2023-2025

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

# Handbook for Ethical Review & Approval

Research Policy Unit
www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics

# Contents

## 1) Introduction

The procedures for ethical review in this handbook have been designed to assist in the application and assessment of ethical approval requests, implementation of good research practice, and in the prevention of misconduct. This is to ensure that researchers conduct research of the highest quality.

The handbook is written for staff and students of the University who are planning to carry out a research project, and staff involved in assessing applications for ethical approval. It may be used as a reference in the preparation of bid for grant funding.

## 2) Specific Policies and Guidance

Observing recognised research ethics principles is basic to good research practice in general. The handbook should, therefore, be read alongside:

- Code of Good Research Practice
- Ethics Policy
- Ethics Guidance www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics
- Research Policies, Procedures & Guidance www.wlv.ac.uk/researchpolicies
- Student Disciplinary Regulations
- Research Misconduct Guidance & Procedures

## 3) Ethical Review & Approval Overview

### 3.1) Why is Ethical Review & Approval Needed?

Undergoing ethical review and obtaining ethical approval safeguards researchers and research participants and also facilitates and promotes ethical research that is of potential benefit to society. By obtaining ethical approval from an impartial committee and having in place robust systems for the review of studies the University can ensure that the research conducted is of high ethical standard, sound integrity and in accordance with good research governance and legal requirements.

Ethical review ensures that researchers:

- think about the ethical considerations that affect each stage of your research
- avoid potential problems later on, by ensuring that the main foreseeable ethical considerations are addressed before the research starts
- protect the rights, safety, dignity and welfare of participants and minimise the risk of physical and mental discomfort, harm and danger from research procedures
- protect their own rights as a researcher to carry out legitimate investigations
- protect the reputation of the University in respect of research conducted by its students and staff
- are insured to carry out the research
- minimise the potential for claims of negligence made against them, the University and/or any collaborating individual or organisation
- have evidence of ethical approval increasingly required by refereed journals before they will publish your work.

### 3.2) When should I start thinking about ethical considerations?

You should start thinking about ethical considerations at the earliest possible stage in planning your research. A proper deliberation of ethical principles and ethical considerations is relevant to, and will almost certainly influence, fundamental aspects of the research design. The Faculty Ethics Committee or Subject Panels will want to be assured that you have thought about all aspects of your research and addressed potential risks and ethical issues.

### 3.3) General Principles of Ethical Review

All research requires ethical review to facilitate the conduct of University activities in a manner that manages ethical risk appropriately, and which safeguards researchers. Research projects should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency.

In addition all Staff and Research Student projects must undergo full ethical review (and secure approval) before any data collection starts.

### 3.4) Ethical Considerations

As part of ethical review researchers at all levels (UG, PGT, PGR & Staff) must identify whether the following ethical considerations are relevant to the proposed research, and projects including these factors must undergo full ethical approval:

**Health & Social Care**: Any project involving the NHS or Social Care, its staff, patients, data or facilities; or individuals covered by the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

**Animals**: Any project involving animals.

**Humans & Personal Data:** Any projects involving people, their data or tissues, particularly those which are high risk either due to their participant profile, design or methodology. Significant risks include:

- Potentially vulnerable groups, e.g. children / minors, prisoners, those with cognitive impairment or those in unequal relationships;
- Requirement for co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access (e.g. students at school, members of a self-help group, nursing home residents);
- Requirement for participants to take part without full knowledge and consent (e.g. involving covert observation or deception of participants);
- Sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, politics, illegal activities);
- Administering drugs, food or other substances to participants;
- All activity involving the acquisition, storage and use of human tissue (including cells, serum, saliva etc) as defined by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA);
- Any invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedure;
- Prolonged or repetitive testing;
- The collection or processing of sensitive personal data (including from secondary sources) without explicit consent;
- Sensitive personal data transfer to partners outside the EEA;
- Members of the public in a research capacity ('participant research');
- Any video or audio recording of people;
- Offering financial recompense to participants beyond reasonable expenses.

