

RG45 Research Ethics Policy		Effective date: 03/2024
Authorised owner: Katie Hickin	Department(s) / Project team(s) PEDAL	Last revision: 03/2024
Classification: Public	Issue: 01	Next review: 03/2024



Research Ethics Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the ethical principles and procedures that all Real Group postgraduate students must adhere to throughout their studies. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the well-being and rights of research participants.
- Promote research integrity and responsible conduct.
- Uphold Real Group's commitment to ethical research practices.

2. Core Principles Of Ethical Research Approval

Research ethics approval seeks to ensure all work is designed and undertaken according to certain principles of ethical research. These include:

1. Primary concern must be given to the **safety, welfare and dignity** of participants, researchers, colleagues, the environment and the wider community
2. Consideration of **risks** should be undertaken before research commences with the aim of minimising risks to those involved – i.e. human participants or animal subjects, colleagues, the environment and the wider community, as well as actual or potential risks to those directly or indirectly affected by the research.
3. **Informed consent** should be freely given by participants.
4. Respect for the **privacy, confidentiality and anonymity** of participants must be maintained in line with Data Protection Legislation.
5. Consideration of the rights of **people who may be vulnerable** (by virtue of perceived or actual differences in their social status, ethnic origin, gender, mental capacities, or other such characteristics) who may be less competent or able to refuse to give consent to participate.
6. Researchers have a responsibility to the general public and to their profession; as such they should balance the anticipated benefits of their research against **potential harm, misuse or abuse** which must be avoided
7. Researchers must demonstrate the highest standards of **ethical conduct and research integrity**. They must work within the limits of their skills, training and experience, and refrain

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from exploitation, dishonesty, plagiarism, infringement of intellectual property rights and the fabrication of research results. They should declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and where necessary take steps to resolve them.

8. Research should **not involve any illegal activity**, and researchers must comply with all relevant laws

All Masters level students should familiarise themselves with the British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines (<https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online>) which underpin our assessment design and are explored within each module's introduction strand.

Additionally modules with specific PSRB requirements may have their own professional ethics guides such as:

- M02 Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing completion of which allows students to join the BPS's Register of Qualifications in Test Use follows [The British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics](#)

3. Requirements for ethical approval

Within our courses ethical approval **may** have been pre-sought for research activities that form part of assessment activities. Please refer to your module narrative for specific details.

Note however that:

- Where an assessment activity has had pre-sought ethical approval but requires sharing data on an individual, even if anonymised, then informed consent must still be sought and evidence provided.
- **all students completing** M10 Enquiry based SEND Practice will be required to undertake an ethics review process as part of planning their research.

Data **MUST NOT** be collected without first obtaining ethics approval for your research or ascertaining if data gathering has been pre-approved for a module. If you submit work that includes data gathered

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from or about people without ethical approval this will be treated as academic misconduct and could lead to a fail grade being awarded.

4. Responsibilities

- **Delegates:**

- Are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and relevant ethical guidelines.
- Must design and conduct research with ethical considerations at the forefront.
- Seek guidance from tutors, module leaders and the Programme Leaders when necessary.

- **Tutors:**

- Have a responsibility to ensure their students understand and adhere to ethical principles.
- Assist students in identifying potential ethical issues and navigating the research ethics approval process.

- **Research Ethics Committee (REC):**

- Comprised of two or more M12 Enquiry tutors
- Reviews research proposals to ensure they meet ethical standards.
- Provides guidance and advice to researchers on ethical considerations.

5. Ethics Review Process

All research involving human participants and/or sensitive data (e.g., personal data, confidential information) must undergo ethical review and approval before commencement.

M10 Enquiry based SEND Practice provides guidance on completing the ethics application form and the required documentation. This ethics application is written as Practice Analysis 1. Once your tutor is confident that Practice Analysis 1 represents an ethical research plan they will approve this and pass it on to a second tutor to independently review. The second tutor may:

1. Approve the research proposal, or;

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- Return the research proposal to the student for further amendments.

Data MUST NOT be collected before approval from a second tutor is received.

5. Training and Resources

Real Group is committed to providing postgraduate students with the necessary training and resources to conduct ethical research. This may include:

- Online training
- Access to guidance documents and resources

6. Breaches of Ethics

Any suspected breach of research ethics will be investigated by Real Group as academic misconduct. Serious breaches may result in disciplinary action, up to and including withdrawal of research approval or termination of studies as per RG46 Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

7. Contact Information

For further information on research ethics or to discuss your research proposal, please contact:

- Dr Jane Yeomans (jane@realgroup.co.uk)

8. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect best practices and any changes in relevant legislation.

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FAQs

Where can I find additional guidance around conducting online or remote research?

If you are interested in conducting research remotely, you may find the following resources a helpful starting point for exploring the sometimes unique ethical challenges of internet-mediated research.

[The British Psychological Society Ethics guidelines for internet-mediated research](#)

[Open University Conducting Online Research Information Pack](#)

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Related Documents

RG46 Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

Document history

Issue 1

Initial release

