School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee

Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise and Education

1. Introduction

The School of Media, Culture and Society fully embraces the University Ethics Guidelines and its aims. The School strives to maintain the "highest ethical standards" in research, scholarship, enterprise and education; we are committed to ensuring a culture of honesty, rigour, transparency and respect. Within this context research and scholarship are broadly defined as the systematic investigation to add to a body of knowledge or theory, and understanding. Additionally, educational experiences are operationalized as learning events where students 1) act as "researchers" and interact with members of the public in that role e.g. collect data as a learning event, 2) interact with the public in a professional role e.g. media installations, performance events, journalistic interviews 3) interact with an enterprise partner in a professional role. Finally, within the new guidelines, student learner analytics are defined as the collection, analysis and reporting of web usage by visitors to a digital site

The purpose of these guidelines is to present an ethical framework and procedures for the conduct of all academic activity and to identify ethical considerations that should be addressed through the formal approval process

2. MCS Remit and Review Process Overview

"All but a few of the activities of ethical review and accountability within UWS are devolved to the Schools. Each School, therefore, has a responsibility to make sure that local and University ethical guidelines are available to every member of their

staff and students. School Ethics Committees abide by the University Regulations and guidelines, including the minimum requirements outlined later in this document. School Ethics Committees are required, for example, to demonstrate to the University Ethics Committee that they are independent and multidisciplinary, and have appropriate operating procedures in place. All applications for ethical scrutiny by staff and students should be submitted to one of these School Research Ethics Committees" (section 4. http://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/overview/university-ethics/).

The purpose of the School Guideline is to operationalise our functions and remit within the University's Regulatory parameters. Of note for the MCS guidelines is University's definition of risk (http://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/overview/university-ethics/) and how we identify and mitigate the risk through the application and review process. As a School, we note and acknowledge these are examples and will work with them to aid and inform our practices. However, given that they characterise most of our research, education and teaching areas it is important to note that we have developed a robust set of expert reviewing processes in which the risk of the project is foregrounded and mitigated so that an informed decision about the appropriateness of further referral and review will be taken into account. Moreover, the Chair (or Depute Chair) will ultimately be responsible for decisions about the involvement of the University Committee.

3. Scope and Purpose of the MCS Ethics Committee

The MCS ethics review process is intended to be a supportive, critical review of the project, whilst ensuring a minimum standard of competence.

Since each research project/educational experience is seeking to make a unique contribution, the University ethical principles will be applied in a holistic manner with every application being assessed on a case-by-case basis by suitability qualified academic staff. Complex projects take the time to assess, and staff and students should be prepared for this by factoring lead in times for their project (see section 5.6). To ameliorate this process, the MCS Ethics Committee will offer staff and

School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee   *Updated Feb 2018*
Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise, Education and the Student Experience
P a g e | 2

research students the option of Approval in Principle or Fast Track approval. The suitability of those mechanisms for an application will be at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

The onus of detailing the suitability of the project to address the educational experience or research question is on the applicant. All the principles underpinning the UWS Ethics Code should be present within the design, method and conduct of the study/experience. The applicant will be deemed to have entered an informal social contract where the participant rights have been explained, assured and protected. All applicants must clearly state a justification for an exception to a core principle(s) that is deemed appropriate within the parameters of the study/experience. Examples of this are where deception may be deemed necessary to the methodology, or that anonymity of the participant is not possible, or in Elite Interviews, the lack of anonymity and consent no being required. In cases like those, the dignity of the participant should always be protected and it is important to provide an appropriate information session and debrief.

4. Review Structure and Process

Ethics applications can be submitted for review under one of three processes:

1) Approval in Principle or Fast Track Review (reserved for grant applications and work with external partners).

2) Low-Risk Review (University Risk categories 1 and 2)

3) High-Risk Review (Risk categories 3a and 3b)

Each of these categories would require a proportionate review before approval will be given. Ultimately the suitability of the project's review category will be decided by the Chair (or Depute Chair) though an applicant can specify a preference on the application.

4.1 Staff Applications

School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee   *Updated Feb 2018*
Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise, Education and the Student Experience
P a g e | 3

Staff applications for ethical approval should be submitted under process 1, 2 or 3 to the Ethics Committee by using the on-line Ethics Research Management software (https://uws.forms.ethicalreviewmanager.com/Account/Login: https://uws.review.ethicalreviewmanager.com/Account/Login). All applications must be submitted alongside any appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. Participant information Sheet, Consent, Debrief Gatekeeper agreement letters etc.).

4.2 Postgraduate Applications (MSc, MA, MPhil, and Ph.D)

Applications for ethical approval should be submitted under process 2 (low Risk) or 3a (High Risk) approval to the Ethics Committee by using the on-line Ethics Research Management software (https://uws.forms.ethicalreviewmanager.com/Account/Login). The application should be submitted alongside any appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. Participant Information Sheet, Consent, Debrief Gatekeeper agreement letters etc.).

4.3 Undergraduate Applications

Dissertation Student or Research Project applications for ethical approval should be submitted with a supervisor's signature under process 2 or 3a approval by using the on-line Ethics Research Management software (https://uws.forms.ethicalreviewmanager.com/Account/Login). The application should be submitted alongside any appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. Participant Information Sheet, Consent, Debrief Gatekeeper agreement letters etc.).

