**School of Arts, Languages and Cultures – Research ethics for staff and postgraduate students**

**Overview of process**

**1. Background**

As a member of academic staff producing published research as part of funded or unfunded research projects, or a postgraduate student writing a thesis or dissertation, you must think carefully about the ethical issues raised by your particular project. This will involve considering the research ethics norms of your discipline and consulting up to date guidance produced by relevant disciplinary or professional bodies. It may also involve applying for ethical approval from the University.

The key principle here is that 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 the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) or other 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.

Research that takes place in unpredictable and volatile environments, engages with vulnerable or dependent human participants, asks participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress and/or otherwise 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 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 ask participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress, and that otherwise presents a minimal level of risk to researchers and/or research participants, can be considered within the framework provided by the SALC Ethics Template.

Please note: **Research involving the NHS** may require review by an NHS ethics committee, and **research involving prisoners or prison staff** will need ethical approval from the Ministry of Justice. **Research involving the adult social care sector** must be reviewed bythe Social Care Research Ethics Committee (e.g. research taking place in local authority, private and voluntary care settings, as well as studies which cross sector boundaries). Approval for **research involving children, young people or children services** depends on the settings and services through which you are sampling. Thus, for example, research with children sampled through NHS organisations has to go through the NHS approval system. Similarly, research involving family court proceedings has to have approval from **Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service** (CAFCASS). Further information about research ethics approval processes outside of the University is available below.

No work on a research project that involves ethical issues can take place until a project has been identified as exempt from review or formal ethical approval has been obtained.

**2. Declaration**

All academic staff producing published research as part of funded or unfunded research projects, or postgraduate students writing a thesis or dissertation (regardless of whether you have ethical issues in your research) must complete an ethical approval pre-screening declaration form.

Academic staff must submit this to Olivia Pennelle in the School Research Office: olivia.pennelle@manchester.ac.uk

PGT students must submit this as part of their Dissertation Research Outline, to MA Dissertation module convenors.

PGR students must submit this to research supervisors as part of the documentation submitted for the first panel.

The purpose of the ethical approval pre-screening declaration form is for you to consider how your research raises ethical issues and whether or not you need to apply for ethical approval. As noted above, the key principle here is that all research using human subjects must be reviewed or identified as being exempt from review by a University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) or a designated screening panel using agreed templates at School level.

Training on Research Ethics is available in the School (via artsmethods@manchester) in semester 1 of each academic year, and you are strongly advised to attend sessions relevant to your research. Please consult with your tutor/supervisor about sources of information on research ethics relevant to your discipline.

**2. SALC Ethics Template**

If your research does involve contact with human participants, including online or virtual contact, you must consider whether you can apply for ethical approval via the SALC Ethics Template. The Template allows the SALC Research Ethics Panel to approve research with adults and children (where that research is carried out in an accredited setting such as a cultural institution, school or youth club and where the child is accompanied by a carer or professional with a duty of care). Research covered by the Template must also not ask participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress, or present more than a minimal level of risk to researchers and/or research participants. The Template adheres to accepted principles of informed consent and University regulations on data management and IT security.

Please review the Template and ‘Further guidance on assessing risk’ carefully. If your research does comply with the Template, please send a completed version of the Template form and supporting documents, to Olivia Pennelle (olivia.pennelle@manchester.ac.uk). The SALC Research Ethics panel will review your form at the next available committee and either (a) confirm approval, (b) approve subject to minor amendments, or (c) advise that you complete a full University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) ethical approval form. There are four committee meetings per academic year, taking place in October, January, March and June.

The Template is in part a diagnostic tool that should help you decide on the appropriate procedure for applying for ethical approval. However, if you are in any doubt once you’ve consulted the Template, please ask a member of the SALC Research Ethics panel (by sending a query to Olivia Pennelle – olivia.pennelle@manchester.ac.uk).

Examples of projects that can by approved at School level:

**Variation in speech in remote towns in the UK:** The study explores variation in speech in a town in a remote area of the UK in order to understand how speech patterns have changed in relation to transformations in the local community. 50 speakers representing different age and social groups, all of whom grew up in the area, are recruited through groups, associations and events in community centres. Each participates in an hour-long recorded conversation at the centre about topics relevant to the community - memories of recreational activities as a child, hobbies and pastimes, working life. Research participants are also asked to read lists of words at the end of the interview.

