

# Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy

Leeds Trinity University expects all research and knowledge exchange activities carried out at the University, or in its name, to be undertaken to the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. This policy sets out the principles underlying ethical research and knowledge exchange at the University and should be read in conjunction with the relevant ordinances and regulations, and other policies, procedures or guidance issued by the University. It will be reviewed annually by the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee and approved by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

## 1. Principles and application

Research at the University should be conducted in full compliance with the UK Research Integrity Office code of practice for research [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research](#), in that it should be in accordance with the principles of academic excellence, community, integrity, inclusiveness and professionalism. It must be conducted with respect for participants, and in full compliance with legislative, regulatory body and funder requirements.

To determine whether an application for Leeds Trinity University ethical approval is required for a project, be it research or knowledge exchange activities conducted by postgraduate research or postgraduate taught students, or staff, all applicants must complete a project-specific self-assessment form and submit this to the Chair of their Faculty or Institute's Research Ethics and Integrity Committee before commencing any project or stage thereof (NB: For undergraduate projects, a proportionate separate research ethics process applies). For the avoidance of doubt, research is defined as "a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction" (Research Excellence Framework (2019/01), Guidance on Submissions, p.90). Alternatively, knowledge exchange is concerned with the transfer of ideas between the knowledge source and the potential users of that knowledge. While many definitions exist, the key common element is that information and expertise is exchanged with businesses, society and/or the economy ([Knowledge Exchange Vitae](#))

If completion of a self-assessment form indicates that full ethical review is required, then an ethics application must be submitted to a Faculty or Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. No research or knowledge exchange project (or stage of a project) may be conducted unless, and until, the project (or that stage) has been granted ethical approval by a

Leeds Trinity (Faculty/Institute or University) Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, another appropriate external body (see below), or the completion of a University ethics self-assessment document directing that ethical approval is not required. However, in cases where LTU staff engage in external projects, for example as co-authors, but have no access to raw data, there is no requirement for the self-assessment document to be submitted. In addition, the following activities must be reviewed by the appropriate Faculty or Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committee:

- a. Projects involving human participants, their personal data, tissues or body fluids
- b. Projects that have the potential to have an adverse environmental impact
- c. Projects that pose a reputational risk to the University or its researchers

Routine audit or evaluation of University business (e.g., evaluation of teaching) is excluded from this policy unless this is to be published externally, constitutes scholarship, increases knowledge and/or understanding of education and educational processes or is to be utilised in the creation of impact for any University activity.

This policy applies to everybody carrying out research and/or knowledge exchange activities under the auspices of the University, whether on its premises or elsewhere. This includes, but not limited to, all staff (including honorary or emeritus fellows/professors and visiting staff), postgraduate researchers and all registered students (whether undergraduate or postgraduate). It is the responsibility of the principal investigator, research supervisor (postgraduate research) or project supervisor (undergraduates) to ensure that all researchers (including external collaborators) are aware of and fully comply with this policy. Deans of Faculty or Institutes have a responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy within their Faculty or Institute.

This policy is linked to, and operates in conjunction with, conditions of employment for the relevant staff groups and other related University policies and procedures including, but not limited to, those for [academic misconduct](#), [research misconduct](#), and the protocol for research degree candidates. Failure to abide by this policy may lead to the matter being considered under the University's Student Conduct and Discipline Code

## 2. Ethical review by other Bodies

Research and/or knowledge exchange activities undertaken by Leeds Trinity University staff or students at other Institutions or Organisations within the UK should comply with this policy, and also follow the guidelines of appropriate professional bodies, and law. Leeds Trinity University staff or students merely reviewing a manuscript or becoming involved in a project for specific contributions that do not require access to raw data may not need to be named in ethics applications to other institutions or organisations. This should be determined by the

other institution or organisation's policy. However, to avoid duplication, the University may accept ethical approval by that Institution or Organisation provided that the appropriate Faculty/Institute Research Ethics Committee is informed (supported by evidence) and carries out a 'light touch' review. Applicants are encouraged to discuss involvement with such projects with the Chair of their Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committee before involvement.

