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| Code of Practice for Research |
| **June 2025** |

**Code of Practice for Research**

Contents

[Summary and Purpose 3](#_Toc194497106)

[Code of Practice for Research 3](#_Toc194497107)

[1. Introduction 3](#_Toc194497108)

[2. Key principles 4](#_Toc194497109)

[4. Leadership and supervision 6](#_Toc194497110)

[4.1 Student supervision 6](#_Toc194497111)

[5. Training and mentoring 7](#_Toc194497112)

[5.1 Student researchers 8](#_Toc194497113)

[6. Research design 8](#_Toc194497114)

[7. Securing external funding for research 9](#_Toc194497115)

[8. Pursuing or accepting resources from funders 10](#_Toc194497116)

[9. Collaborative working and international research 11](#_Toc194497117)

[10. Conflicts of Interest 11](#_Toc194497118)

[11. Ethical Scrutiny 13](#_Toc194497119)

[11.1 Research Ethics Committees 13](#_Toc194497120)

[11.2 Research using animals 14](#_Toc194497121)

[12. Insurance and indemnity 14](#_Toc194497122)

[12.1 Insurance 15](#_Toc194497123)

[12.2 Indemnity 15](#_Toc194497124)

[12.3 HRA applications (insurance and indemnity) 15](#_Toc194497125)

[13. Open research 16](#_Toc194497126)

[14. Monitoring and audit 16](#_Toc194497128)

[15. Peer review 17](#_Toc194497129)

[15.1 Peer review for external funding bodies or other research organisations 18](#_Toc194497130)

[15.2 Internal peer review 18](#_Toc194497131)

[16. Publication and authorship 18](#_Toc194497132)

[16.1 Further information 20](#_Toc194497133)

[17. Research misconduct 20](#_Toc194497134)

[17.1 UKRIO researcher checklist 20](#_Toc194497135)

[Key to Relevant Documents 21](#_Toc194497136)

[Endmatter 21](#_Toc194497137)

# Summary and Purpose

Research integrity and good conduct are crucial aspects of research at Edge Hill University and a core part of a sustainable research culture. This Code of Practice (the Code) sets out the guiding principles and standards of good practice in research across all subject disciplines and fields of study in the University. The Code applies to all those undertaking research on the University’s premises using its facilities, or on behalf of, or under the auspices of the University. This includes staff, students, visiting or emeritus staff, associates, honorary or clinical contract holders, contractors and consultants. The Code may, where it would otherwise be in scope, be disapplied in whole or in part in advance by the Director of Research or the Director of Knowledge Exchange for those using the university facilities but not taking part in research for or under the auspices of the University, e.g. where a private external researcher with suitable governance arrangements in place hires University facilities. The Code requires that all researchers adhere to the highest standards of performance and ethical conduct. This code also contains (or provides links to) further guidance, policies and procedures issued by the University and by external bodies. If there are any queries in relation to the code’s contents, please contact the Research Office (RO) at [Research@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:Research@edgehill.ac.uk) for assistance.

# Code of Practice for Research

## Introduction

Edge Hill University recognises its responsibility towards both researchers and the wider community to ensure that the highest standards of integrity and professionalism are met in the conduct of research in which it is involved. For the purposes of the Code ‘research’ refers to the definition used by the 2021 [Research Excellence Framework](https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/):

”…. a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.”

The Code is informed by a number of key guidance documents, including:

* UK Research Integrity Office’s [Code of Practice for Research](https://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Code-of-Practice-for-Research.pdf), June 2023

UKRI Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct; updated February 2021[European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf](https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf) The Code will be updated to reflect updates to sector-wide guidance, the requirements of research regulatory and funding bodies and any other regulatory or legislative requirements.

Failure to comply with the Code or any actions that may be deemed to constitute research misconduct, under the University’s Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct, may be grounds for instigating disciplinary proceedings.

**You are encouraged to use the** [**UK Research Integrity Office’s checklist for researchers**](http://ukrio.org/publications/checklist-for-researchers/) **before beginning any research project.**

## Key principles

The [UK Research Integrity Office identifies a number of key principles](https://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/2-0-principles/) which should guide the design, conduct and management of the research process. These principles are intended to encourage you to consider the consequences of your work and to engage critically and actively with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges that are inherent in the conduct of high quality research.

