

Academic Ethics Policy

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Jo Cresswell	New document with input from QEO, and consultation across the University	V1.0	Academic Ethics Committee: 28/06/2017
Policy Management and Responsibilities:			
Owner:	This Policy is issued by Research & Enterprise who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on academic ethics.		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.		
Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR) Equality Assessment form	1. <i>Completed with HR representative 02/06/2017</i>		
Legal implications (LPG)	2. <i>Draft passed to Legal & Governance, comments incorporated</i>		
Information Governance (LPG)	3. <i>Draft passed to Information Governance, comments incorporated</i>		
Student facing procedures (QEO)	4. <i>Final policy agreed with QEO</i>		
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The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.			

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1 Provide an academic ethics policy which underpins the conduct of the University's academic activities to ensure these activities are conducted to the highest ethical standards.
- 1.2 Set out ethics principles and responsibilities, outline the ethics review policies and procedures that will be employed to ensure the ethical integrity of this work, and act as a signpost to other existing and relevant policies and procedures.
- 1.3 Ensure that academic freedom and endeavour are supported and maintained through proportionate levels of scrutiny in relation to the assessed risk arising as a consequence of the proposed academic activity.

This policy sits under the University's Ethics Framework, Research Code of Practice and the policies contained in the Academic Handbook

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy relates to the academic activities of research, enterprise, consultancy and teaching and learning. It does not apply to non-academic issues concerning business partnerships, procurement or investment. Responsibility for such issues sits with the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee of Council and the University Ethics Framework.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all University staff, students, visiting or emeritus staff, associates, holders of honorary and clinical appointments or contracts, contractors and consultants and others working on or off University premises or carrying out academic activities in the name, or on behalf of, the University of Salford, and across all subject disciplines and fields of study, including instances where the University of Salford is not the lead partner.
- 2.3 This policy applies all staff members or students who undertake academic activities on University premises but not in the name of the University of Salford. These individuals are expected to adhere to the principles, standards and procedures outlined in this policy and related procedures, even if ethics review and approval has been undertaken by their home institution.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 Commitment

As set out in our Charter, *“the objects of the University shall be to advance education and knowledge by teaching and research, and in doing so to foster an academic environment which is enterprising and applied to business and the professions, for the benefit of society at large.”*

The University is committed to fulfilling that purpose only in ways that comply with broad obligations to social responsibility, including the protection of human rights, civil liberties, the natural environment and health and wellbeing, maintaining and promoting the highest standards of integrity rigour, honesty and transparency in its creation,

advancement and dissemination of knowledge and learning, and all related academic activities.

3.2 Principles of a good ethics standard

In addition to the principles and ethical requirements set out in the University's Ethics Framework and Research Code of Practice, the following principles apply to the management of participation in any academic activities undertaken by staff, students and individuals carrying out these activities on University premises, or in the name of the University of Salford (see 2.1). These are summary principles; detailed responsibilities are outlined in named related procedures (see Related Documents section).

This Academic Ethics Policy, and all related policies and procedures, align with both statutory and regulatory requirements, and also with the standards and codes of practice outlined by the professional bodies with whom we work on a general or subject-by-subject basis.

Whilst the University advocates proportionate and appropriate ethics review, there are a number of academic activities where ethics issues will need particular consideration.

- 3.2.1 The University of Salford is committed to safeguarding the interests of staff, students, partners, participants and all others engaged with or affected by its academic activities. All academic activities are considered against the potential risks outlined below in the context of current Health and Safety legislation and the University's Health and Safety policy (see Related Documentation section), and the potential vulnerability of participants. This principle takes into account a wide range of considerations, which must take precedence over academic, or any other factors or interests. These considerations include (but are not restricted to):
- The dignity, interests, rights, safety and well-being of all actual and potential participants, observers and all others involved in the academic activity
 - The welfare and interests of those carrying out the activity
 - The welfare and interests of the University's partners and collaborators and the individuals associated with those organisations
 - Animal welfare
 - Cultural Heritage
 - The natural environment
 - The reputation of the University and the wider academic community.
 - The welfare and interests of the wider community
- 3.2.2 Academic activities should be designed, reviewed and undertaken in adherence to the appropriate standards of quality, integrity, ethical governance, and legal compliance. Where ethics review and approval is required, this must take place before the activity commences.
- 3.2.3 The confidentiality of information supplied by participants, and participants' right to anonymity, must be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's Data Protection Policy. Where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that behaviours or activities which are of

concern, are issues of safeguarding, or are potentially or actually illegal are discovered in the course of a project, may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities.