4.4 Modular or Programmatic Approval

The MCS taught programme portfolio includes educational experiences that require students to act as researchers and to collect data from human participants. We require annual modular or programmatic ethical approval to be sought and granted before any student embarks on an embedded education experience. The application should be submitted by the programme leader for process 2 or 3a approval by using the on-line Ethics Research Management software (https://uws.forms.ethicalreviewmanager.com/Account/Login). The application should be submitted alongside any appropriate supporting documentation (e.g.

School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee   *Updated Feb 2018*
Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise, Education and the Student Experience
P a g e | 4

template PIS, template Consent, Debrief Gatekeeper agreement letters etc.). The application will be reviewed by the School Ethics Committee.

5. Process of ethics review

5.1 Submission

All applications should be submitted by the Principal Investigator or in the case of Undergraduate research the Dissertation Supervisor to the MCS Ethics Committee via the on-line Ethics Research Management software (https://uws.forms.ethicalreviewmanager.com/Account/Login) In the case of student research, the application should be reviewed and signed by the Supervisor prior to submission as an endorsement that it meets the minimum requirement for review.

5.2 Proportionate review and timeline

The School Ethics Committee Chair (or nominated deputy) will screen and then distribute received applications to independent peer reviewers. The number of reviewers will depend on the level of risk.

Approval in Principle and Fastrack applications will be reviewed by at least; the Chair and one appropriate peer reviewer. Low-risk projects (category 2 risk) will be given a "light touch" review by 2 peer reviewers, High-risk projects (category 3a and 3b) will be reviewed by at least the Chair/Depute Chair and two peer reviewers from the School's Ethics Committee reviewer pool and then if deemed to be of high risk then referred to the University Ethics Committee for further review.

5.3 Undergraduate Project Review

Dissertation and Educational Experience Projects will be reviewed by School Ethics Committee.

5.4 Reviewer Pool

All academic staff are called upon to act as reviewers for the MCS Ethics Committee, reviews are allocated based on the academic discipline or methodological expertise. For undergraduate and programmatic approval, the bulk of the reviews will be

School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee   *Updated Feb 2018*
Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise, Education and the Student Experience
P a g e | 5

undertaken by colleagues from that programme and a committee member will also review all the applications for that programme. Consensus will be reached on a proportionate review and the Chair of the Committee (or Depute) must endorse the final review outcome.

5.6 Review Outcomes and Timeline

The time taken for ethical review will depend on the number of reviewers but should not normally exceed 1) one working week for fast track/approval in principle 2) two weeks for low-risk projects and 3) two-three weeks for high-risk projects. Retrospective ethics review i.e. requests to approve research that has already taken place is not permitted. In cases where the School Ethics review processes cannot reach consensus, or where there is an appeal by the applicant against the decision, the application should be referred to the University Ethics Committee. The decision made by the University Ethics Committee will be deemed the final one.

On point of application, each project will receive a Unique Project Identifier UPI). This will stay with the project, be used on participant documentation and should be stored by staff, as annual audits will ask to produce the ethics identifier.

5.7 Ethics reviewer outcomes

Ethics reviewers will recommend one of the following outcomes:

• Approved: the project can proceed as outlined in the application

• Approval in Principle: in principle, the project meets minimum Ethical Requirements and can proceed to application for external funding or scoping.

• Conditional Approval subject to required changes: the project can proceed provided the compulsory changes are made. Agreement to implement the conditions will be sought from the PI or student supervisors before final approval will be given.

• Resubmission requested: at application, the project cannot be approved due to greater information the committee will feedback to ask for compulsory changes/update in application information has been made.

School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee　　　　　　　　　　*Updated Feb 2018*
Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise, Education and the Student Experience
P a g e | 6

- Not approved: the project cannot proceed for the reasons clearly specified but a significantly reconceptualised project may be approved

- Rejected: The project cannot be approved or amended to meet the Ethical standards of the School and University and is rejected.

6.   Tracking and Accountability of Approved Projects

Approved projects must be carried out in accordance with the original application and the conditions. If changes are made to the project that are significant and could have an ethical impact e.g. engagement of different groups of participants, different recruiting methods, a different approach to obtaining consent, different experimental procedures, then the School Ethics Committee should be informed immediately. The proposed changes will be considered, usually by the original team of reviewers, and a recommendation will be made.

The Principal Investigator should provide the application identifier within reports of their activities through the Research Hubs, Research and Enterprise and Education Forum. In the case of undergraduate projects, the Supervisor should provide reports through the Module Review and Programme Quality Enhancement Processes.

Where the School Ethics Committee has concerns about the ethical conduct of the project a full audit should take place, and the University Ethics Committee should be kept informed. That investigation may form part of the University's Complaints process. If an on-going research project is considered unethical, then the research should be halted immediately whilst subject to investigation.

6.1 Research/Projects that do not have ethics approval

The School is fully aligned with the University guidelines (link it)

School of Media, Culture and Society Ethics Committee   *Updated Feb 2018*
Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research, Enterprise, Education and the Student Experience
P a g e | 7