Edge Hill University requires all of its researchers, research managers and supervisors to review and follow the key principles set out below in all of their research activities. In doing so you should take responsibility for all aspects of your own research, use your own judgement, refer to institutional and external guidance, and consult with colleagues.

These key principles are:

* **Excellence:** the University and its researchers strive for excellence when conducting research and aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality.
* **Honesty:** the University seeks to create and maintain a research culture that fosters and supports honesty in all aspects of research. You should be honest in relation to your own research and that of others. You should do your utmost to ensure the accuracy of data and results, acknowledge the contributions of others, and neither engage in misconduct nor conceal it.
* **Integrity:** the University and its researchers must comply with all legal and ethical requirements relevant to their field of study. They should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to research and where necessary take steps to resolve them.
* **Co-operation:** the University and its researchers should promote the open exchange of ideas, research methods, data and results and their discussion, scrutiny and debate, subject to any considerations of confidentiality.
* **Accountability:** the University and its researchers recognise that in and through their work they are accountable to the general public and should act accordingly. Both the University and its researchers must ensure that any research undertaken complies with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project, and provide proper governance and transparency. You should follow the requirements and guidance of any professional bodies in your field of research. If you are a member of a regulated profession, you must follow the requirements and guidance of the body regulating your profession.
* **Building capacity:** the University is committed to the provision of training and opportunities for development for its researchers, and to providing the resources required for them to conduct research to the required standards. You should ensure that you have the necessary skills, training and resources to carry out research within your proposed research team or though collaboration with specialists in relevant fields. You should always report and resolve any unmet training and development needs identified before commencing research. You are encouraged to review the University’s Researcher Development Programme (RDP) programme, enrolling for RDP sessions as required.
* **Safety:** the University and its researchers must always ensure the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all involved in research and avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects, patients, participants, researchers and others. You should report and address any concerns relating to the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of those involved in research. Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

In addition to the principles identified above, the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](file:///C:/Users/williamg/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/7EKHW2C8/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf) identifies two further principles which should guide researchers in their work as well as in their engagement with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges inherent in research. These are as follows:

* **Reliability:** the University and its researchers should ensure the quality of their research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources.
* **Respect:** the University and its researchers should show respect for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.

1. **Commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity**

The University adheres to the commitments set out within The Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Researchers (the Commitments) and should consider the Commitments when implementing and complying with the standards and guidance contained in the Code, these are summarised below.

1. Maintaining the highest standards:

We are committed to upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all

aspects of research.

2. Ethical, legal and other frameworks:

We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate

ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

3. Research culture:

We are committed to supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a

culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the

development of researchers.

4. Dealing with research misconduct:

We are committed to using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with

allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

5. Strengthening research integrity:

We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to

reviewing progress regularly and openly.

## Leadership and supervision

Through the Code the University seeks to promote and maintain an environment which fosters and supports research of the highest ethical standards, mutual co-operation, professionalism and the open and honest exchange of ideas. The University shall regularly reflect on its research environment using the UK RIO’s Self Assessment Tool: [UKRIO-Self-Assessment-Tool-for-The-Concordat-to-Support-Research-Integrity-V2.pdf](https://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Self-Assessment-Tool-for-The-Concordat-to-Support-Research-Integrity-V2.pdf).

Through the Code, the University provides direction to you in meeting the legal and ethical requirements of conducting research. The University supports supervisors, managers and researchers in doing so, via the suite of research governance documents available [through the University's website,](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/collection/research/research-governance/) briefings to line managers and research staff and through one-to-one guidance and the regular consideration of training needs. The University also provides external training for researchers and research supervisors where this is appropriate.

If you are involved in the supervision and development of other researchers, you should ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities, as set out in the Code, the terms of funding and ethical approvals and their contracts of employment. They should ensure that they have the necessary training, time and resources to carry out their role, and request support if required.

