**Guidance Notes: School of Arts, Languages and Cultures (updated 20 February 2017)**

SALC is committed to developing and supporting the highest standards of research. This document has been created in order to maintain these high academic standards and associated codes of good research practice. The research portfolio within SALC covers a wide range of fields and perspectives and research within each of these areas places responsibilities of a differing nature on staff (whether as researchers or supervisors) and students subject to course, level, focus and participants. The aim of this document is to assist in assessing these factors.

The SALC Research Ethics procedures are designed to ensure that student and staff research projects receive a review proportionate to risks presented by the ethical issues raised by the research proposal. In the case of student research projects, it is expected that supervisors will fully engage with the ethics review process, using the guidance here to assess which form of documentation is required and ensuring that disciplinary norms are adhered to in all instances.

All staff research is pre-screened at School level, and sent to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for review, regardless of level of risk.

Where the student is the applicant, the supervisor is responsible for assessing the level of risk with the student and signing off the application (UREC forms for high risk, Division/School Template for low and medium risk projects). Supervisors can review and approve low risk applications; medium risk applications are reviewed by the SALC Ethics Committee.

Staff and postgraduate ethics applications are submitted and reviewed via the Ethical Review Manager (ERM) – the University’s online system for reviewing ethics applications. Undergraduate applications are managed via the SALC undergraduate ethics application.

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 are expected to fall under the low risk category outlined here, although supervisors can make a case for a student to be granted permission for a higher risk project. 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 the SALC Research Ethics Committee for consideration and dispensation may be granted. At present, all **undergraduate** ethics documentation should be held and filed by the supervisor. **Please note, from 2018/16 we plan to move undergraduate ethics onto ERM.**

For further guidelines on ethics procedures, and for the undergraduate forms, please see <http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/staffintranet/research/researchethics/>

**Information for staff research projects and ethical approval procedures**

**⚫** For **all projects requiring ethical approval**, staff should select **UREC Review on Question A5** in order to complete the UREC form. This should be done irrespective of levels of ethical approval sought. ALL high, medium and low level **staff projects should be applied for using the UREC form**.

**Stage 1: Review**

The School recognises four levels of *review* to be considered by student researchers (in consultation with their supervisors) before completing any documentation:

1. 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

1. Ethical issues arising from research with adults in a public setting, or with children (if 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, and where parental/guardian consent and child assent is provided) may be categorised as **low risk**. Research should not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress (research where topics are either not contentious or sensitive at all, or where a reasonable person would agree that the topic is of legitimate interest and may result in distress in **extremely** rare instances). Research may make use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher is able to guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing. Low risk projects do not need to be reviewed by the SALC ethics committee. The categorisation of student research projects as low risk requires certification by the supervisor.
2. Research with adults and research with children (the latter 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, and where parental/guardian consent and child assent can be provided) that does not comply with the low risk criteria above, may be categorised ***medium risk***. Medium risk projects are distinct from low risk projects in that the research topics may be of legitimate interest and may result in distress in **rare** instances, and they may present a minimal level of risk to researchers and/or research participants. Medium risk projects are considered via the framework provided by the School/Division Research Ethics Template. Medium risk projects are reviewed by the SALC Research Ethics Committee.
3. 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 is classed as *high* risk and must be reviewed by the SALC Research Ethics Signatory and will then be forwarded to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for approval. Please note that approval timings on projects requiring UREC assessment will require an additional month following SALC committee dates.

For all the above categories, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that all procedures relating to disciplinary norms are followed by their research students. Supervisors are expected to take this element of their role seriously, to familiarise themselves with the relevant policies and procedures, and to ensure that their students follow them.

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

**Stage 2: Assessing ethical risk levels**

The School has determined three levels of *Ethical Research Risk* that require review, each of which has a number of associated criteria with implications for the degree of ethical review required.