Where required by law (e.g., Human Tissue Act) or where the research involves the NHS (e.g., but not limited to, patients, their data, records, tissue or body fluids), confirmation should be sought from the relevant NHS Research Ethics Committee, normally through the Integrated Research Application System.

Research undertaken outside of the UK must be approved by a Leeds Trinity University Research Ethics and Integrity Committee as well as being compliant with the legal and ethical requirements of the host country.

The University is not licenced to undertake studies using research animals regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Any such studies should be undertaken at Institutions which hold the appropriate licences and be reviewed by that Institutions Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (or similar). The relevant Faculty or Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committee should be notified that such studies are being undertaken and be provided with details of the requisite licences (i.e., personal, project, institutional).

The University is not licenced to store human tissue. Any study requiring this must be undertaken at an Institution which hold the appropriate licence and the relevant Faculty or Institute Research Ethics Committee should be notified that such studies are being undertaken and be provided with details of the requisite licences.

In all cases where ethical approval has been granted through another body (e.g., NHS, Ministry of Defence, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service etc.) there is a requirement adhere to the local health and safety policies of that body in addition to LTU.

## University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-committee (UREISC) Remit

1. To oversee the development, and execution of, policy and procedures relating to research and knowledge exchange ethics, integrity, and conduct;
2. To consider approval of the ethical dimensions of research and knowledge exchange proposals from staff, postgraduate researchers and students which exceed the remit of Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees;
3. To consider appeals against School/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees' decisions on research and knowledge exchange proposals from staff, postgraduate researchers and students;
4. To log the outcomes of, and monitor the progress of, cases across the University, in accordance with institutional policy;

5. To provide an annual summary report to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee in relation to 2 – 4 above;
6. To provide a forum for chairs of Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees to facilitate consistency of practice;
7. To conduct an annual audit of the work of Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees, for report to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee;
8. To provide the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee with regular summary reports on its activities and recommendations for changes to policies and procedures.

## Membership\*

- Chairs of Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees (ex officio)\*
- Director of Postgraduate Research (ex officio)
- Information Governance and Data Protection Officer (ex officio)
- Up to two members independent of the University, to be approved by RKEC
- One postgraduate researcher nominated by the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies
- The Committee Secretary (from Research and Knowledge Exchange Office staff).
- The Chair: to be appointed from the membership of the UREISC and approved by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
- \*The Vice-Chair shall be elected from within this group.

Total core membership: 7/8

The Sub-Committee may co-opt other members from time-to-time as it requires, including members external to the University.

## Notes

Quorum 4/5 members

Frequency: Minimum of four meetings per academic year.

## 3. Faculty or Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees

Each Faculty or Institute is required to establish a Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. It is the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty/Institute to ensure that their Faculty or Institute has a properly constituted Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees are subcommittees of the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee. Their

primary function is to take responsibility for making decisions on research, module, and knowledge exchange applications for ethical approval that have been submitted by staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers and students across the Faculty/Institute.

The general Terms of Reference of Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees are as follow:

1. The Committee shall have responsibility for making decisions on applications for ethical approval that have been submitted by members of staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers and by students across the Faculties. In the case of undergraduate student projects or project modules, this may be via block approval of groups of projects.

2. The Committee shall keep under review the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy and where necessary make recommendations to the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee regarding any issues that arise.

3. In particular, the Committee shall ensure that the Faculty/Institute complies with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy in the following ways:

- a) to establish and keep under review procedures which ensure that activities conducted by staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers or students comply with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy.
- b) recognise where advice and guidance are required from colleagues outside of the Committee, including the option of referral of applications to the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee, and if necessary, call upon experts to assist with advice and reviewing activities;
- c) provide guidance to Principal Investigators or supervisors where it is considered that the documentation submitted is insufficient for the Committee to make an informed decision;
- d) under the guidance of University procedures relating to health and safety, ensure that, so far as may be possible and reasonable, health and safety risks are minimised both to participants and researchers occasioned by, or associated with, research conducted from within the Faculty/Institute;
- e) where a Principal Investigator or supervisor is uncertain about the ethical implications of a proposal, provide further guidance as to the appropriate type of ethical review required;
- f) ensuring compliance with the University's Research Data Management Policy and taking advice where necessary from the University's Data Protection Officer, to ensure that researchers comply with data protection procedures and legislation;
- g) conduct an audit of a minimum of 10% of approved applications per annum and annually report results to the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee regarding ethics activities of the Faculty/Institute, outcomes and any issues of concern;
- h) ensure that there are no conflicts of interest when making decisions;