- 3.2.4 Those responsible for academic activities should plan in advance how potential incidental information relating to the welfare or interests of participants in academic activities, or third parties, are to be handled, in accordance with professional and legislative requirements. This plan should be considered as part of the formal ethics review.
- 3.2.5 All data and other materials from and about participants in academic activities will be collected, managed, processed, retained, stored, and disposed of, in accordance with current legislative requirements and the University Information Governance policies. Particular care must be taken when collecting, handling and storing sensitive, classified and/or personal data. Such data must be kept securely and protected from unauthorised, accidental or malicious access, supported by a clear and documented access control procedure for granting and revoking access to the data. This procedure must be considered as part of the formal ethics review process. All such data should be disposed of appropriately and securely at the end of their lifespan, in line with legal and funder requirements.
- 3.2.6 Where the academic activity involves vulnerable groups (see 3.2.1), care must be taken to safeguard participants' welfare, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks where appropriate. This should not be seen as a barrier to including such groups in the activity.
- 3.2.7 All those engaged with the academic activity must normally be informed fully about the nature, purposes, methods and intended possible uses of the activity, what their participation in the activity entails, and what risks and benefits are involved. This information should be accurate, clear, and easily understood by the potential participant, who should have the ability to understand what is involved in their participation. Academic activities proposing variation from this principle may be approved only in very specific contexts in which the lack of proper information, or the inability of participants to comprehend the information, must be justified by the value of the activity. Evidence of the provision of information and participant acceptance must be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and any other regulatory or funder requirements
- 3.2.8 The University of Salford promotes inclusion of all those who may benefit from its academic activities, however particular consideration will be given to academic activity which involves:
- Human subjects including gathering of data using interviews, questionnaires, observation and testing
 - The use of personal data from living and recently deceased people
 - Vulnerable, or potentially vulnerable groups including, but not restricted to (see also the University's Safeguarding Policy):
 - Children (under 18 years of age)

- People with learning or communication difficulties
 - People for whom English is not their first language and/or people who are unable to understand readily the language used in the academic activity
 - Patients or clinical populations and/or their carers
 - Pregnant women or participants in academic activities relating to conception or contraception;
 - People who are recently bereaved
 - People in custody or any form of detention
 - People engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug-taking)
 - Financial inducements to participation in academic activities
 - The collection of human or animal tissue, or other samples
- 3.2.9 Participants in academic activities must be able to consent to participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion, undue influence, or manipulation. Use of inducements to encourage participation must be considered and approved as part of the formal ethics review process, and be carefully monitored as part of this process.
- 3.2.10 Participants in academic activities should be informed in advance of any controversial or sensitive materials or topics which have the potential to cause offence or distress, and be given the opportunity to opt out or view alternative materials.
- 3.2.11 Any conflicts of interest or partiality must be disclosed in accordance with the University's Management of Conflicts of Interest Policy. Publication of results or other outcomes of academic activities must be done fairly and with the public good taking priority over private interests.
- 3.2.12 The University does not prohibit academic activities involving any country, organisation or sector, however all academic activities should adhere to the University's Ethics Framework.
- 3.2.13 All academic activities which are of a controversial and/or security sensitive nature should follow the University's ICT Acceptable Use Policy and, with completion of a Prohibited Internet Access Form.
- 3.2.14 Ethics review and approval pathways will be determined by the nature of the proposed academic activity regardless of the type of the academic activity or level of study of the students involved. Teaching and learning activities will be reviewed through the Period Programme Review and Revalidation process and the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure.
- 3.2.15 The default position is that written consent is required from participants in academic activities, and/or their appropriate representatives. Where this is not possible, the method by which consent will be obtained, and/or the justification for exception must be reviewed and approved as part of the formal ethics review process.
- 3.2.16 Any academic activities involving the use of human tissue and fluid samples must undergo rigorous internal and external ethics scrutiny and control, and must comply with all statutory legislation and codes of practice including

the [Human Tissue Act \(2004\)](#) and the [Human Fertilization and Embryology Act \(2008\)](#)