**Online Research**: Any projects involving social media data or accessing Massive Multiple Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG):

- Researcher-generated data - Using social media as a platform for researchers access large groups of participants to gather information through a variety of standard research methods such as questionnaires, focus groups etc.
- User-generated content – harvesting naturally occurring data which includes:
    - content users create (e.g. a comment, Tweet, video, blog post etc) data that records users' engagement with content and other users (e.g. likes, shares, retweets, followers, friends etc)
    - other user data that is collected by the social media company possibly without the user being aware e.g. location data.

**Sensitive Materials:** Any project involving:

- data covered by statute such as the Official Secrets Act and Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2013;
- highly controversial subjects, such as pornography, but does not necessarily involve human participants.
- viewing or dissemination of illegal materials.

**Environment:** Any project posing a significant potential risk to a physical environment or material culture. This includes but is not limited to levels of pollution greater than that permitted under UK law.

**Institutional Research**: Any institutional research conducted within academic faculties and professional service departments which includes pedagogic research, educational research and all individual research and scholarship related to learning, teaching and assessment and the student experience, if the work could provide evidence for strategic decision making and enhancement.

**Insider Research**: research which is undertaken within an organisation, group or community using privileged information (not available in the public domain) that the researcher has access to by virtue of being a member. This includes practitioner research and work-based research.

**International:** Any project involving:

- travel to areas of acute political sensitivity;
- cultural, governance or legal frameworks which are unfamiliar to the individual undertaking the work or not equivalent to those used in the UK;
- requiring licences or permissions from international bodies. Including "Fair and equitable benefit-sharing", and the legal requirements set out in the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in relation to genetic materials.

**Safety of those involved:** Any project posing a significant risk to the safety and well-being - whether physical, psychological, emotional or reputational - of those involved, including participants and/or the project team. 'Significant risk' is defined as outside that which a normal person would be exposed to in daily life.

**Collaborator or Funding Source:** Any project where any of the following may apply:

- the funder or collaborator's ethos and values are at odds with the University's;
- funds or other project resources have been unethically obtained;
- the funder or collaborator has a poor ethical track record;
- the relationship could negatively affect the University's reputation;
- the terms of the funding are prohibitive (e.g. in restricting publication or influencing research design).

**Conflicts of Interest:** Any project involving any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Approved projects require effective management of the interest to be put in place before work starts.

**Publicly available:** Any work that is intended to be placed in the public domain including social media.

### 3.5) Pilot studies

If you intend to carry out a pilot study, you must obtain ethical approval for it first. Any research to follow up the pilot study will also require ethical approval if you have made changes to your study as a result of the pilot.

Should your research use a questionnaire of your own devising, it is strongly recommended that you pilot it first. Ethical approval will be required for the pilot study and any changes to the questionnaire following it will also need ethical approval. Please make it easy for the ethics committee to identify revisions (for example by using track changes).

### 3.6) Reuse of previous research data

You may be able to reuse data obtained from previous research. You will need to check that ethical approval was obtained and that participants gave appropriate permission for the data to be reused in the way that you intend. There may also be copyright and/or intellectual property issues to consider. If you wish to reuse data, you are advised to seek guidance from your Supervisors and/or the relevant FEC at the earliest opportunity.

Please also refer to the Concordat on Open Research Data:
https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/concordatonopenresearchdata-pdf/

### 3.7) Collaborative Applications

**Projects Involving Researchers from Multiple Departments or Faculties within UoW**
Review must be performed by the Ethics Subject panel of the lead researcher, with input from other relevant panels if required. The researchers involved in the project must identify a lead researcher, who is responsible for submitting the ethical application. The application should include confirmation that all other researchers involved in the project have viewed and agreed the full application paperwork.

**Projects involving external persons or organisation**
When collaborating with other organisations, the researcher must ensure that they understand and meet the requirements of all partners. Researchers should establish local requirements and discuss the project with their subject panel.

**Projects that have already obtained ethical approval from another organisation**
Such approvals need to be ratified by a researcher's Subject Panel. The Wolverhampton based researcher must submit:

- a copy of the approved ethical application (and all supporting documentation) from the other organisation
- a copy of the approval letter from the other organisation.