The University is committed to fostering a culture in which good conduct in research is promoted and inappropriate conduct is identified and addressed. For further details, please see the University’s [Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/whistle-blowing-policy/) and [Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/code-of-practice-for-the-investigation-of-research-misconduct/)

The University supports the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.](https://researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk/) As part of this support the University has developed a programme of training and briefing sessions, delivered through the [Researcher Development Programme](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/HumanResources/SitePages/Researcher-Development-Programme.aspx). Managers and principal investigators are required to ensure that team members are aware of the opportunities that are open to them and facilitate their attendance at professional development sessions where beneficial.

### Student supervision

The above principles should also apply to the supervision of research degree students (MRes, PhD and professional doctorate). If you itend to supervise research degree students you must attend the research degree supervisor development programme run by your department or faculty. If you are a new member of staff or have not supervised a research degree student at the University before, you must also attend the central research degree supervisor induction session for staff new to research degree supervision generally. Both research degree supervisor induction sessions are run annually, early in each new academic year. The Graduate School may repeat the induction sessions at other times of the year according to demand, so if you are in need of induction you should email [graduateschool@edgehill.ac.uk](file:///C:/Users/williamg/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/7EKHW2C8/graduateschool@edgehill.ac.uk). For information on the research degree supervisor development programme in your department or faculty, you should contact the Graduate School PGR Contact for your academic unit. A list of those is available on the [Home - Graduate School - Edge Hill University Wiki](https://wiki.edgehill.ac.uk/display/gs).

All research degree supervision within the University must conform to the [Research Degree Regulations](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-degree-regulations/).

You must observe the responsibilities described in the Quality Assurance of Research Degrees [Key Guidance Documents](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/agqa/SitePages/Key-Guidance-Documents.aspx) (Chapter 9)).

You must decline appointment to a supervisory team unless you expect to be able to discharge the responsibilities outlined in the Research Degree Handbook and the Research Degree Supervisor Code of Conduct.

The Graduate School seeks to establish that supervisors have the necessary knowledge and expertise to supervise a project, that the project is appropriate for the degree sought, that the necessary resources are available, that the projected timescale is appropriate, and that, as far as can be determined at the outset, the student has the capacity to undertake the project successfully. The Graduate School does this in consultation with prospective supervisors, academic staff acting as examiners, and the relevant Head of Department, Director of the Research Office or Pro Vice Chancellor. When advising the Graduate School on these matters you must satisfy yourself that any advice you give is accurate.

## Training and mentoring

The University’s commitment to the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](https://researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk/) includes principles related to training and professional development. [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/) states that research institutions and organisations should ensure that researchers receive rigorous training in research design, methodology and analysis. The University offers a wide range of training and mentoring for researchers and students to assist in their career development and to develop and maintain their knowledge and skills. You should identify needs for training when they arise and report them to your manager or another appropriate person as identified by your department. The national [Researcher Development Framework](https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework) is a useful tool for identifying training requirements and you are encouraged to assess your own development needs through it.

For staff, central research training is primarily delivered through the University’s Researcher Development Programme (RDP). The RDP has been informed by the national benchmark of the Researcher Development Framework. Details of the RDP and instructions on how to book on to RDP sessions are available on the [Researcher Development Framework](https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework) pages. All research degree students are required to attend core training provided by the Graduate School. In addition, there are faculty level development programmes that are open to staff and research degree students.

All staff and students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development as researchers. In assessing their strengths, weaknesses and development needs the University encourages staff and students to make use of the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and companion resources developed by [Vitae](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/), the UK organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. These include:

* The Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and the various ‘lenses’ currently being developed (e.g. RDF tailored for research leader)
* Departmental Learning Skills Needs Analysis processes
* Staff are also encouraged to engage as appropriate to their needs with the University’s Centre for Learning and Teaching.

The University is committed to the mentoring of staff in order to support and accelerate their development as researchers. The University has a centrally administered mentoring programme managed by Human Resources and departments provide mentors for researchers where need is identified. As part of their induction, early career researchers should be assigned an academic mentor on arrival in post who will assist them with research planning or direct them to a senior researcher with appropriate skills and experience. Senior researchers, research leaders and supervisors should mentor their team members and offer specific guidance and training to properly develop, design and structure their research activity and to foster a culture of research integrity.

All new research supervisors must attend the training in research supervision organised by the Graduate School and the researcher’s faculty and/or department.

