**The University Research Ethics Committee Guidance on the Use of Media in Research**

1. **General Advice on the Use of Emotional Media or Manipulations**

In order to protect the well-being all of participants in research projects, the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) requires that the participant information sheets of all projects using emotional media or manipulations explicitly state the type of media being used as well as contain specific example media accurately reflecting topic area and level of potential distress. In addition, as is encouraged with all research, the benefits or outcome of the research project must outweigh any potential or perceived risks to the participants.

Please note that the UREC encourages researchers to use media where the persons in the media have consented to their publication or use, and/or media of activities that people engage in voluntarily in the public space.

In order to ensure that applications are reviewed appropriately, the UREC requires that **ALL** media that the researcher wishes to use during the course of their project are submitted to the committee with a completed UREC application.

1. **Advice on the Use of Potentially Objectionable Media**

The UREC classifies potentially objectionable media as the following:

* Depicting real acts of torture towards human beings or animals
* Media which depict situations that could be deemed intrusive or disrespectful to the dignity and privacy of individuals
* Media which depict nudity or content of a sexual nature involving living or dead subjects (either positive or negative)

If researchers wish to use media for their projects which fall into one of the above categories, they must take great care and consideration. Whenever possible, the UREC urges researchers to find alternative media to use in order to achieve the same methodological result in their research. If researchers deem it necessary to use media of this nature, they must provide a robust and comprehensive justification of why the media must be used, and they must be able to show that the benefits of the research outweigh the possible negative risks to research participants.

In addition, researchers must provide explicit and detailed information regarding the content of the media on the participant information sheet, except in the rare circumstances where researchers can provide a convincing justification for withholding this information. All participants must be provided with example media prior to the start of the research which is comparable in both level of potential distress and explicit nature in order to determine if participants are comfortable with the topic area and wish to proceed with the research.

The UREC will only provide a favourable ethical opinion to projects that adequately meet the above criteria.

1. **Advice on the Use of Illegal Media**

The UREC will not condone the use of any media which are illegal according to UK Law, or could be possibly construed as falling into one of the following categories that include but are not limited to:

1. [Extreme Pornography](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/d_to_g/extreme_pornography/)
2. [Paedophilia](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/h_to_k/indecent_photographs_of_children/%2C)
3. Sexual Violence and specifically acts such as sexual mutilation or distress

The UREC will refuse to provide researchers with a favourable ethical opinion for their research if it is found to contain media that are classified as illegal.