**High risk:** The research focuses on groups within society in need of special support, is carried out in an unstable or volatile setting, involves non-standard methodologies or approaches, presents risks to the personal safety of the researcher or research participant beyond what is normal in the setting, or where there is a possibility the research may be distressing to the researcher or research participant in one or more ways. If any aspect of your student research can be described within this frame of reference, please select **UREC Review for Question A5**, in order to proceed to the **UREC form**. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (**in Section B**) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form. Further information on types of approval required for certain categories (e.g. NHS patients or prisoners) can be found on the SALC Ethics intranet pages.

**High risk research can be described as research that involves *one or more* of the following:**

* Research that engages children under 16 outside of a cultural institution that has been accredited to work with children and young people, school, youth club, or other accredited organisations; Adults or children with learning difficulties; Adults or children who are unable to self-consent; Adults or children with mental illness; Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher; Prisoners or young offenders; Any other group who can be regarded as vulnerable or dependent; NHS patients.
* Research that takes place in an international setting that the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against ‘all or all but essential’ travel to.
* Research that addresses themes or issues in respect of participant’s personal *experience* which may be of a sensitive nature and that therefore may involve any risk of psychological damage or distress to the subject (or the subject’s family).
* Research that cannot be completed without data collection or associated activities which place the researcher and/or participants (or any third party) at physical risk or serious inconvenience.
* Research that requires participant informed consent and/or withdrawal procedures which are not consistent with accepted practice.
* Research that involves primary data collection on an area of public or social objection (e.g. terrorism, paedophilia).
* Research that involves the necessary deception of research participants.
* Research that makes use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher cannot guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing.
* Research that will take place in locations where first aid and/or other medical support or facilities are not available within 30 minutes.
* Research that may involve the researcher operating machinery, electrical equipment, or workplace vehicles, or handling or working with animals at the research location(s), for which they are not qualified, and where a qualified operative or handler is not available to act as supervisor.
* Research that takes place in, or involves transport to and from, locations where the researcher’s lack of familiarity combined with potential threats in that context may put them at personal risk.
* Research that involves the administration of drugs or use of invasive or semi-invasive procedures, involve the use of tissue from living subjects or the cadavers of or tissue from the recently dead, other than bequeathed cadavers and tissue obtained in the normal course of necropsy.

**Medium risk:** The research engages 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), follows standard procedures and established research methodologies, is carried out 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 lead to significant levels of distress (the research topics are either not contentious or sensitive, or a reasonable person would agree the topic is of legitimate interest and may result in distress in *rare* instances). If your research can be described as medium risk, please select **Division/School Review for Question A5** and **‘Medium Risk’ for Question L3** in order to proceed to the SALC Medium Risk Ethics form. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (**in Section B**) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

**Medium risk research can be described as research that fits with the following criteria (in the ERM form, tick all that are applicable):**

* My research will engage with adults and/or children (in an educational setting or accredited organisation where they have the opportunity to assent and where parental/guardian consent can be provided) who are able to give informed consent in a way that accords with accepted practice.
* My research will not involve vulnerable or dependent groups.
* My research will not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress (research where the topics are either not contentious or sensitive at all, or where a reasonable person would agree that the topic is of legitimate interest and may result in distress in rare instances).
* My project will involve 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.
* My project will be primary research conducted in a public space or building (e.g. the high street, the University campus, a school building).
* My research will take place in locations where first aid and/or other medical support or facilities are available within 30 minutes.
* My research will be a review/evaluation involving topics that may be of a sensitive nature, but that are not personal to the participants.
* My research will be carried out within normal working hours or at a time convenient to participants.

**Low risk:** 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 religious beliefs, sexual preferences, political views or illegal activities, or a reasonable person would agree the topic may only result in distress in *extremely* *rare* instances).

