**School of Arts, Languages and Cultures – Research ethics policy**

Research in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures reflects the diverse concerns, methods and methodologies of the 17 cognate disciplines represented within the School. Our research interests are in the fields of human cultures, languages, beliefs and institutions, and our research projects embrace the material, visual, linguistic, textual, social and performative dimensions of human society, past and present. Much of this research can be located within methodological approaches broadly defined as interpretive or hermeneutic. However, SALC research might also take place by means of an artistic process, or make use of quantitative methods such as surveys and statistical analysis, or carry out forensic analysis of remnants of material culture, for example. The methods and methodologies used include (the following is not a comprehensive list): oral history, artistic practice as research, qualitative interviewing, elicited conversation, speech analysis, questionnaires (including online questionnaires), textual and image analysis, excavation, interpretation of material substances, laboratory investigation of materials, observation, archival research, participatory or action research, perception mapping and analysis, and ethnography. This research exhibits a range of relationships between researcher and research participants, including artistic projects where participants are engaged as ‘co-researchers’ as well as researcher-informant relationships.

SALC’s policy on research ethics covers the research activities of academic staff and postgraduate students (including research and taught postgraduates) and adheres to University guidelines on research governance. All research projects conducted by University staff or students that involve human participants in a way that might harm, disturb or upset them (however slight the possibility) or where they can be deemed to be in a vulnerable or disadvantageous situation, must receive approval from a recognised research ethics committee or a designated screening panel using an agreed Template at School level. No work on a research project that involves ethical issues can take place until pre-screening has been fully completed and, if required, formal ethical approval has been obtained.

The term ‘human participants’ refers to research subjects, their tissue, organs or personal data.

Ethical approval should not be considered as a bureaucratic obstacle; it is a mechanism for demonstrating that the design of research has considered, respected and safeguarded the rights, well-being and dignity of those who are engaged in the research.

The following principles underpin the policy:

* All staff and postgraduate students are required to consider the ethical issues arising from their research. As part of this, staff are required to keep themselves abreast of developments relevant to research ethics in their discipline as well as adhere to University regulations relating to research ethics, and incorporate this into teaching and supervision of postgraduate students.
* The SALC Research Ethics procedures are designed to ensure that research projects receive a review proportionate to the ethical issues and risks presented by the research proposal. The School recognises three levels of review: (a) Ethical issues arising from research that does not involve contact with human participants can be considered by referring to disciplinary norms, making use of internal review within subject areas where appropriate; (b) Research with adults and children (carried out in an accredited setting such as a cultural institution, school or youth club and accompanied by a carer or professional with a duty of care), that does not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress, and that presents a minimal level of risk to researchers and/or research participants, can be considered within the framework provided by the SALC Ethics Template; (c) Research that involves contact with vulnerable or dependent human participants, requires research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress and/or presents more than a minimal level of risk to researcher or research participants must be reviewed by the SALC Research Ethics Panel and then forwarded to the University Research Ethics Committee for approval.
* Research that presents a ‘minimal level of risk’ is defined as research that takes place in stable urban and rural environments, and that
  + Engages with healthy adults;
  + Engages with healthy children and young people under 16 years in a professional setting accredited to work with children and young people, such as a cultural institution, school or youth club, and *only* when the child/young person is accompanied by a parent/carer or professional with a duty of care;
  + Follows standard procedures and research methods relevant to its discipline;
  + Does not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress;
* Academic staff are responsible for monitoring the ethical issues raised by their own research and for supporting postgraduate students to consider the ethical issues arising from their research, and are required to work closely with students to complete the SALC Ethics Template and/or UREC ethical approval form.
* The Chair of SALC’s Research Ethics Panel (in consultation with the Research Director, Postgraduate Research Director and Postgraduate Taught Programmes Director) is responsible for monitoring and reviewing SALC ethics procedures, providing information to staff about changes in procedures, chairing regular panels to review applications, scheduling annual training events for staff and students, and responding to ad hoc queries. Annual research ethics training sessions will be provided in the following areas: University and School research ethics principles and governance structures, risk assessments, fieldwork guidance, lone working guidance, data protection and IT security.