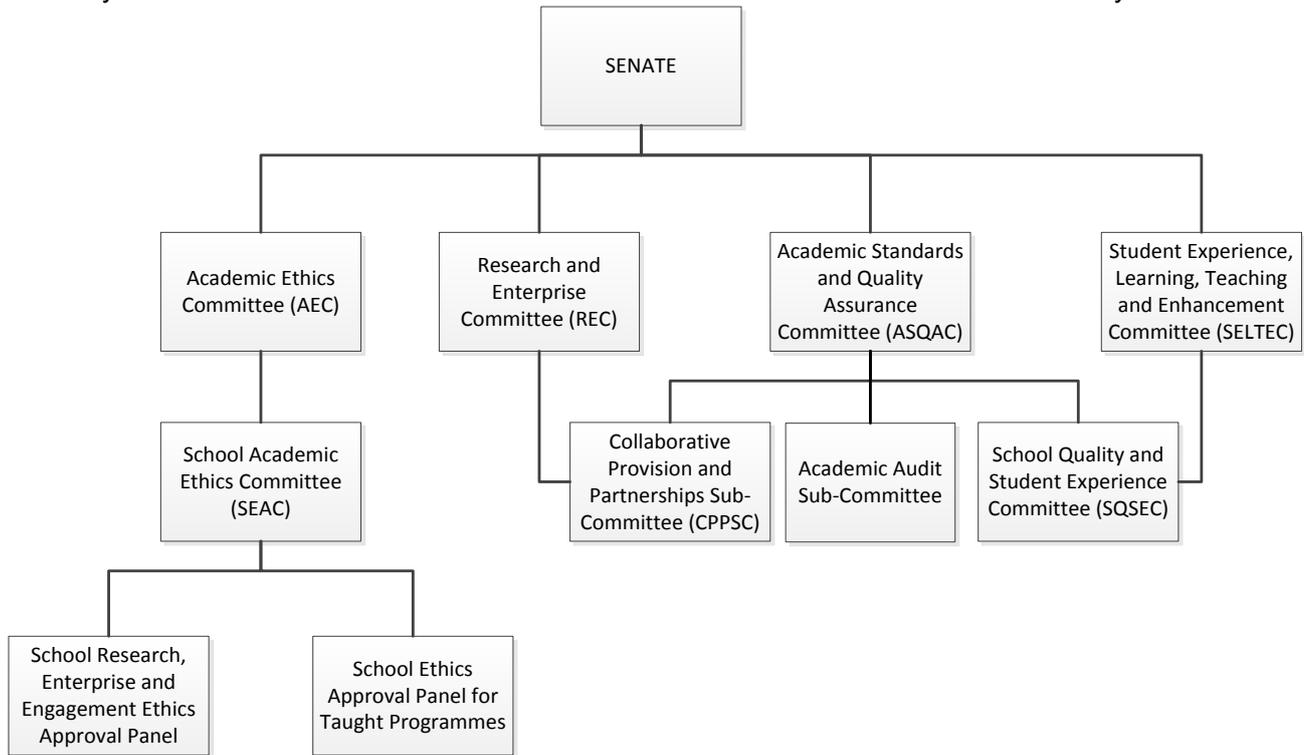
- 3.2.17 The University does not currently permit research or experimentation on live vertebrates and cephalopods on its premises. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure, in the case of research on animals undertaken on behalf of the University either by a third party or in external organisations, that the methods used adhere to the principle of Replacing, Refining and Reducing the use of animals for research purposes, and that all statutory controls and codes of practice are observed by the third party organisation, including the [Animals \(Scientific Procedures\) Act \(1986\)](#).
- 3.2.18 All academic activities involving non-human biological materials sourced from outside the EU must comply with the Nagoya Protocol.
- 3.2.19 Any academic activities which involve public engagement must be subject to ethics review.