The ESP will then determine whether the other organisation has reviewed and approved the application to an equivalent standard as the University of Wolverhampton; this may involve the ESP asking additional questions of the researcher. Ethical approval given by other UK universities will normally meet the standard set by the University. If the standard is not met, the researcher will have to submit a full ethical application through the normal process.

**Health and Social Care Research**
If you wish to conduct Health and Social Care Research you will require approval from the NHS Health Research Authority (HRA) which protects and promotes the interests of patients http://www.hra.nhs.uk/
You must however first obtain University ethical approval before applying for HR approval.

If your research is to be undertaken on the premises of an NHS organisation, with NHS patients or with NHS staff then the local NHS R&D office should be contacted. It is important that you plan and prepare your application well ahead of time; otherwise you may encounter unnecessary delays and complexity. There is a standard process for applying to undertake research within the NHS and proposals are required to be sent to a research ethics committee (RECs). Applications to RECs should be made in accordance with a process set out in standard operating procedures for RECs and in written guidance for applicants.

To apply for approval you need to streamline your research application process with IRAS (Integrated Research Application System). To view IRAS and for further information visit www.myresearchproject.org.uk

**Institutional Sponsorship**
Research which falls within the scope of the UK Policy Framework requires a research sponsor; the Sponsor is a company, institution or organisation which takes responsibility for the quality and governance of the project. The UK Policy Framework states that a Sponsor is 'The organisation or partnership that takes on overall responsibility for proportionate, effective arrangements being in place to set up, run and report a research project'.

Formal confirmation from the Sponsor must be obtained prior to an application for the permissions and approvals for health and social care / community care research in the UK using the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS). The Institutional Sponsorship Policy - Health and Social Care Research sets out the policy and procedure that researchers must follow when making an IRAS application.

**Prison & Probation Research**
Should you wish to conduct research in prison, probation or young offenders' institutions you will need to gain permission from the Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS), this can also be accessed via the IRAS process. More information about HMPPS can be found by visiting https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service

### 3.8) Conflicts of interest
If there are any conflicts of interest, these must be declared in the ethics application. This includes a conflict of interest arising from the funding for the research.

### 3.9) Involvement of Students in Research and Teaching Activities
Teaching experiments and research studies involving blood sampling or the handling of blood and other human specimens must be carried out in accordance with the Human Tissue Act, 2004 and the University's Code of Good Research Practice.

The ESC considers that it is ethically acceptable to request an undergraduate or postgraduate student to participate in teaching experiments and research studies as a normal part of their programme on the understanding:

a) that the supervisor ensures that all such studies have ethical approval and conform with the University's Ethics Policy and Code of Good Research Practice;
b) that the student/participant has the right to decline;
c) that the student/participant must be assured that, by declining to participate, their marks will NOT be adversely affected;
d) that undue academic pressure or financial inducement must not be brought to bear on the student under any circumstances;

In addition, if students' data (demographics, personal data, work contributing to their degree) are to be used in a different way than described in the University's Intellectual Property policy or the research otherwise goes beyond the terms of consent implied by the student's participation in the teaching activity, then additional consent to take part in the research should be sought.

### 3.10) Payments to participants and/or organisations
Payments can be made to individual participants to reasonably reimburse them for time and for direct expenses. Payments can be made to organisations to offset direct costs of providing for research to take place e.g. postal costs, room hire. However, it is unusual for any other fee to be paid and any payments of this nature should be clarified with your Faculty Ethics Committee.

### 3.11) Incentives for participants in research
The use of compensation (rather than incentive) in clinical trials is well established, accepted and widespread. However, if incentives are used to recruit participants to a research study, they should not be too large an incentive or they may be viewed as undue inducement, and impair the personal judgement of the participant and potentially compromise their informed consent.

Therefore, any research in the UK which includes incentives to more than the minimum national hourly wage or to an accumulative total of £100 (whichever is higher), or any type of incentives offered outside the UK, or protocols which otherwise offer incentives which may unduly influence participants' decision to participate, must have a full ethical review from the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Incentives for participation should not form the most prominent aspect of an invitation to participate in a study.

### 3.12) Research outside the remit of a student or member of staff at the University of Wolverhampton
If research is outside the remit of someone's role, as a student or member of staff at the University, we cannot give it ethical approval, due to indemnity issues. This also means that the researcher will not be permitted to use the University's name in dissemination.