### Student researchers

As with staff, all students conducting research at the University must comply with all applicable University regulations and policies including this Code. Support for student researchers will be provided in accordance with the Code. All student research must be subject to appropriate peer review and ethical scrutiny. You should consult with your supervisor and/or the Graduate School (if you are a research degree student) prior to conducting any research. All research undertaken by students on taught programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) at Edge Hill must be done under the supervision of the appropriate member of staff.

## Research design

Research design is the foundation of high quality research. Identifying appropriate research questions and research objectives, and then putting in place a research programme that can address those questions and that can be achieved in light of all constraints, is vital. A sound approach to research design enables you to identify the requirements of the research process (for example, time, sequencing of tasks, funding, access to data, sampling, ethical approvals, data management processes). It also enables you to identify risks and put in place adequate steps to manage risk. When designing research projects, you should ensure that:

* The proposed research addresses pertinent question(s) and is designed either to add to existing knowledge about the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it; context dependent concepts like repeatability, reproducibility, replicability, trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity and meta-research are of equal importance to establish quality;
* The design of the study is appropriate for the question(s) being asked and addresses the most important potential sources of bias and criticism;
* The design and conduct of the study, including how data will be made, gathered, analysed and managed, are set out in detail in a pre-specified research plan or where required a protocol submitted to an appropriate registry. Open research practices are encouraged – see further detail at section 13;
* All necessary skills and experience will be available to carry out the proposed research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields;
* Sufficient resources will be available to carry out the proposed research and that these resources will meet the relevant standards;
* The challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI)-generated content for intellectual property rights and other research integrity concerns that have potential for harm across all disciplines and wider society are recognised and arrangements put in place to effectively regulate the use of technology. The arrangements shall define who is responsible and accountable for the use of generative AI in the proposed research;
* Agreements are in place to give appropriate acknowledgment for the intellectual and or technical coontributions to the research output (see  [Intellectual Property Policy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/intellectual-property-policy/)).

Any issues relating to the above are resolved as far as possible prior to the start of the research.

It may also be appropriate to undertake a risk assessment of the planned study (and maintain this througout the period of the research project) to determine:

* Whether there are any ethical issues and whether ethics review is required;
* The potential for risks to the University, the research or the health, safety or well-being of researchers or research participants;
* Which legal requirements govern the research.
* Whether the research poses any Trusted Research or research security risks (see below).
* The risks identified should be communicated to the relevant staff.

Where the design has been approved by ethics, regulatory or peer review, you should ensure that any subsequent alterations to the design are subject to appropriate review to determine that they will not compromise the integrity of the research or any terms of consent previously given.

Where appropriate, a study should be registered with an appropriate body to align with transparency and openness of the research. For example, a researcher could use preregistered reports so that the background, study design, methods, and analysis plan are peer reviewed before research begins (if appropriate for their research discipline).

You should seek to anticipate any risks that your proposed research might produce results that could be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful, including dual use research of concern. You should report any risks to, and seek guidance from, your head of department in the first instance and take action to manage and minimise those risks.This will include your consideration of Trusted Research issues, see: <https://www.npsa.gov.uk/security-campaigns/trusted-research> and seek guidance from the Research Office where appropriate.

You should be prepared to make your research designs available to peer reviewers (internal and external) and journal editors when submitting research reports for publication.

## Securing external funding for research

The University supports and encourages you to seek external funding for your research activities and accepts funding for research from a wide and diverse portfolio of legal sources, in accordance with University financial regulations and ethical scrutiny framework.

Any contract, or offer to contract (including the submission of research proposals) should only be entered into with the explicit institutional approval via the Research Office. This approval must be sought in good time, ensuring that there is time for bids and proposed contracts to be reviewed. Institutional approval is required in order to:

* Establish a track record of the volume and value of external funding bids submitted;
* Ensure that there is an opportunity to check contract documents (for example to identify any liabilities that the University may be assuming, ensuring that there will be adequate risk management, insurance and indemnity);
* Provide an opportunity to check and confirm that bids have been costed accurately;
* Provide an opportunity for quality assurance and improvement.