- i) to maintain records of ethical permissions for activities conducted by staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers or students, including self-assessment forms and those that have been approved by other ethical review bodies or organisations, for the appropriate period specified in the School GDPR Asset Register;
- j) to ensure that new committee members receive an induction to the processes of the Committee and, where necessary, that any existing members receive ongoing development specific to their needs;
- k) to consider initial appeals against SREIC decisions, the process of reaching the decision or if circumstances have changed.
- l) to disseminate good practice

4. The Committee will liaise with other relevant units of the University (such as the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office) regarding the provision of research ethics training and dissemination of good practice to raise awareness of research integrity and ethics amongst staff, research fellows, postgraduate researchers and students within the School.

## Membership

Individual Faculties/Institutes can set the frequency of meetings appropriate to meet their needs (typically, up to 6 meetings) per academic year. They consist of the following core membership:

- Chair of the School/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committee
- X academic members of the School (to be determined by the number needed to represent the range of subjects being covered)
- A member of academic staff from another School
- A postgraduate researcher may be included within the membership, but should not be involved in considering reserved business (e.g., decision making about PGR applications).

Members of the Committee shall serve for a term of three years with the option to renew their membership once (serve a maximum 6 years).

The Committee may co-opt other members from time-to-time as it requires.

The quorum for Committee meetings is half of members plus either the Chair, or Vice Chair.

## Mode of Operation

Until superseded by an alternative mechanism, applications are received by email to [ethicscommittee@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:ethicscommittee@leedstrinity.ac.uk) in line with published deadlines that precede the scheduled Committee meeting dates. Such applications are supported with the timely completion of a project-specific self-assessment form. Consideration of a minor amendment to an approved proposal may be dealt with by the Chair (or nominated other). The Committee shall be informed promptly of decisions made under such circumstances. Committee Chairs may also include further information for example regarding turn-around time for applications and how decisions are communicated to applicants in individual Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and

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Integrity Committee terms of reference.

In unforeseen circumstances when, for good reason (e.g., ad hoc/exceptional funding call requiring a priori ethical approval), applications need rapid fast track consideration, the Chair (or nominated other such as Vice-Chair, Chair of other Faculty/Institute Committee or the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee in the case of conflicts of interest) may, at their discretion, act after consultation with no fewer than two members of the Committee. However, this will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to seek ethical approval early enough to allow time for review through the normal channels and therefore fast-track approval should only be required in exceptional circumstances. The Faculty/Institute Committee shall be informed promptly of decisions made under such circumstances.

Where funding bids do not require full ethical approval but may require letters of support regarding the ethical dimensions of the work, applicants are required to provide at least 10-days notice to the Chair (or Vice-Chair or nominated other in case of conflict of interest) of their home Faculty/Institute Ethics and Integrity Committee (in first instance). In doing so, it is necessary to ensure that the Chair is provided with the information necessary to comment on the application (e.g., all final submission documents, including title of the proposal, institutions and full staff names participating in the application, vision/aims of the proposal, a completed self-assessment form (with a separate outline of proposed methods) in order to provide commentary on the possible ethical issues.

## 5. Complaints

Investigations of allegations of misconduct or unethical conduct on the part of staff, postgraduate researchers or students will follow the University protocol for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research and student academic and professional misconduct policy and procedures respectively.

Leeds Trinity University Research Ethics and Integrity Committee Approved by RKEC 23 February 2022.

## Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy Notes

The following document should be read in conjunction with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy.