3.3 Ethics management

- 3.3.1 All academic activities (see 1.2) which involve the principles outlined in 3.2 should undergo formal ethics review and sign-off (see Related Documents section) and must adhere to the University's Ethics Framework. Individuals are required to determine whether their activities fall within the scope of this Policy, and where this is the case, the activities should be formally reviewed and signed off through the University's governance structures outlined in section 3.4, before the activities take place, and with regard to the degree and risk (including the impact and/or likelihood) of potential harm (see section 3.2). The purpose of ethics review is to ensure that academic activities take place on a sound ethical footing and ensure that the University can defend work carried out in its name and on its premises.
- 3.3.2 Retrospective ethics approval is not permitted.
- 3.3.3 It is essential that the University is aware of all projects with ethical implications being undertaken in its name or on its premises. Where activities require ethics approval by an outside body (e.g. the NHS, the EU, or a partner organisation), it is still necessary for them to be reviewed by the relevant internal panel. This enables any issues of fundamental or specific concern for the University to be identified and addressed before details are submitted for external sign-off. The final outcome of ethics scrutiny by any outside body must be reported back to the relevant School Ethics Panel and/or committee for final ratification.

3.4 University academic ethics governance and approval structures

The management of ethics review and approval processes for academic activities is outlined in the University's Scheme of Academic Governance.



The Purpose and Terms of Reference for each Committee/Panel are provided in the University's Scheme of Academic Governance:

http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf, and can also be found at:

- Academic Ethics Committee:
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/geo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/academic-ethics-committee>
- Research and Enterprise Committee:
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/geo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/research-and-enterprise-committee>
- School Ethics Approval Committee:
http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 30)
- School, Research, Enterprise and Engagement Ethics Approval Panel:
http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 41)
- School Ethics Approval Panel for Taught Programmes:
http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 42)
- Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee:
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/geo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/asqac>
- Academic Audit Sub-Committee:
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/geo/AcademicGovernance/aasc>
- Student Experience, Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee:
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/geo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its->

[committees/student-experience,-learning-teaching-and-enhancement-committee](#)

- Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Sub-Committee:
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/cppsc>
- School Quality and Student Experience Committee:
http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 32)
- More information on ethics approval processes can be found on the University's Ethics and Research Governance website:
http://www.salford.ac.uk/ethics/_nocache

3.5 Roles and Responsibilities

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for academic ethics through delegated authority to the Chair of University Academic Ethics Committee and a designated committee structure.

3.5.1 The University is responsible for:

- Maintaining and managing academic ethics and governance frameworks
- Providing an approved structure for the leadership and management of academic ethics to ensure that the highest standards of ethics are maintained at the University of Salford
- Creating and maintaining an environment where it is safe report any breaches in ethical standard, using accessible processes including the Code of Conduct for Students Whistle Blowing Policy, the Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research, and the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

3.5.2 All staff and students and individuals outlined in section 2.2 are responsible for:

- Demonstrating a personal ethical standard and delivering academic activities in a manner which maintains good ethical behaviour and University culture, in line with the principles outlined in section 3.2
- Following the appropriate University procedure for obtaining ethics guidance and approval to proceed
- Recognising that that ethics approval can take time, especially for highly sensitive activity and ensuring that in their work planning they allow sufficient time to obtain ethics approval before commencing the proposed activity
- Reporting any potential breach in ethics standards to their Associate Dean Academic (or nominee) or their School Research Governance Officer as outlined in the Research Code of Practice, the Academic Misconduct Procedure and the Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research.

3.5.3 Supervisors of postgraduate research students are responsible for:

- Providing guidance and assistance to ensure ethical design, conduct and dissemination of their students' research
- Providing sign-off to students' applications to ethics committees

3.5.4 Supervisors of undergraduate and taught postgraduate students are responsible for:

- Providing appropriate ethical guidance and taking all reasonable precautions in ensuring that students' academic activities are conducted ethically
- Taking the role of Principal Investigator in any research, with the student acting as Co-Investigator
- Providing sign-off to students' applications to ethics committees

3.5.5 Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students are responsible for:

- Complying with module-level ethics approval requirements and seeking further ethics approval if proposed activities change
- Prompt reporting to their supervisor or module leader of any problems they have complying with ethics approval requirements
- Where relevant and appropriate, maintaining records of ethics related information

3.5.6 Undergraduate and postgraduate taught Module Leaders are responsible for:

- Obtaining module-level ethics approval for modules where there are, or may be, ethics issues and where students are working to prescribed guidance regarding the project aims and implementation.