# 4) Applying for Ethical Approval

### 4.1) Overview of Ethics committee structures

All Faculties have Ethics Subject Panels (ESPs). All ESPs report to their respective Faculty Ethics & Research Integrity Committee (FERIC). Decisions of panels are subject to ratification by their FERIC.

At institutional level, the Committee for Research Integrity & Ethics (CERI) deals with policy and procedure. CERI is a sub-committee of the University Research & Innovation Committee, which is itself a sub-committee of Academic Board. Terms of reference of all Research Governance Committees are published at www.wlv.ac.uk/researchpolicies

CERI delegates ethical review to the FERICs and ESPs, which are therefore responsible for the operation of our Research Ethics approval requirements.

### 4.2) Accessing the Ethics Application

The names of the Subject Panel Chairs and administrators in the Faculties can be found in Appendix A.

**Faculty of Education, Health & Wellbeing (FEHW)** - For FEHW Ethics Application Form please visit the University Ethics webpage www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics and access the relevant forms under 'Faculty & Subject Resources'.

**Faculty of Science & Engineering (FSE) -** Ethics forms appropriate to each academic area are available from the Panel administrators who will also advise regarding the submission process.

**Faculty of Arts, Business & Social Sciences (FABSS) -** For FABSS Ethics Application Form please visit the University Ethics webpage www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics and access the relevant forms under 'Faculty & Subject Resources'.

### 4.3) To which Ethics Subject Panel should I submit my application?

If your work is interdisciplinary you need to decide in which subject most of the ethical issue are likely to arise. For example, if you are working in the uses of art therapy in mental health services, your ethical approval may best be considered by the Health subject panel in FEHW. If you are not sure contact the Ethics Subject Panel Chair for advice.

Applicants conducting Institutional Research or Insider Research should complete the FEHW ethics form for consideration by the Education Subject Panel.

In such cases, the Panel considering the application will liaise with the Faculty/Department in which the applicant is based and communicate to them, in writing, the outcome of the ethical review.

### 4.4) When to apply

Researchers can apply for ethical approval at any time. Ideally, this should be done at the time of submission of the Research Proposal, but occasionally the ethical dimensions of a project may only become clear as it develops. In any case, ethical approval MUST be granted BEFORE the research is begun, so it is necessary to complete the appropriate forms and submit them as soon as possible to avoid delays in the research programme.

It is often a requirement of the conditions of a research grant that ethical approval is sought prior to the submission of the grant application. This is particularly the case for European funding where there is no contract negotiation.

You must also allow sufficient time for necessary consultation as part of the ethical review process. Changes may be needed to your application, which then needs resubmitting. Finally, some studies will need other permissions or approvals, which can also take time to obtain.
If you will need a Disclosure and Barring Service Check or any other permission that could take a while to obtain, you need to start the process well in advance of submitting your ethics application.

### 4.5) What to include in your application

In crafting your responses to the questions, please refer to the University Ethical Principles and the Ethics Guidance webpages. These pages define terms and concepts that are commonly used in Ethics such as Informed Consent, Vulnerable Adults, Confidentiality, etc. They also offer advice, links to specialist resources, examples of how you might address these issues in your research, etc.

You must describe how you will securely store, retain or destroy, any data you collect. You also need to provide information to comply with the General Data Protection Requirement (GDPR). The GDPR also applies if you are carrying out research outside of the EEA but bringing data back into it. For those based outside the UK, you need to also comply with any other data protection legislation in that country.

If you still require help with understanding the ethical issues in your research and or finding the measures you need to take to address the ethical concerns it raises, it is your responsibility to seek the advice of your project supervisor or your Subject Ethics Panel Chair. It is expected the final submission is the product of a series of discussions. For single authored staff work, it is expected that a member of staff has discussed the work with a colleague or research cluster leader or similar. The aim of this aspect of the process is to encourage collegiately.

### 4.6) Documents required to support your research ethics application

Depending on your research project, you may be required to submit additional documents in support of your application, for example Participant information sheets, consent forms, letter of support, survey questions etc. Please ensure that you have submitted all the relevant documents, as without these your application cannot be considered, and you will be unable to start your research.