If you are a postgraduate student and your research can be described as low risk, please select **Division/School Review for Question A5** and **‘Low Risk’ for Question L3** in order to proceed to the SALC Low Risk Ethics form. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (**in Section B**) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

**Please note**: that low risk applications are not assessed by the ethics committee, however, you will be emailed a ‘receipt’ confirming we have received your application, so please keep this for your records.

**Low risk research can be described as research that fits with the following criteria (in the ERM form, tick all that are applicable):**

* My research will engage healthy adults and/or children (the latter in an educational setting where they have the opportunity to provide assent, or where parental/guardian consent can be provided) who are able to give informed consent in a way that accords with accepted practice.
* My research will focus on professional practice with participants in professional roles conducted in their work setting.
* My research will engage participant groups limited to peers and colleagues that is not of a contentious or sensitive nature.
* My research will not involve vulnerable or dependent groups.
* My research will take place in locations where first aid and/or other medical support or facilities are available within 30 minutes.
* My project will be market research (i.e. the research will involve data collection from the general public approached or observed in public locations for the purposes of market investigations but will not involve the gathering of personal data).
* My project will be 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.
* My project will be 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 but essential' travel to.
* My research will not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress (research where topics are either not contentious or sensitive at all, or where a reasonable person would agree that the topic is of legitimate interest and may result in distress in extremely rare instances).
* My research will make use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher is able to guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing.
* My research requires the collection of personal data, but data will be anonymised prior to analysis and writing up. Where research participants are professional practitioners, providing descriptions of their practice, these participants may be identifiable in research outcomes, but only if consent has been given.
* SALC Linguistics/English Language Students ONLY: My project will be primary or practice research conducted in a public space or building within normal working hours, or in a domestic environment familiar to the researcher, within normal working hours or at a time convenient to participants.

**Research with family and friends – low and medium risk**

If the research involves the use as subjects of members of the researcher’s family and / or friendship groups, evidence will be submitted by the researcher as part of their ethical approval application of the steps which they will take to ensure that the subject’s participation is according to their own free choice, and demonstrating that reasonable precautions will be taken to avoid the explicit or implicit coercion of the subject into participating with the research project.

**Supporting documents** may include recruitment adverts/emails, draft questionnaires, draft interview topic guides, participant information sheets and consent forms, insurance declaration form and risk assessments, depending on the research methodologies employed.

**Insurance information**

For low and medium risk projects that answer ‘yes’ to any of the insurance questions we will log these and send them to the insurance office for completion at the end of the academic year. You are able to start your research without prior approval from the insurance office. If your research is conducted in areas of the world that are regarded as risky you need to complete the appropriate Risk Assessment Forms and in some cases might need approval by the Insurance Office.

Only UREC applications that are deemed ‘high risk’ and where the research is conducted abroad **and** has a medical content, **or** where there is a “yes” in **any** of the other insurance boxes will need prior approval from the insurance office before the research can be carried out. You must then wait for an official email from the insurance office before starting your research.

Please contact [salc.ethics@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:salc.ethics@manchester.ac.uk) if you have any queries about insurance.

**What to do next**

Agreement to proceed with research at each of these levels is provided by an appropriate University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), the SALC Ethics Committee, or by the supervisor/tutor respectively.

**⚫** For **low risk student projects**, please select **Division/School Review for Question A5** **and ‘Low Risk’ for Question L3** in order to proceed to the School/Division Low Risk Ethics form. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (in Section B) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

**⚫** For **medium risk student projects**, please select **Division/School Review for Question A5** **and ‘Medium Risk’ for Question L3** in order to proceed to the School/Division Medium Risk Ethics form. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (in Section B) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

**⚫** For **high risk student projects**, please select **UREC Review for Question A5**, in order to proceed to the UREC form. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (in Section B) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

**⚫** For **staff projects**, please select **UREC Review for Question A5**, in order to proceed to the UREC form. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (in Section B) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

If you have any queries about your specific project, please email the SALC Ethics Team: [salc.ethics@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:salc.ethics@manchester.ac.uk)