3.5.7 Undergraduate and postgraduate taught Programme Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their programmes, aims, learning outcomes and delivery are aligned with the University's expectations around ethics
- Upholding all appropriate policies and regulations which apply to their students/programmes

3.6 Policy Enforcement

Breach of this policy in terms of either the general ethics standard or specific process will be considered as having the potential to bring the University and its employees into disrepute and managed in that context. Specific processes will be brought to bear in this context, including the Academic Misconduct Procedure, the Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research and the University's Disciplinary Policy.

3.7 Policy Promotion and Training

The University is responsible for providing support for those in key leadership roles within the governance structure for ethics, including committee and panel members, ensuring that they have access to the necessary knowledge and skills training in order to perform their role effectively. It also takes the lead on bringing this policy to the attention of all those to whom it applies, and ensures that there are adequate provisions made for providing training and development for staff and students in the principles and application of ethics policy to enable staff and students to understand what is expected of them.

The Research and Enterprise Division will be responsible for staff and PGR student inductions in relation to ethics and the promotion of academic ethics policy and related training materials.

The Human Resources (Development) Section is responsible for the delivery of online training materials.

4.0 Related Documentation

The following related documents can be found on the University Policy & Procedure pages <http://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance/policies-and-procedures> or under 'P' via the Staff Channel A-Z index, or where otherwise indicated.

Academic Ethics Website	http://www.salford.ac.uk/ethics
Academic Governance, Senate and Committees website	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance
Academic Handbook	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/Roles
Academic Misconduct Procedure	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/653648/AcademicMisconductProcedure.pdf
Code of Conduct for Students	Link to be added once finalised
Data Protection Policy	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/316733/DataProtectionPolicyV2.0.pdf
Disciplinary Policy	http://www.salford.ac.uk/hr/workplace-conduct
Health and Safety Policy	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/567333/Health-and-Safety-Pol-V8.1.pdf
Information Governance website	http://www.infogov.salford.ac.uk/
Management of Conflicts of Interest Policy	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/675146/ManagementOfConflictsOfInterestsPolicy.pdf
Periodic Programme Review and Revalidation	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/909586/ProgrammeDevelopmentReviewProceduresGuidance.pdf
Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research	Link to be added once finalised
Programme Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/PDRR
Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/PMEP
Quality Enhancement Office	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo
Prohibited Internet Access Form	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0020/1175051/ProhibitedInternetAccessFormV2.1.docx
Research Code of Practice	Link to be added once finalised
Safeguarding Policy	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/473192/Safe

	guardingPolicy.pdf
Scheme of Academic Governance	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf
University Ethics Framework	Link to be added once finalised
Whistle Blowing Policy	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/487989/WhistleBlowingPolicy.pdf

Terms of Reference:

Academic Audit Sub-Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/AASC-TOR.docx
Academic Ethics Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/academic-ethics-committee
Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQAC)	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/asqac
Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Sub-Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/CPASC-ToR.docx
Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee	http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/page/nomination_trm
Research and Enterprise Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/research-and-enterprise-committee
School Ethics Approval Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 30)
School Ethics Approval Panel for Taught Programmes	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 42)
School Quality and Student Experience Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 32)
School Research, Enterprise and Engagement Ethics Approval Panel	http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/707186/Scheme-of-Academic-Governance.pdf (page 41)
Student Experience, Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee	http://www.salford.ac.uk/qeo/AcademicGovernance/senate-and-its-committees/student-experience,-learning-teaching-and-enhancement-committee

Related external legislation, policies and information:

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals
Data Protection Act (1998)	https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act
Disclosure and Barring Service	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service
Health and Safety at Work etc Act (1974)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (2008)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/22/contents
Human Tissue Act (2004)	https://www.hta.gov.uk/policies/human-tissue-act-2004
Nagoya Protocol	https://www.cbd.int/abs/about/

5.0 Appendices – No appendices