Where you are required to provide documents that you will use as part of your research, those that you submit must be the ones you will use. If you subsequently make any changes to your research you must submit an amended application.

## 5) Processing and assessing applications

### 5.1) Role of the Ethics Subject Panels

The Chair of each Ethics subject panel (ESP) is responsible for collecting the applications for their subject. Once collated the Subject Panel Chair (or designated Administrator) sends each application to at least 2 reviewers. An additional reviewer may be required for highly contentious issues.

The Subject Panel Chair (or designated Administrator) will log the date each application is sent for review and to which member of staff. They will set deadlines for the return of completed reviews and where necessary chase reviewers for their decisions in order to meet the published response times.

Reviewers will be selected, where possible, on the basis of knowledge and experience of the field of enquiry, the research methods proposed, and the understanding of the context of the proposed study. They may also have experience of the particular ethical issues involved.

The Subject Panel Chair will compile quarterly reports to coincide with the dates of the Faculty Ethics Committee.

### 5.2) Assessment of applications

Reviewers should consider each application independent of the other reviewers and return their reports to the Subject Panel Chair by the due date. Where there is disagreement between reviewers, Subject Chair will moderate in discussion with the review team and, where necessary, with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

There may be cases where a meeting is convened to allow a deeper investigation of the issues within a high risk application. In such cases the applicant may be invited to discuss the case with the subject panel and possibly to the Faculty Ethics Committee. In this way, complex ethical issues and the discussion surrounding them are shared and researchers hear the nature of discussion. The reviewers and chair of the ethics committee would meet after to come to a decision and recommendation.

Supervisors who are members of a FEC or ESP must not take a part in the consideration of their students' applications.

### 5.3) What do ethical reviewers look for in an application?

Reviewers of applications for ethical approval draw upon the Ethical Principles and their knowledge and experience of ethics in research and practice to come to a judgement about each application. The following points are considered carefully in making their decision:

- Scientific /Academic Merit
- Competency
- Social value
- Risks and benefits
- Harm: Likelihood of occurrence and severity
- Informed Consent
- Confidentiality
- Conflict of interest
- Honest reporting of results
- Clear procedures for managing research data

The ethics review process is designed to be supportive. Whilst the reviewers will ultimately make a judgement on the ethics of the research project presented, they do so with a view to improving the quality of the research and developing the ethical sensitivities of the researcher. It should not be seen as a barrier.

### 5.4) Outcomes and Conditions

**Approved**

If each reviewer approves the application, the Subject Chair will notify the applicant of the successful application by email. It is good practice to attach a read receipt notification to the email to check the applicant has received and read the contents. The notification should require successful applicants to confirm that they agree to the terms and conditions of the approval. This notification will also contain useful feedback provided by the reviewers and any conditions that apply.

**Approved subject to conditions**

In some cases the reviewer will recommend a 'conditional approval'. This means that they approve the proposal in principle but they want to ensure that the researcher undertakes some other measures before or during the project. Examples of the type of condition that might apply include: minor revision to a research instrument e.g. questionnaire, submission of additional information, setting up of a Project Steering Group to monitor the implementation of the ethical measures, time-related approval. Applicants would need to fulfil the conditions to the satisfaction of the Subject Panel Chair in order to proceed with the project.

**Not Approved**

Applications that are not successful maybe re-submitted at any time. Applicants would re-submit the form as outlined above. Resubmissions would normally be returned to the original reviewers for re assessment.

**Feedback to applicant**

The process of applying for ethical approval should be seen as a formative stage in the process of developing a research project and in becoming an effective researcher. In order for the applicant to benefit from this process, reviewers should provide short but helpful advice and feedback.

In a small number of cases the reviewers feel that a discussion with the applicant would help their decision-making. In such cases the applicant may be asked to attend a meeting of the review panel, following which one of the above recommendations will be made.

FERICs/ESPs may also make other general conditions which will be listed on your approval letter, with which you must you comply.

### 5.5) When will I know the outcome?

The Subject Panel Chairs will normally collect applications on the 1st Monday of every month or the first Tuesday of the month if the 1st Monday of the month falls on a public holiday in England. No ethical applications will be reviewed during the month of August.

The process following submission can take up to 4 weeks. Decisions are normally communicated by email to the applicant on or before the last Friday of the month in which the application was reviewed. Should the last Friday of the month fall on a public holiday, the notification will be sent to the applicant on or before the following Friday.

Thus applications submitted toward the end of the month are likely to be dealt with quicker than those submitted at the beginning of the month. If your application is urgent and needs to be reviewed before the normal timescales outlined above, you will need to contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee and relevant Subject Panel Chair making a case for urgent attention. Lack of planning, time management, and or ignorance of the system are not considered reasonable justifications for urgent attention.

## 6) Appeals

Where a researcher has a concern about the decision of an ESP to withhold, suspend or withdraw ethical approval of research/study they should attempt to resolve the matter with their ESP. In the first instance they should contact the Chair who may decide to select additional reviewers, seek guidance from the FERIC, invite the researcher to resubmit the application or confirm the original decision.

If the matter is not resolved a formal appeal is only permitted on one of 2 grounds:

1) That the researcher possesses new evidence that was not available at the time the panel made its decision and it has subsequently refused to consider such evidence; or
2) That there had been a significant failure in the application of procedures which had affected the decision of the ESP.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of the relevant Faculty Ethics & Research Integrity Committee. Researchers may not appeal against the judgement of the reviewers. If the claim for an appeal is upheld, the Chair of the Faculty Ethics & Research Integrity Committee will instruct two suitably qualified independent reviewers to re-assess the original application.

## 7) Maintaining Ethical Approval

### 7.1) Monitoring

Your research project may be subject to monitoring. To enable you to meet the requirements for this, please keep copies of all the documentation relating to the study and evidence of the original ethical approval and any subsequent approval for amendments.

### 7.2) Renewing or Amending Ethical Approval

Even after initial approval, researchers should remain alert to emerging ethical issues throughout the life of the project and may need to renew or amend their ethical approval. This may be where the original approval is out of date and or where the research project has changed with ethical implications. The procedures for renewal or change are the same as for new applications. When renewing your application, you should refer to the original approval in your application.

Please ensure that it is clear how you have revised your research. You may wish to do this in a separate commentary. You should also indicate any previous re-approvals.

You must wait for approval before you implement your changes and continue with your research.
If a member of staff leaves the University of Wolverhampton while engaged in PhD research, they must reapply to their Ethics Committee for the continuation of their research. Where University of

Wolverhampton student data is being used as part of the research the continued access and utilisation of the data must be expressly approved by the University Secretary after discussion with the Dean of Faculty and Academic Registrar and then approved by the Ethics Committee.
This is true even if the member of staff transfers their studies, based on this data, to another HEI.

The same process of renewal of permissions will also apply to other institutional data (e.g. Human Resources, Financial etc), and data relating to the wider university experience, in respect to surveys conducted on staff (academic or otherwise), and engagements with resources /learning space provisions.

Renewal of permissions is required irrespective of whether the data was collected by the member of staff, or provided by the University during the course of the PhD research.

### 7.3) Adverse events and 'near misses'

Any accidents and 'near misses' which occur during the research must be reported to your Faculty Research Committee. You must also report any other adverse incidents or events relating to the research to the Faculty Ethics Committee within two working days of their occurrence.

### 7.4) Data Protection breaches

If a personal data breach occurs, this should be reported urgently as detailed in the Data Breach Incident Management Policy and Guidance. You should also inform your line manager/supervisor

Incidents are defined as: accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed.

The University is required to notify the Information Commissioner's Office of personal data breaches within 72 hours where they pose a risk to the rights and freedoms of the data subjects and so there must be no delay in initiating a formal review of an incident's severity. The GDPR has introduced significant fines for personal data breaches.

### 7.5) Notification regarding end of project

When your study has ended, please ensure that you notify your FEC Administrator.

## 8) Ethical misconduct

Research students and staff are required to conduct their research to the same standards of honesty and probity as outlined in the University Ethical Principles. Supervisors and Principle Investigators should remind their researchers of the significance of the University Ethical Principles and ensure that the research they carry out under their supervision is in accordance with these Principles, Procedures, and the conditions of their ethical approval.

