UCQ UNIVERSITY CENTRE QUAYSIDE

Ethics Policy

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1. Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out the principles, processes, and governance arrangements for the ethical review and conduct of research undertaken under the auspices of University Centre Quayside (UCQ).

1.2 UCQ is committed to ensuring that all research is conducted to high ethical standards, protects the rights and wellbeing of participants, and complies with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all research conducted under the auspices of UCQ, including research undertaken by staff and students.

2.2 All student research forming part of assessed programmes must undergo formal ethical review as part of the research proposal process.

2.3 Staff research must also be subject to ethical consideration and, where appropriate, formal ethical review. The level of review will be proportionate to the nature and risk of the research.

2.4 All research activities must receive ethical approval prior to commencement. Staff research proposals must be submitted using the Staff Research Ethics Form and may, where appropriate, be approved through Chair's Action.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 All research conducted under UCQ must comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including data protection legislation and safeguarding obligations.

3.2 UCQ adopts the principles set out in the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2024) by the British Educational Research Association (BERA).

3.3 In accordance with these principles, all research must:

- respect the dignity, rights, privacy, and autonomy of participants
- be conducted with integrity and transparency
- minimise risk and harm and maximise potential benefit
- ensure informed consent and the right to withdraw
- maintain appropriate standards of data protection and confidentiality

3.4 Researchers are responsible for demonstrating how these principles have been applied within their research proposals.

4. Governance and Responsibilities

4.1 Ethics Panel

4.1.1 UCQ will maintain an Ethics Panel responsible for the review and approval of research ethics applications.

4.1.2 The Ethics Panel will:

- review and determine ethical approval of research proposals
- assess the level of ethical risk and determine the appropriate level of review
- approve, conditionally approve, or reject applications
- provide advice on ethical issues arising in research and teaching
- promote ethical awareness and good practice across UCQ

4.1.3 The Ethics Panel will report to the HE Academic Board (or equivalent governance body).

4.1.4 The Panel will comprise appropriately qualified staff and may include independent or external members where appropriate to ensure objectivity.

4.2 Researchers

4.2.1 Researchers are responsible for:

- ensuring their research complies with this policy
- submitting applications for ethical review where required
- conducting research in accordance with approved protocols
- reporting any changes, issues, or adverse events to the Ethics Panel

4.3 Supervisors (Student Research)

4.3.1 Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring students understand ethical requirements
- supporting students in preparing ethical applications
- confirming that appropriate ethical review has been undertaken

5. Ethical Review Process

5.1 All research proposals must be submitted for ethical review via assignments@ucq.ac.uk

5.2 The level of review will be proportionate to the level of risk:

- low-risk research may be subject to expedited review
- higher-risk research will require full Ethics Panel review

5.3 The ethical review process includes:

- submission of an ethics application
- initial screening and risk assessment
- proportionate review
- decision and communication of outcome

5.4 Process flow

Applicant submits research proposal and ethics application to assignments@ucq.ac.uk
↓
Initial screening and risk assessment conducted
↓
Proportionate ethical review undertaken (expedited or full panel)
↓
Outcome issued (approval, conditional approval, revisions required, or rejection)
↓
Applicant completes any required actions or revisions
↓
Ethical approval confirmed
↓
Research may commence

6. Outcomes of Ethical Review

6.1 The outcome of ethical review will be one of the following:

- approval
- approval subject to conditions
- request for further information or revisions
- rejection with invitation to resubmit

6.2 Where approval is granted subject to conditions, research may only proceed once those conditions have been met and confirmed.

7. Ongoing Ethical Responsibility

7.1 Researchers must notify the Ethics Panel of:

- any significant changes to the approved research
- any ethical concerns or adverse events arising during the research

7.2 UCQ reserves the right to suspend or withdraw ethical approval where concerns arise.

8. Records and Data Retention

8.1 Records of ethical review decisions will be maintained in accordance with the UCQ Data Retention Schedule.

9. Appeals

9.1 Researchers may appeal decisions of the Ethics Panel. Appeals must be submitted in accordance with AC-001 Appeals Procedure.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 UCQ will monitor the implementation of this policy and promote continuous improvement in ethical research practice.

10.2 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required.

11. Document history

ISSUE NO.	DATE	PAGE	REVIEWER	DETAIL OF AMENDMENT
7	22/05/2026	All	Tara Henderson	The policy has been fully revised to strengthen governance and oversight of research ethics, introduce a proportionate risk-based review process, and ensure alignment with current UK higher education best practice and ethical standards.

12. Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

Department: Higher Education	**Completed by:** Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance	**Date of initial assessment:** 06/05/2026
Area to be assessed:	TLA-018 Ethics Policy	
Existing or new policy/procedure:	Existing (fully revised)	
What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)		
External guidance and requirements: ➢ Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2024) by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) **Internal guidance and requirements:** ➢ Consultation with the Ethics Panel ➢ UCQ Data Protection Policy ➢ UCQ Academic Governance Framework		

1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure		This policy sets out the principles, processes, and governance arrangements for the ethical review and conduct of research undertaken under the auspices of University Centre Quayside (UCQ). It applies to all research conducted by staff and students, with mandatory ethical review for student research and proportionate, risk-based review for staff research. The policy ensures that all research involving human participants, personal data, or sensitive topics is subject to appropriate ethical scrutiny prior to commencement, and that research is conducted in accordance with legal, regulatory, and sector-recognised ethical standards.		
2. Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?		All HE stakeholders		
The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:- (1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization (2) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and (3) Foster good relations between different groups		**3. Could the policy/procedure have a disproportionately negative effect impact in terms of the aims set out in (1) to (3) of the Act on any of the protected characteristics?:-** **High** **Medium** **Low** **No effect**	**4. Briefly explain how the policy/procedure furthers or prevents the aims set out in (1) to (3).**	**5. If there is a disproportionately negative impact on any protected characteristics, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality or any other reason? If yes, please explain.**
Protected characteristics	**Age**	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Disability	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender reassignment	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Pregnancy and Maternity	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

	Race	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Religion or Belief	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Sexual Orientation	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

6. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?		Not applicable as no PC impact identified
7. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any?		None required
8. Based on the information in sections 1 to 7, should this policy/procedure proceed to Full Impact Assessment? (recommended if one or more 'High' under section 2)		No
Assessor signature:	**Approved by:** **Michelle Elliott**	**Date approved:** 06/05/2026