**Kinaesthetic learning in the museum:** The research explores a new approach to kinaesthetic learning tested out in collaboration with education teams at three museums. The researcher trains staff in the approach, and then observes 15 groups of parents and children taking part in a 20-minute creative object-handling session in 3 museums. The researcher carries out 10-minute interviews following the session with parents and children asking for their reflections on the experience. Children are also asked to draw a picture that shows what they were thinking about and feeling during the session.

**Women and liberation theology in India:** The research explores attitudes to women within liberation theology in India. 20 scholars in liberation theology working at reputable religious and educational sites across India, known for their work in this area, are invited to take part in recorded interviews exploring how contextual realities like caste, class, gender, and rights have influenced attitudes to women, and how new theoretical insights can help develop the recognition of women’s rights in India.

**3. University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) approval**

If your research project does not comply with the Template, then a University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee (UREC) ethical approval form must be completed and referred to UREC for review. The SALC Research Ethics panel can offer guidance and support in preparing your application and the Director of Research must review and sign off the approval form prior to it being forwarded to UREC.

Please note: research that *must* be reviewed by a University Research Ethics Committee includes research that involves contact with vulnerable or dependent human participants, deals with contentious or sensitive topics and/or presents more than a minimal level of risk to researcher or research participants. In addition, this includes research that involves:

a) Any form of physical risk or serious inconvenience to the subject or to any third party;

b) The administration of drugs or use of invasive or semi-invasive procedures;

c) Any risk of psychological damage or distress to the subject (or the subject’s family);

d) Privileged access to the subjects’ clinical records, or that may incur the risk of the disclosure of sensitive information about the subject disclosed by persons taking part in the investigation;

e) Participants deemed to be vulnerable or dependent or otherwise have an unequal relationship with the researcher;

f) The deception of research participants;

g) The use of tissue from living subjects (subject to the Human Tissue Act 2004)

i) Cadavers of or tissue from the recently dead, other than bequeathed cadavers and tissue obtained in the normal course of necropsy (subject to the Human Tissue Act 2004).

**Please note:** if your project involves a likelihood of danger to you above and beyond risks normally associated with research in your discipline you may be advised to apply for approval from UREC.

It is vitally important that both you and your supervisor have read and understood the general University Ethics Committee Guidelines when completing your UREC ethical approval form (see useful links below).

Please note: UREC approval will take a minimum of six weeks during semester time.

Examples of projects that will be referred to UREC for approval:

**Texts of ‘refugee-ness’:** the research explores how contemporary understanding of the ‘refugee’ is produced by a range of discourses that circulate across discursive terrains. It compares the construction of the refugee in government policy and procedural discourse (via the analysis of legislation and procedural texts produced by government agencies), fictional narratives (in literature and poetry) and ‘real’ narratives gained via interviews with asylum seekers in Manchester. The researcher intends to carry out in-depth narrative interviews with up to 10 asylum seekers currently being supported by Refugee Action as part of the research.

**Performance in a place of war: youth music networks in Colombia:** the research explores a network of young musicians in conflict-ridden areas of Colombia, documenting and understanding how musicians are using independent music to confront and counter narratives of war in local communities on the outskirts of Bogota. The researcher intends to carry out an ethnographic study of the network, spending up to 6 months in Bogota engaging in interviews and observations of their practice.

**4. Supporting documents**

You must append a number of supporting documents to your UREC ethical approval form or SALC Ethics Template, which will be reviewed alongside information supplied on the form. Supporting documents vary from application to application, but generally include recruitment adverts/emails for research participants, draft questionnaires, draft interview topic guides, draft observation schedules, participant information sheets and consent forms, letters of support from host organisations, risk assessment and insurance forms.

**5. Risk assessment**

A **risk assessment** must be completed if your research takes place off-site, even if it does not involve human participants. The risk assessment needs to identify risks associated with activities researcher and research participants are engaging in, and risks associated with travel to areas inside and outside of the UK. It also needs to say how the researcher will manage these risks.

The School has prepared two Generic Risk Assessments that aim to cover most research activities undertaken by staff and postgraduate students in the School relevant to the Template:

* SALC Generic A: Off campus work in the United Kingdom.
* SALC Generic B: Off campus work in low-risk international settings.

If you are planning a fieldtrip involving local, national or international travel please consult the relevant risk assessment and also refer to the University’s fieldwork guidance notes (available below).

If you are planning to work alone, please also consult the University’s lone working guidance (available below) and make sure you address specific risks associated with lone working in your risk assessment and Ethical approval form. This is especially important if you are planning to carry out data collection in private homes.

