



Ruskin College
Oxford

IMPLEMENTING ETHICS POLICY

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Approved: AQSC
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Implementing Ethics

1. At all stages of the research process, from inception, resourcing, design, investigation and dissemination, staff and students from Ruskin College who undertake research have a duty to maintain an active personal and disciplinary ethical awareness and to take practical and ethical responsibility for their work. The independence of the research must at all times be safeguarded, with any conflicts of interest or partiality made explicit.
2. Both the process of research, including choice of methodology, and the use to which any findings might be put, should be congruent with the mission and values of Ruskin College and, where possible, should seek to empower ordinary people, to promote their welfare and to improve their access to economic and social capital. Disciplines should interpret this expectation in a manner appropriate to the best practice in their subject.
3. Researchers from Ruskin College should seek to promote, as appropriate, empowerment, directly or indirectly, by devising, articulating and achieving research agendas that respect fundamental human rights and aim towards social justice.
4. In relation to all those who are the subjects of research, but particularly those who may be considered vulnerable or socially disadvantaged, researchers from Ruskin must retain a primary concern for individual and collective welfare and should actively protect participants from physical and mental harm, danger, and unreasonable disruption in their daily lives or unreasonable intrusions into their privacy.
5. Researchers from Ruskin must not actively promote any form of discrimination based on age, gender, class, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, health, marital, domestic or parental status. Researchers should, wherever possible, explicitly acknowledge their positionality on and within the research. Where appropriate, they should seek to predicate their work on the perspective and lived experiences of their research subject(s).
6. In establishing the aims and objectives of their research, Ruskin researchers are to consider the ascertainable consequences of their actions for the subjects of their research and for the wider community, in order to ensure that legitimate interests are not unwarrantably compromised or prejudiced by the proposed investigation.
7. In their chosen methodology and in every other aspect of their research design, Ruskin researchers are to ensure that they are technically and academically competent to carry out the particular investigation to the appropriate standards of the discipline as currently understood, recognising the limitations of their own expertise. In relation to research carried out as part of a Ruskin course, this responsibility is shared by the student's supervisor.
8. As appropriate, in relation to every participant to the research process, including service users, local people, colleagues, funders and employers, Ruskin researchers have a duty to deal openly and fairly. In particular, there is a duty to inform every participant of all features of the research that might be expected to influence willingness to participate. This applies especially but not exclusively when access to services or to any other benefit may be, or may be perceived to be, dependent on participation or when there are any risks involved to health, well-being, comfort, safety, personal social standing, occupational standing, privacy, personal values or

beliefs or links with family or community, or where disclosure could be potentially disruptive or damaging.

9. There are serious ethical and legal issues in the use of covert research, but the use of covert methods may be justified in certain, limited circumstances. Covert methods, however, violate the principles of informed consent. Covert researchers need to take into account all applicable and emerging legal frameworks surrounding this issue. Participation or non-participant observation in non-public spaces or experimental manipulation of research participants without their knowledge should be resorted to only where it is impossible to use other methods to obtain essential data. In such studies it is important to safeguard the anonymity of research participants. Ideally, where informed consent has not been obtained prior to the research it should be obtained post-hoc.
10. If information is received relating to the ongoing physical, emotional or sexual abuse or the neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, you have a statutory duty to report it to the police, social services or the NSPCC as a matter of urgency. This is not a discretionary responsibility. This action will be pursued in conjunction with the relevant safeguarding vulnerable adults procedure.
11. Participation in any research activity directed or funded from Ruskin must be based on the freely given, informed and acknowledged consent of the research subject, following a clear explanation of the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, of the proposed dissemination strategy for its conclusions, and of what their participation in the research will entail. Consent must be secured through the use of language that is readily comprehensible to the research subject and that provides an adequate and accurate explanation. Particular care must be taken in obtaining the consent of those who have special or additional needs or who live in circumstances that might limit understanding and/or communication. Third party consent in the case of those who are incapable of giving consent directly may only be obtained from a legally authorized or other appropriate person. Consent will normally be in writing, signed and dated. The only exceptions to this latter point would be in circumstances where a participant or participants either could not write or completely mistrusted a written tradition, in which case an equivalent way to record consent must be found, for example, through video or audio recording.
12. Researchers from Ruskin will, wherever possible (in conjunction with the spirit of point 9), at all times respect the individual participant's absolute right to decline to participate in or to withdraw from the research programme, especially when the researcher is by any means in a position of authority over the participant.
13. Any data or other information produced in the course of research directed or funded from Ruskin is confidential, except as agreed in advance with the research participants (including research subjects) and prescribed by law. The anonymity of participants must be scrupulously respected, taking care to disguise any potentially identifying information (not just names) and to store data in accordance with the relevant legislation and disciplinary practice.
14. Research findings must be reported accurately, and must note any significant variables and conditions that may have affected the outcomes or the interpretation of the data.
15. The publication of research findings should properly and, appropriately, acknowledge the contribution of all authors.

ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDIES

General Approval

This form must be completed by any student planning to conduct a piece of original research. It should be submitted to your project supervisor and must be approved and signed by them before you start the research. This helps the College to satisfy external bodies that we have appropriate ethical procedures and research governance in place.

Student name _____ **Date** _____

Project title _____

Project start and finish dates (as near as possible) _____

Purpose of study

Provide a brief description of the research project for which ethics approval is requested (maximum 50 words)

Name of supervisor, if known _____

1. Does the research project involve any foreseeable legal risks or does it involve any risk of physical, psychological or social distress to students, staff or participants?
Yes No
2. Does the research project involve any other research apart from solely library-based/archive material or research based solely on the analysis and scrutiny of publicly available documents? Yes No
3. Does the project involve the collection or use of data collected from participants?
Yes No
4. Does the project involve the collection of data through the direct or indirect observation of subjects? Yes No
5. Does the project involve deceiving participants? Yes No
6. Is the research project likely to lead to the potential disclosure of illegal activity or incriminating information from participants? Yes No
7. Does the research project involve participants who could be considered vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? Yes No

