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considering the ethical dilemmas that may arise, managing such dilemmas is an on-going process that requires attention throughout the course of a project.

## 2. General Principles

2.1. The integrity of any research depends not only on its intellectual rigour but also on its ethical adequacy. The following general principles are applicable across all areas of research activity. Further principles relating to the ethical conduct of research involving human and non-human animal subjects are detailed in parts 2 and 3, respectively.

### 2.2. **Non-falsification of data:**

Researchers have an ethical obligation to assure the integrity of their data. Thus, questionnaire responses, experimental observation and data analyses should not be fabricated, altered, discarded or in any other way deliberately manipulated in such a way as to distort the results or to manufacture any particular outcomes. In addition, researchers have a responsibility to exercise reasonable care in processing data to ensure no errors are introduced that may affect the results.

### 2.3. **Dissemination of research findings**

Researchers have a duty to disseminate research findings to all appropriate parties. Researchers are obliged to give full and proper attribution of ideas: presenting the words, data or ideas of another person as your own without properly citing them is



Researchers should be aware of the impact of dissemination of their work, including that on any individual or group of individuals. If it is anticipated that it might cause distress, it is essential to demonstrate that the benefits outweigh this risk.

#### 2.10. **Storage and Disposal of Data:**

Researchers must make sure that data management is built into their planning. At the same time as ensuring that personal and other confidential data is kept secure, researchers have an obligation, so far as is possible, to make the data upon which their research outputs are based, available to other researchers in the future. Meeting both objectives requires careful planning.

Data must at all times be maintained or destroyed in accordance with existing data protection laws and best practice.

### **3. Research Involving Human Subjects**

3.1. Research involving human subjects is undertaken by **many different disciplines** and conducted in a broad range of settings and institutions. Whilst some issues are specific to particular professional groups, all research should be guided by a set of fundamental ethical principles to ensure the protection of human subjects. The standards outlined in the paragraphs below have been developed to guide staff and students at GBS who undertake research that actively involves human subjects.

3.2. Research relationships are frequently characterised by disparities of power and status. Despite this, research relationships should be characterised, wherever possible, by trust, honesty and integrity.

3.3. Researchers should avoid deceiving participants **wherever possible**. Only in certain **exceptional** circumstances is deception a necessary methodological feature of research. In such cases, the reasons should always be explained to participants at the conclusion of the study.

#### 3.4 **Non-maleficence and beneficence:**



Underpinning our expectations of the ethical standards for the conduct of research is the philosophy: **do no harm** (non-maleficence); and,





### **3.7 Third party consent**

When third parties, for example parents, teachers or health care professionals, are directly involved in the care, education or treatment of potential participants, their informed consent should also be sought. In such cases, informed consent should involve sharing of information about the project.

If the research is likely to interfere with the treatment or care being provided by a third party, it is necessary that they be fully involved and give written consent to participate.

In certain situations,



- 4.3. Guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity given to research participants must be honoured, unless there are clear and over-riding reasons to do otherwise, for example, in relation to the abuse of children. In research with children, researchers should have regard for issues of child protection and make provision for the potential disclosure of abuse. Specialist advice should be sought where relevant.
- 4.4. When personal identifiers are used in a study, the researcher should explain why this is necessary and how confidentiality will be protected.
- 4.5. Researchers should follow procedures for protecting the confidentiality of participants, such as:
- Securing statements of commitment to confidentiality from individual research personnel.
  - Using pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants.
  - Storing data with identifying information in a locked file or password protected/encrypted area on your computer. Access to these files must be restricted to the researcher or (in agreed cases) the designated members of a research team.
  - Using codes for identifying participants when transcribing tapes, deleting the tapes on completion of transcription.
  - Disposing of information that could reveal participants carefully, for example by shredding or burning or in confidential wastebaskets.
- 4.6. Researchers should take special care when carrying out research via the Internet. Ethical standards for Internet research are not well developed. Eliciting informed consent, negotiating access agreements, assessing the boundaries between the public and the private, and ensuring the security of data transmissions are all problematic in Internet research. Researchers who carry out research online should ensure they are familiar with ongoing debates on the ethics of Internet research and should be cautious when making judgements affecting the well-being of online research participants.

## **5. Data protection**

- 5.1. Researchers must comply with all appropriate legal acts and take account of best practice when collecting and storing research data.
- 5.2. Researchers need to be aware of the risks to anonymity, privacy and confidentiality posed by personal information storage and processing, including computer and paper files, e-mail records, audio and videotapes, or any other information that directly identifies an individual.
- 5.3. Researchers need to inform participants about what kinds of personal information will be collected, what will be done with it, how long it will be kept before it is destroyed, and to whom it will be disclosed.
- 5.4. Researchers must build longer term data management into their project planning. Universities are required to make research data available wherever possible, and so there must be plans for data archiving, or a justification for destruction where appropriate.

## **6. Internet mediated research (IMR)**

- 6.1. The REC will be expected to take into account specific guidance on IMR, within the following parameters:
  - 6.2. Standard principles apply to IMR:
    - a. Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities
    - b. Scientific integrity
    - c. Social responsibility
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## **8. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

8.1.

## Appendix 1

### Research Ethics Committee (REC) Terms of Reference

#### 1. Membership

- 1.1. Chair: Dean of Education
- 1.2. One member from each Faculty Research Ethics Group (FREG).
- 1.3. Secretary in attendance: Member of ASQO staff appointed by the Director of Academic Standards and Quality.

#### 2. Terms of reference

- 2.1. To ensure the exchange and the upholding of said high standards in student and staff research proposals.
- 2.2. To develop and review institutional guidelines in consultation with RSPPC and faculties to ensure that appropriate advice is available for staff, supervisors and students on good practice in relation to the ethics of their research.
- 2.3. To consider and, if appropriate, approve staff research proposals.
- 2.4. To consider and, if appropriate, approve those student research proposals referred to it by FREGs.
- 2.5. To consider and, if appropriate, approve amendments to previously approved research proposals.
- 2.6. To review appeals, complaints and adverse events or incidents reported regarding ethically approved research.
- 2.7. To report on an annual basis to RSPPC, including a summary of all reviewed projects and a report on the effectiveness of current practice and procedures.



### 3. Quoracy

3.1. Quoracy is four of seven required attendees: ie at least half of the faculty representatives and the Chair.

### 4. Frequency of meeting

4.1. The committee is held on a bi-monthly basis, to align with the three student intakes,