If you are applying for consideration via the SALC Ethics Template, you should read the appropriate generic risk assessment carefully, and make an assessment as to whether all the risks associated with your research activities are identified and controlled by the risk plan in these documents. If not, please add to the risk assessment prior to submitting your application.

If you are applying for ethical approval to UREC, you are free to use the generic risk assessments as a basis for developing your own risk assessment.

**Please note:** the responsibility for checking and approving the safety aspects of research lies with academic staff and supervisors, not the SALC Research Ethics Panel. Principal Investigators (academic staff only) and research supervisors must sign the risk assessment in their capacity as the research leaders, in line with Health and Safety procedures of the School.

If you are a postgraduate researcher, it is important that you consult with your supervisor when developing your risk assessment.

**6. Insurance**

If your research is ethically reviewed and approved, insurance cover is automatically arranged. If your project requires ethical approval, then this must be obtained before you commence the research, in order for your insurance cover to be effective.

The University provides insurance cover in respect of research involving human subjects undertaken in the United Kingdom for:

* harm to participants, on a “no-fault” or “non-negligent harm” basis, and;
* financial loss by participants and participating organisations, on a legal liability basis.

The University also provides insurance cover in respect of research involving human subjects undertaken abroad that does not have a medical content, on a legal liability basis.

To ensure that your proposed research project is covered by the University insurance, please complete the [Insurance Assessment Form](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=11970) and return with your SALC Ethics Template or application to the University Research Ethics Committee. More information on insurance for research activities, and the Insurance Assessment Form, can be found here - http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/ethics/obtaining-ethics-approval/insurance/.

Insurance cover must be confirmed or, if necessary, special cover arranged, through the Purchasing Office

**Please note:** this insurance covers your research activities only – it does not substitute for travel insurance.

**PGT Students: Forms and Deadlines**

If you are on a Masters programme please download the Declaration Form, and, if required, the SALC Ethics Template or UREC forms, from the SALC Research Ethics website.  All MA students in the School must complete the declaration form as part of the dissertation research outline process. You must submit this form to your MA Administrator with your Dissertation Research Outline. If you are undertaking research that is likely to need SALC or UREC approval, you must draft the relevant ethical approval form and submit this with the supporting documents to Olivia Pennelle (olivia.pennelle@manchester.ac.uk) by the deadline published in the School’s MA Programmes Handbook (usually the first week of March). It is very important that you seek your tutor’s advice and consult the School’s Research Ethics website, before you complete the form. The SALC Research Ethics Panel will respond to your application by the end of March. It will take a minimum of three weeks to process a UREC ethical approval application form. **Please note:** if you need to apply to UREC for approval, you are **strongly advised** to begin working on your research ethics application early in semester 2 – if you are applying to UREC, the SALC Research Ethics Panel is happy to review your application as soon as it is ready.

You must receive ethical approval before you begin the part of your dissertation research that involves contact with human beings.

**PhD Students: Forms and Deadlines**

If you are on a PhD or MPhil programme please download your Declaration Form, and, if required, the SALC Ethics Template or UREC forms from the School’s Research Ethics website. All postgraduate researchers in the School must complete the Declaration Form within six months of starting their programme. Before completing the form, please consult your supervisor. If your research requires ethical approval, you must gain this before you begin that part of your research. If you are using the SALC Ethics Template, the School’s Research Ethics Panel will review your application at the next committee meeting (committee meetings take place in October, January, March and June each academic year).

UREC forms can be reviewed all year round, prior to being forwarded to UREC for approval. These are reviewed by the Chair of the Panel and School’s Director of Research and signed by the School’s Director of Research on behalf of the Head of School prior to being forwarded to UREC. Once a full, signed copy of your UREC application is received by UREC, it will take a minimum of three weeks to process.

**Academic staff: Forms and Deadlines**

Please consider the ethical issues arising from your research at the start of each new research cycle (that is, when you are engaging with a new group of participants, or drawing on a new or substantially revised methodology) or funded research project. Much of SALC research does not involve direct contact with human beings, but even here, your research might raise ethical issues (for example, connected to the preservation of material or cultural remains). Some ethical issues can be navigated by following disciplinary norms, and it is therefore important that you keep yourself abreast of debates about research ethics in your disciplinary area and/or methodological approach, as well as the University’s research governance principles. Obviously, it is important to do this in order to safeguard your own research as well as support postgraduate researchers.

