Bartlett Ethics Guidance[1]

Research Ethics
All UCL students and staff undertaking research involving living human participants, or data derived from living human participants, are responsible for ensuring that their research is conducted ethically. There are a number of ethical standards that have been accepted throughout the UK and abroad with which all researchers and ethical committees are expected to comply.

Principles
Informed consent: All participants must be fully informed of the study and what is being asked of them, including the potential risks/benefits and exclusion criteria, in order to make a fully informed decision about whether or not to participate in the research. This must be an active step on behalf of the participant and not due to any inducement, coercion or perceived pressure to participate. This is required of all participants in a research study, except where there is a justification for covert research or deception (such cases will be considered on an individual basis by the relevant ethics committee).

Benefit not harm: Research involving human participants must have a benefit to society and the risks involved to participants must be minimized, balanced against the potential benefit to the overall community, and clearly explained to participants before they give their consent.

Confidentiality: All participants have the right for their participation to remain confidential in that only the researcher will be aware who has participated. Generally all data will also be anonymous in the final report so that nothing can be attributed back to an individual participant. There are exceptions, for instance where participants wish to be identified or they cannot realistically have their identities kept confidential, but written informed consent must be obtained from the individual participant in advance. (Note: the definition of informed consent is contextual, and as a result rules on the form of consent vary, with exceptions arising from that contextuality. For example, it may be appropriate to gain consent orally as a part of a recording).

Procedures
UCL is reviewing the research ethics system and new structures, processes and guidelines. But for now, please consult current guidelines:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/policies/conduct/ethical-principles

https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/

If you have any questions please consult your course director, dissertation supervisor or the relevant person in your school, for example a Director of Ethics.

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[1] This document was originally written by David Roberts in 2018, and updated by Jane Rendell in November 2021.

Guidance

Please consult the extensive set of guidance notes prepared by UCL across a range of topics, issues and methods.

https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/guidance.php

Information sheets and consent forms: Information sheets and consent forms are strongly advised when conducting interviews or surveys to inform participants about the research in plain language and to receive informed consent for sharing data in verbal or signed form. The UCL research ethics website includes guidance for writing information sheets

https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/advice.php

Data protection: Please consult UCL guidance for researchers on GDPR procedures.

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/data-protection/data-protection-guidance

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/data-protection/guidance-staff-students-and-researchers/research-and-data-protection

Method and discipline-specific guidance: The methods, site and subjects of your built environment research each raise their own ethical considerations; eg, taking photographs of people as part of site-surveys or collecting data from apps and sensors may raise issues of anonymity. Collaboration with other researchers or research based in institutions may raise issues of permission, commercial sensitivity and authorship. Combining different data sets may inadvertently disclose personal data of individual citizens. Gaining written consent may not always be appropriate in certain contexts, for example if participants are illiterate or apprehensive about form-signing because of cultural reasons.

The Research Ethics Guidebook from the Economic and Social Research Council, Researcher Development Initiative and Institute of Education includes guidance on the following research methods and scenarios

http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/index.html

- asking questions of participants;
- literature reviews and systematic reviews;
- visual methods;
- online research;
- observation;
- international research;
- research with children;
- secondary analysis;
- practitioner research and dual roles;
- research led by service users;
- participatory approaches.
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For specific advice, please consult guidelines produced by disciplinary bodies:

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) - Research Ethics
https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/

British Sociological Association - Guidelines on Ethical Research
https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

Social Research Association
https://the-sra.org.uk/SRA/Ethics/Research-ethics-guidance/SRA/Ethics/Research-Ethics-Guidance.aspx?hkey=5e809828-fb49-42be-a17e-c95d6cc72da1

British Educational Research Association
https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011

Wellcome Trust
Including Guidelines on good research practice, Policy on research involving human participants, and Research involving people in low- and middle-income countries
https://wellcome.ac.uk/grant-funding/guidance/policy-and-position-statements

The RESPECT project
Professional and ethical guidelines for the conduct of socio-economic research, funded by the European Commission's Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme
http://www.respectproject.org/main/index.php

For specific research methods:

Interviewing
See the Oral History Society's ethical guide
https://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/

Ethnographic and observational research
See the Association of Social Anthropologists' ethical guidelines for good research practice
https://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml

Participatory research and co-production
See the Just Space protocol for research collaboration with community/activist groups
https://justspace2010.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/jsn-research-protocol-20110607.pdf

The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action's community-based participatory research guide to ethical principles and practice;
https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/cbpr_ethics_guide_web_november_2012.pdf

ESRC case studies
https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ethics-case-studies/case-study-ethical-challenges-of-co-production/

https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ethics-case-studies/case-study-participatory-methods/

https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ethics-case-studies/case-study-use-of-deception/

Research creating or combining large data sets
See the UK Data Archive guidance on creating and managing data
https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/learning-hub/research-data-management/ethical-issues/ethical-obligations/

And the Government Statistical Service guidance on statistical disclosure control
https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/archive/statistics/methodology-2/statistical-disclosure-control/index.html

Research on and about the internet
See the Association of Internet Research's ethical decision-making recommendations
http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf.

Exhibiting material
https://www.jcms-journal.com/articles/10.5334/jcms.1021213/

Visual Research Methods
See The Visual Research Collaboratory
https://vrc.org.au/guidelines-for-ethical-visual-research-methods

International Visual Sociology Association - Code of Research Ethics
https://visualsociology.org/?page_id=405

Diana Papademas & the International Visual Sociology Association (2009) 'IVSA Code of Research Ethics and Guidelines', *Visual Studies*, 24:3, 250-257, DOI:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14725860903309187

Andrew Clark, Jon Prosser & Rose Wiles, (2010) 'Ethical issues in image-based research', *Arts & Health*, 2:1, 81-93, DOI: 10.1080/17533010903495298

Research on or with indigenous groups and cultural sensitivities:
For example
https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about/protocols-for-working-with-indigenous-artists/

Health and safety for site-based work:
http://www.gsa.ac.uk/media/1024702/Artist-in-the-Public-Realm-Health-and-Safety.pdf

Issues relating to precarious work
https://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/ethicscode