Before you submit an application for external funding or offer to undertake consultancy services, you must secure approval through Pure. Guidance on how to do this is available: [Applying for external funding](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Funding/Ext/Apply.aspx). The University may use an internal academic peer review process as part of institutional approval (details of which can be found on our [SharePoint](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Funding/Ext/Peer_review.aspx)).

## Pursuing or accepting resources from funders

There may be circumstances in which ethical issues arise when considering whether or not to apply for or accept funding for research from particular sources. **It is important that the interests of all staff and the interests and the reputation of the University as a whole are safeguarded when seeking and accepting external funding.**

While it is outside the scope of the Code to provide an exhaustive list of specific examples of what may or may not be acceptable sources of funding, circumstances where the following may occur would cause concern and further advice should be sought from the University’s Research Office, in the first instance:

* Where a third party is involved and the original source of the funding is unknown or cannot be identified;
* Where a funding organisation wishes to place inappropriate restrictions on publication and exploitation of research which may lead to substantial ethical difficulties;
* Where a funding organisation is attempting to exert pressure to suppress or alter the results of the research which do not further, or may damage, its interests, commercial or otherwise;
* Where a member of staff may have an interest in a funding organisation;
* Where accepting funds from one source may compromise the ability of the University to apply for or accept funds from another source;
* Where the practices of a potential sponsor or their motives in commissioning the research may conflict with the mission, aims and objectives of the University;
* Where the ethical and political implications of undertaking research or accepting research funding from a particular source could result in negative publicity and/or may seriously damage the reputation of the University;
* Where the conduct of research may harm or place at undue risk members of the public, participants or staff;
* Further advice and guidance on any ethical considerations relating to the application for or acceptance of external funding for research activities should be referred to the Director of the Research Office in the first instance, who may also seek advice from the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and the University Research Ethics Sub-committee (URESC).

## Collaborative working and international research

All partners in research collaborations should take responsibility for the integrity of the research.

The University and its researchers must pay particular attention to research projects which include participants from different countries or where work will be carried out in another country. There may be additional legal and ethical requirements and other international or local guidelines that apply in such circumstances. Refer to the Cape Town Statement (Reference 3 in the UK RIO Code of Pactice -see 16.1 below) on how to foster equitable research partnerships.When conducting or collaborating in research in other countries, the University and its researchers based in the UK should comply with the legal and ethical requirements both in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted. They should have clarity over who has competency in overseeing research outside the UK as UK RECs are advised to avoid reviewing research projects which already have ethical approval from a REC in another country whose review process is similar to the standards expected in the UK.

Similarly, organisations and researchers based in other countries who participate in the Univesity’s UK-hosted research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements in the UK as well as those of their own country.

The University and its researchers will work with partner organisations to ensure the agreement of, and compliance with, common standards and procedures for the conduct of collaborative research, including detailing arrangements to ensure the resolution of any issues or problems that might arise and the investigation of any allegations of misconduct in research should they occur.

You need to be aware of the standards and procedures for the conduct of research followed by any organisation involved in collaborative research that you are undertaking. You should also be aware of any contractual requirements involving partner organisations, seeking guidance and assistance where necessary and reporting any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as you become aware of them.

You should try to anticipate any issues that might arise as a result of working collaboratively and agree jointly in advance how they might be addressed, communicating any decisions to all members of the research team.

In particular, you are advised to contact the Research Office as early as possible, so that an appropriate agreement can be put in place which clearly outlines the specific roles of the researchers involved in the project and on issues relating to intellectual property, trusted research, open access, publication, and the attribution of authorship, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research.

## Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest can negatively affect research and risks compromising the validity or integrity of the research, your reputation, your research group(s), department, research centre, and the University. Conflicts of interest must be identified, disclosed and addressed to avoid poor research practice or potential research misconduct.

You should disclose and justify potential or real conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest may arise at the outset of the planned research or at later point, so there is a need for ongoing vigilance. Conflicts of interest might be personal or organisational (e.g. related to the University or its affiliates) and may be legal, ethical, moral, financial, personal, academic or of another nature. Any such conflict, which could affect, or be perceived to affect, your judgement in any aspect of undertaking your research, must be disclosed as soon as it is recognised and necessary steps taken to ensure it is recorded, and either avoided or appropriately managed.