### Introduction:

Before beginning a programme of research or knowledge exchange, LTU applicants (staff, fellows, postgraduate researchers or students) need to consider the potential ethical issues that may arise, which may be either specific to the discipline or situation in question, conceptual as well as practical. They also need to ensure that

they abide by related university policies including, but not limited to Health and Safety, data protection and research integrity.

When considering the type of approval required for knowledge exchange projects, the following flowchart may be of use (figure 1), relating to the use of the knowledge exchange self-assessment form and decision-making process.

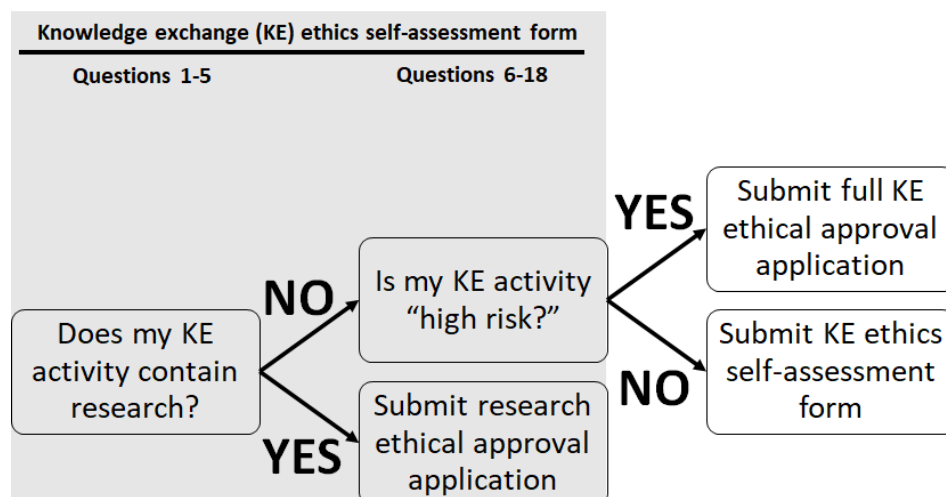


Figure 1: Flow chart outlining the decision-making process for knowledge exchange (KE) projects requiring ethical approval

Additionally, the following checklist, in no particular order of priority, highlights some of the general ethical dimensions/areas for consideration, particularly for research or knowledge exchange involving human subjects, tissue or data, where there is risk to society, animals or the environment, or where the research or knowledge exchange activity may pose a reputational risk to the University or its staff, fellows, postgraduate researchers or students. It should be read alongside guidance provided by relevant professional bodies or learned societies.

For undergraduate final year projects, particularly those where block permission for groups of projects or a final year project module is sought, additional Faculty or Institute specific guidance may be made available by Faculty/Institute Research Ethics and Integrity Committees

## Regulations and guidance:

- Adherence to the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy and other related policies
- Ethical review by other external bodies where dictated by statute
- Adherence to the University policies on academic conduct and research integrity
- Adherence to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)
- Adherence to statutory requirements
- Adherence to discipline-specific codes and guidance or those of other outside



bodies

## Research involving human participants:

- Fully informed, voluntary consent with the unconditional right of withdrawal of participation and/or of data
- Financial incentives or participants expenses
- Support for and protection of individuals (including consideration of gender or cultural needs)
- Additional protections for minors or vulnerable adults
- Physical and psychological health and safety of participants
- Management and reporting of adverse events
- Appropriate policy and practice concerning confidentiality, anonymity or acknowledgement of research participants
- Anonymity and security of research data
- Retention, future use or disposal of data and samples in line with consent
- Clear complaints procedure
- Procedure for disclosure of information to legal or other authorities (e.g. illegal activity, potential harm to minors or vulnerable adults etc.)

## Other considerations:

- Research design
- Ownership of research
- Risk versus benefit
- Risk to people, society, environment or animals
- Reputational risk to individuals (including the researchers), the University or other organisations
- Intellectual property issues
- Publication of research results/dissemination of results
- Funding sources, financial and confidentiality agreements with funders or sponsors
- Conflicts of interest
- Monitoring and audit
- Support and training for junior researchers and other staff