**ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRATUATE STUDENTS IN SALC**

During your undergraduate studies you might have to undertake independent research as part of a taught course, or for independent projects, reports or dissertations, which involve human participants - in the form of interviews, data collection or observation, among others. As a researcher you must be aware of the ethical risks involved in the process, and the possibility that you might harm, disturb or upset (however slight the possibility) your participants. In keeping with the University’s policy on the ethical approval of research carried out by its staff and students, therefore, you too are subject to certain rules and regulations. This is to ensure that research data is collected in a manner that is ethical and transparent, and displays integrity.

Before you embark on your research discuss this closely with your supervisor. You will need to fill out a form (see link below) and ensure that all or some of the following conditions apply:

The research engages healthy adults or children (the latter 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) who are able to give informed consent in a way that accords with accepted practice.

The research follows standard procedures and established research methodologies, is carried out online or in a public setting that does not present risks to the researcher or research participants beyond what is normal in that setting, and does not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to compromise them, or to lead to distress (the research topics are not contentious or sensitive, such as asking about sexual preferences, political views or illegal activities, or a reasonable person would agree the topic may only result in distress in *extremely* *rare* instances).

**Your research should fit the following criteria (as applicable):**

* Research that engages healthy adults and/or children (the latter 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) who are able to give informed consent in a way that accords with accepted practice.
* Primary research on professional practice with participants in professional roles conducted in their work setting.
* Research that engages participant groups limited to peers, colleagues, family members and friends and that is not of a contentious or sensitive nature.
* Research that does not involve vulnerable or dependent groups.
* Primary or practice research conducted in a public space or building within normal working hours or at a time convenient to participants (e.g. the high street, the University campus, a school building).
* Research that will take place in locations where first aid and/or other medical support or facilities are available within 30 minutes.
* Market research (i.e. the research may involve data collection from the general public approached or observed in public locations for the purposes of market investigation but does not involve the gathering of personal data).
* Primary research using a questionnaire completed and returned by participants with no direct contact with the researcher, where the topic is not sensitive or personally distressing.
* Research that involves primary research with participants inside the EU or an international setting that is not on the list of countries/regions that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against ‘all or all but essential’ travel to.
* Research that does not involve the collection of video/photographs of research participants.

If you are working off-campus you would also need to fill in a Risk Assessment form (guided again by your supervisor). This is to ensure your safety at all times and in off-campus research locations. See link below.

**You must not commence your independent working until you have been given written permission to proceed by their course unit teacher/supervisor.**

Should you fail to comply with the instruction from a unit teacher/ supervisor with regards completing risk assessment and/ or working in an ethical manner you are liable to receive a fail mark for their work.

In extremely serious cases you may be referred to the University under Regulation XVII on the Conduct and Discipline for students. We do not want to see any student receive a fail mark or be referred under Regulation XVII and urge all students to take seriously risk assessments and ethical approval, and to follow course teacher/supervisor instructions.

CHECKLIST:

1. Have you discussed your research methodology in detail with your supervisor/course co-ordinator and considered all kinds of risk involved – both ethical and personal?
2. Have you completed all forms and documentation?
3. Have you and your supervisor signed them?
4. Do also remember that all relevant paperwork needs to be submitted along with your coursework/dissertation/project at the end of your research. Failure to do so will result in severe penalties.

**NOTE TO DISSERTATION/PROJECT SUPERVISORS AND COURSE CO-ORDINATORS:** Please note that in cases of undergraduate students undertaking research involving human subjects, the supervisor/tutor is required to assist with completion and to validate the form on behalf of the students. For group work or class projects a single form can be completed by the supervisor/tutor for the entire project. Undergraduate projects must only fall under the low risk category outlined here, unless the supervisor would like to make a case for a student to be granted permission for a higher risk project (for example, using photography/video of human subjects or conducting research in the homes of friends/family). In this case, the supervisor should still fill in this document but add an explanatory text outlining the justification. These cases should be forwarded to [Elizabeth Nolan](mailto:elizabeth.m.nolan@manchester.ac.uk) for consideration and dispensation may be granted. All undergraduate ethics documentation should be held and filed by the supervisor.

Responsibility for approving risk assessment and working in an ethical manner with human subjects is the responsibility of a unit teacher or dissertation supervisor. They must provide permission only when they are satisfied that the risk assessment and/or ethics procedures have been satisfactorily completed.

Students must be made aware that when they conduct independent work, they have a responsibility to:

* ensure a risk assessment is completed when appropriate;
* comply with instructions for ethical work when engaging in an investigation involving human subjects;
* ensure that the independent work completed does not deviate from that which has been approved;
* contact the relevant member(s) of staff if the focus of the independent study changes, to ensure that they are continuing to work in a safe and ethical manner.

**Links:**

[UG Low Risk Ethical Approval Form](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=27375)

[SALC Risk Assessment Form A](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=27363)

[UG Participant Information Sheet and Consent Forms](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=24309)