Actual or perceived conflict of interests may arise in the following ways (the list is not exhaustive):

* A financial interest held by an individual (or by their immediate relative(s) or household member(s)) in an external enterprise engaged in activities closely related to that individual's line of research in the University. Examples of such interests are paid consultancies, paid service on a board of directors or advisory board, or equity holdings in or royalty income from the enterprise. The existence of such an interest does not necessarily imply conflict, but is likely to give an appearance of conflict, and should be declared (see below).
* A personal involvement in any company or commercial enterprise which is in a contractual relationship with the University, or which is in the process of negotiating a contract with the University, where the employee has been concerned or connected with placing or negotiating the contract in question or with the research or other activity which the contract might cover.
* attempts to restrict rights governing the timing and content of publications, except in circumstances properly approved by the University to protect privacy, commercially sensitive proprietary information, and patentable inventions.
* Use of the University's research or administrative facilities to pursue personal, business, commercial, or consulting activities.
* Involvement in externally funded activity which might infringe the right of a student engaged in the activity to complete the degree for which they are registered, and/or to publish freely their findings
* Application by family members or friends for employment in the University or in a related company, where an individual is in a position to influence the appointing process.
* Receipt of gifts or hospitality by an individual (or by their immediate relative(s) or household member(s) from a company or organisation offering goods or services to the University.

Any perceived conflict of interest must be disclosed to the appropriate head of department who will determine what further action should be taken. That action may involve consultation with the University’s Research Office, a funding body, journal editors, publishers, or other parties to ensure that the conflict of interest does not compromise the research, or the University’s interests. Senior University staff should be aware of potential or actual cpompeting interests at the organisational level and disclose them when they arise so they may be suitably addressed, e.g. by recusing themsleves from committees, investigations, and other duties when there are potential conflicts of interest. You must abide by any direction given by the University or any relevant ethics committee in relation to a conflict of interest.

There may be external regualtion of conflicts of interests, e.g. funders of research may have separate requirements in terms of conflicts; these are to be observed in addition to the above requirements

## Ethical Scrutiny

Edge Hill University is committed to advancing and safeguarding the highest academic and ethical standards in all its research activities. The University Research Ethics Sub-committee (URESC) was established formally on 1 October 2011 to govern ethical policy and to provide a clear research governance framework across the University. Details of the remit, constitution and membership of URESC are identified in the [standard operating procedures for ethical approval](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-ethics-policy/) (Research Ethics Policy Appendix 1). You must follow the appropriate procedures to ensure that your research project undergoes ethical scrutiny. Failure to secure appropriate ethical approval will result in the material been removed from the reporting of research findings. Repeated failures to secure ethical approval, a wanton disregard for the ethical approval process and/or carrying out research when ethical approval has been denied may constitute research misconduct which will be addressed via the [Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/code-of-practice-for-the-investigation-of-research-misconduct/)

### Research Ethics Committees

The [Research Ethics Policy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/research-ethics-policy/)  is the governing document for ethical research and research practice at Edge Hill University. All academic staff, support staff with research roles and students involved in research practice should ensure they are aware of its contents and incorporate the values, principles and obligations set out by the policy into their practice.

Protocols are extensions of the Research Ethics Policy: all academic staff, support staff with research roles and students involved in research practice are required to be aware of their contents and incorporate them into relevant practice. Where advice is offered, it is offered to enrich the practice of staff and students in their own deliberations.

The Edge Hill [Research ethics](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Ethics/About.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=t2YWdZ) SharePoint resources contain details on how to apply for ethical approval. You may also need to seek approval from an external research ethics committee (for example, from an NHS research ethics committee where research involves healthcare patients as subjects).

Ethical approval only covers the original study for which approval was sought (unless advised otherwise by the ethics committee issuing the approval). Any amendments to the study (e.g. extensions or changed use of samples or data from a study already completed) must be authorised by the ethics committee which granted your original approval.

The [Research Ethics Policy - Edge Hill University](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/research-ethics-policy/) also provides further information on the following:

* Human participants, materials and data
* Human tissue (additional guidance is provided here: [Human tissue](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Governance/Human_tissue.aspx)) Genetic resources and traditional knowledge (additional guidance is available: [Nagoya Protocol](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Governance/Nagoya.aspx))
* