

Research Integrity and Ethics: Guide to related policies and procedures

Lancaster University's strategic objective is to deliver the highest quality research and therefore requires the highest standards of research integrity. Research at Lancaster shall be legal and transparent and conducted in line with the principles of accountability and responsibility, honesty, openness and respect, as set out in our [Research Ethics and Research Governance Code of Practice](#). The University has existing policies and procedures that consider the ethical and reputational concerns highlighted below. Individual responsibility and accountability for adherence to these policies and to conducting research that is at all times legal and transparent rest with the Principal Investigator and research supervisor.

Research Services:

Research Services provides information and guidance relating to the University's research activities. All applications for externally funded research are supported by [Research Services](#) and each project will have a designated member of the RES team to support researchers in the project development. Through this support any ethical, reputational or other concerns can be flagged at the pre-application stage.

Researcher self-assessment:

Researchers have responsibility to assess their research projects for ethical and institutional risks whether externally funded or un-funded (i.e. internally funded). All externally-funded research projects must be costed and approved through [ACP](#) the University's costing and pricing tool and the Principal Investigator (PI) must complete the researcher self-assessment in the [ACP governance checklist](#), which includes for example if the project involves "research or a funding source(s) that could be considered controversial (by members of the general public)". PIs also have responsibility to ensure they assess all their research included un-funded research that is not logged through ACP and flag up issues for consideration through one or more established routes (e.g. Faculty Research Ethics Committees etc.) or, seek advice from Research Services.

Approval process:

The ACP process includes the [approval stage](#). All externally funded applications for research will go to the relevant Head of Department (HoD) for approval. HoDs can view the financial cost/recovery, research partners and researcher self-assessment (ACP governance checklist). At this stage HoDs can raise any concerns before approval. Depending on the size of the application further approvals may be required from the Dean/Institute Director, or for the largest grants the Director of Finance and Vice-Chancellor. Applications requiring institutional match are considered by the University Planning and Resources Group (UPRG). At any stage of this approval process questions may be raised and the process of approval halted.

Ethical approval:

Ethical approval is required for activities that directly involve humans, human tissue, data relating to humans, or other ethical issues that have been raised. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator, or PhD Supervisor, to decide whether ethical approval is required. For funded research this decision is recorded on the ACP costing tool, and approved by the Head of Department. Researchers must consider ethical risk and where ethical review is required an application must be submitted to the relevant **Faculty Research Ethics Committee** (FREC) via [REAMS](#). Approval must be gained prior to any work being undertaken. Details of the internal processes can be found in the "[General](#)

[Guidance and Procedures on Research Ethics Approval](#)" and additional guidance is located on the FREC web pages. FREC review is also a route to raise conflicts of interest.

Research Due Diligence Panel:

The University needs to assess the financial, operational and reputational risk of working with certain research funders and partners. This is done through a series of checks to identify and manage risk before an activity is approved to proceed. The due diligence checks are undertaken by the [Research Development Officer](#) (RDO) team in liaison with the PI and research partners. A partner questionnaire is required and a checklist is completed and submitted as documentary evidence to the **Research Due Diligence Panel** for approval or recommendation. Due diligence checks are a requirement of several research funders including UKRI.

Ethical Giving (philanthropic fundraising):

The University has an [Ethical Giving Policy](#) for staff engaged in fundraising activities, ensuring that due diligence is observed when assessing whether or not to accept significant benefactions or establish specific philanthropic relationships. A due diligence and review process is overseen by the Director of Development & Alumni Relations and through a **Gift Review Panel**.

Animal Research:

All research on animals or their tissues is dealt with by the **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body** ([AWERB](#)) in accordance with the requirements of the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (Amended 2012). Prior to any work being conducted, each project must have undergone a rigorous and objective review by the AWERB, whose membership includes lay persons, scientists and those with veterinary and animal care expertise.

Export Controls:

The University engages widely in international research collaboration, global movement of researchers and the exchange of new ideas in pursuit of its mission to undertake excellent research and provide world-class education. However, some of the knowledge held, goods used, and activities conducted by academics and researchers have the potential to be misused and are therefore subject to **export control law**. Export controls are needed for a variety of reasons, including national security and international treaty obligations. Compliance with export controls is a serious obligation and the University has a [Statement on Export Controls and guidance](#) is available to help build awareness and to ensure compliance.

Nagoya Protocols:

Each country has rights over the genetic resources that exist within their country such as animals, plants and organisms as well as the associated traditional knowledge. The [Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing](#) (ABS) is an international agreement establishing a legal framework to govern access to genetic material including the associated traditional knowledge, and ensure that benefits arising from the use of these resources are shared fairly. University [guidance](#) is available to help researchers who source or use such material to 'exercise diligence' to ensure that genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with those resources have been accessed in accordance with applicable access and benefit sharing laws implemented by the source country.

Other Policies relating to research

Other University policies and procedures impact on our approach to upholding the highest standards of research integrity, ethical conduct and individual responsibility and accountability. These include:

- Raising Serious Concerns and Disclosing Public Interest Matters ([Whistleblowing](#))
- [Lancaster University Research Misconduct Procedure](#)
- Code of Practice on [Freedom of Speech](#)
- Health and Safety [Policy](#)
- Safeguarding in Research [Safeguarding in Research Framework](#), [Statement](#) and [Policy](#)
- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct (BHSM) [Policy](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- Anti-bribery and Corruption [Policy](#)
- Rules Governing [Outside Professional Activities](#)
- Intellectual Property [Policy](#) and Support
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Sustainability](#)
- [Research Data Policy](#) and [Data Protection](#)

A full list of all University policies and procedures can be found [here](#).