deficiencies identified and opportunity for further submission. Any appeals are made through the Higher Education Academic Appeals Procedure.	UUK
Associated Documentation	• Research Ethics Procedures • Research Project Proposal Form • Application for Research Ethics Authorisation Form • Application for Research Ethics Approval Form • Research Ethics Committee Terms of Reference • Higher Education Academic Appeals Procedure	RCUK Section 1 REF UUK