Where your research involves contact with human beings, you will need to apply for ethical approval via the SALC Ethics Template or apply to UREC for ethical approval at the start of each new phase of research.

If you are using the SALC Ethics Template, the School’s Research Ethics Panel will review your application at the next committee meeting (committee meetings take place in October, January, March and June each academic year).

UREC forms can be reviewed by the Panel all year round, prior to being forwarded to UREC for approval. These are reviewed by the Chair of the Panel and School’s Director of Research and signed by the School’s Director of Research on behalf of the Head of School prior to being forwarded to UREC. Once a full, signed copy of your UREC application is received by UREC, it will take a minimum of three weeks to process.

**Research involving the NHS – further information**

You will need to obtain R&D approval for your research from the NHS Trusts involved and should contact the relevant R&D offices before you start your ethics application. They will be able to give you advice about the approvals that you will require. You will be required to have a research governance sponsor for your research. This will be the University. Details about the University’s process for sponsorship review are also contained on the above website.

Once ethical approval has been obtained, the full application and approval letter must be registered with the ethics office for insurance purposes via the following email address: research.ethics@manchester.ac.uk

**Research involving prisoners or prison staff – further information**

Research involving prisoners or prison staff will need ethical approval from the Ministry of Justice. If you are researching in prisons, your application should be made using the IRAS system:<https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/>

Once ethical approval has been obtained, the full application and approval letter must be registered with the ethics office for insurance purposes via the following email address: research.ethics@manchester.ac.uk

**Research involving the adult social care sector – further information**

Research involving the adult social care sectoris reviewed bythe Social Care Research Ethics Committee (e.g. in local authority, private and voluntary care settings), as well as studies which cross sector boundaries. Applications for this REC are through the IRAS system:<https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/>

Once ethical approval has been obtained, the full application and approval letter must be registered with the ethics office for insurance purposes via the following email address: research.ethics@manchester.ac.uk

**Research involving children and young people - further information**

Detailed information about research involving children and young people requiring CAFCASS approval can be found on the following web site: <http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/Does-your-research-involve-children-or-Children-s-Services-126>

**Access to the courts or to court records**

The approval you need depends on the courts (or court records) that you hope to access in your research. Detailed information can be found on the following web site:

<http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/Access-to-the-courts-or-to-court-records-195>

**Document links:**

Ethical approval declaration form

SALC Ethics Template

Participant information sheet proforma

Consent form proforma

Generic risk assessment forms

Guidance notes on assessing risk in relation to research ethics

University of Manchester Lone worker guidance – http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=13644

University insurance form

Sample UREC forms (where we have permission from applicants and UREC)

Sample Template forms (to be added incrementally and with permission from applicants)

**Useful sites (internal):**

University of Manchester research governance and integrity: http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/

University of Manchester research ethics: http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/ethics/

University of Manchester data protection: http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/records-management/data-protection/

University of Manchester IT security: http://www.its.manchester.ac.uk/secure-it/policies/

University of Manchester IT security and encryption: [http://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/secure-it/encryptionsw/](https://outlook.manchester.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=64d55dca14c7443a87f0e8858d5a2846&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.itservices.manchester.ac.uk%2fsecure-it%2fencryptionsw%2f)

Guidance on health and safety and risk assessments: http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/index.htm

Guidance on Fieldwork (look under ‘F’ on the A-Z list of guidance notes here) - http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance.htm

Guidance on insurance for research activities:

http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/ethics/obtaining-ethics-approval/insurance/

Lone working guidance: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=13644

**Useful sites (external):**

Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) guidance on H&S in Fieldwork including offsite visits and travel in the UK and overseas (the University adopts this guidance) <http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/guidance-on-health-and-safety-in-fieldwork> )

World Medical Association, *Declaration of Helsinki* (revised Seoul 2008) <http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/index.html>

Research policy and compliance at Harvard University:

<http://vpr.harvard.edu/content/policy-compliance>

Human subjects and research integrity at Harvard:

<http://vpr.harvard.edu/content/human-subjects-irbs>

ESRC Framework for Research Ethics:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research-ethics.aspx>

The Association for Social Anthropologists Ethical Guidelines for Good Practice Research:

<http://www.theasa.org/ethics/Ethical_guidelines.pdf>

Oral History Society:

http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/

Association of Internet researchers:

http://aoir.org/

Association of Internet researchers ethics guide:

http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf

Social Research Association Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers:

http://the-sra.org.uk/sra\_resources/safety-code/