Types of ethical misconduct include:

- Failure to observe the University Ethical Principles,
- Failure to obtain ethical approval for an on-going project,
- Breach of ethical approval conditions
- Failure to renew or reapply for ethical approval when changes have occurred that have ethical implications.

The University takes a very serious view of anyone who brings the Institution into disrepute. Students who are found guilty of serious or repeated breaches of these ethical principles and or the Student Code of Conduct may be excluded from their course of study.

Where there are concerns around potential ethical misconduct by a member of staff, or a member of staff has failed in their duty to supervise the ethical conduct of their students and researchers, consideration may be given to taking action under the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

### 8.1) Notification of ethical misconduct

Cases of ethical misconduct by staff or students should be referred to the Chair of the Faculty Ethics and Research Integrity Committee in the first instance. An initial investigation will be conducted with reference to the appropriate University policies (e.g. University Data Protection Policy, Academic Misconduct Policy, Public Interest Disclosure Policy, Freedom of Information policy). This guidance does not supersede established procedures such as the formal complaints procedures, the grievance procedure, or the policies on discrimination, harassment or bullying.

### 8.2) Procedures for investigating ethical misconduct among students

If a *prima facie* case for further investigation is established the matter will be referred to the Conduct and Appeals Unit for consideration within the University of Wolverhampton Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure. The Associate Dean of Research & KE, Head of the Research Centre, or Dean of Faculty, and the Head of the Conduct and Appeals Unit will jointly determine on the evidence presented whether the matter shall be dealt with under Stage One for minor offences or Stage Two for more serious or repeated offences.

A letter inviting the student to attend a Disciplinary Hearing meeting will be sent by the Associate Dean of Research & KE. The meeting will be conducted in accordance with the University Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure. Further information about this procedure can be found on the Conduct and Appeals Website: www.wlv.ac.uk/conductandappeals.

### 8.3) Fitness to Practice status following academic or ethical misconduct

Research students who are required to comply with Professional Codes of Conduct whilst undertaking their research degree course may have responsibilities over and above those of other research students at the University. Examples include (but are not limited to) the following professions:

- Nursing
- Midwifery
- Social Work
- Pharmacy
- Forensic Science
- Teaching
- Policing

A research student's alleged misconduct may be considered to be contrary to behavioural expectations required by the relevant professional code. In such circumstances consideration must be given to the possibility that they could put patients/clients/the public or other students or staff at risk. A research student's Fitness to Practise is called into question when their conduct, health or competence raises a serious or persistent cause for concern about their ability or suitability to continue on a course. Such cases will be dealt with under the University of Wolverhampton Fitness to Practice Policy & Procedure, details of which are available at: www.wlv.ac.uk/polsregs

### 8.4) Procedures for investigating ethical misconduct among staff

The University Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistle blowing) enables staff, students, Governors and members of the University community to raise, in good faith, concerns of malpractice, impropriety or wrongdoing without fear of reprisal. This policy details how such a disclosure can be made and how the University will deal with the matter.

Where there are concerns around potential ethical misconduct by a member of staff, or a member of staff has failed in their duty to supervise the ethical conduct of their students and researchers, consideration may be given to taking action under the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## Appendix A: Ethics Subject Panels

| Faculty | FEC Chair | Ethics Subject Panel Chairs |
|---|---|---|
| FEHW | Dr Hilary Paniagua<br><br>FEHW ethics email:<br>fehwethics@wlv.ac.uk | **Education**<br>Professor Diana Bannister (DianaBannister@wlv.ac.uk)<br><br>**Health**<br>Dr Louise Bouic (L.Bouic@wlv.ac.uk)<br><br>**Psychology**<br>Dr Danielle Mcfeeters (mcfeetersd1@wlv.ac.uk)<br>Dr Antigonos Sochos (A.Sochos@wlv.ac.uk) (Deputy)<br><br>**Social Work and Social Care**<br>Dr Martin Partridge (m.partridge@wlv.ac.uk<br><br>**Sport**<br>Professor Matt Wyon ( M.Wyon@wlv.ac.uk) |
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