

Ethical Principles

The University and researchers should adhere to the following principles, which set out the responsibilities and values relevant to research. While some elements may seem self-evident, and there is some overlap, these principles aim to encourage all involved in research to consider the wider consequences of their work and to engage critically with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges that are inherent in the conduct of high quality research, rather than treating codes of practice such as this as just another procedure to be followed.

Excellence

The University and researchers should strive for excellence when conducting research and aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality and rigor. This means research should be in line with prevailing disciplinary and professional body norms and standards, using appropriate methods and in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results. This Code, its Principles and its Standards are intended to support these goals.

Honesty

The University should work to create and maintain a culture of research that fosters and supports honesty in research. Researchers should be honest in relation to their own research and that of others. They should do their utmost to ensure the accuracy of data and results, acknowledge the contributions of others, and should not engage in, condone or conceal misconduct.

Integrity

The University and researchers should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to research and where necessary take steps to resolve them. Researchers should be transparent and open in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes sharing negative results as appropriate; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the general public. In situations in which deception may be ethically justifiable to maximise benefits and minimise harm, researchers have a serious obligation to consider the need for, the possible consequences of, and their responsibility to correct any resulting mistrust or other harmful effects that arise from the use of such techniques.

Cooperation

The University and researchers should promote the open exchange of ideas, research methods, data and results and their discussion, scrutiny and debate, subject to any considerations of confidentiality. They should encourage and enable all participants to contribute meaningfully to decision-making and other aspects of the research process according to skill, interest and collective need. They should communicate clearly using language that is understandable to the intended audience. They should try to acknowledge and discuss differences in the status and power of research participants, and work towards sharing power more equally. Where appropriate they will use participatory research methods that build on, share and develop different skills and expertise

Accountability

The University and researchers should recognise that in and through their work they are ultimately accountable to the general public and should act accordingly. They should ensure that any research undertaken complies with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project, and allows for proper governance and transparency. The University and researchers must comply with all legal and ethical requirements relevant to their field of study. Research is governed by a range of ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards. These reduce the potential for harm, in particular to human participants, the environment, and animals involved in research. All parties have a responsibility to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of the frameworks, standards and obligations that apply to their work and to which their research must conform.

Researchers should follow the requirements and guidance of any professional bodies in their field of research. Researchers who are members of a regulated profession must follow the requirements and guidance of the body regulating their profession.

Training and Skills

The University should provide training and opportunities for development for their researchers, and the necessary resources to enable them to conduct research to the required standards. They should support researchers in identifying unmet needs for training and development. Researchers should ensure that they have the necessary skills, training and resources to carry out research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields, and report and resolve any unmet needs identified.

Care, Safety and Respect

The University and researchers should ensure the dignity; rights, safety and wellbeing of all involved in research and avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research participants, patients, researchers and others. They should report and address any concerns relating to the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of those involved in research. Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

Researchers should be aware that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities whose vulnerabilities impair autonomous decision making. They should be aware of and respect cultural, individual and role differences, including those based on age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, disability, language and socioeconomic status and consider these factors when working with members of such groups. Researchers should try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they should not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based upon such prejudices.

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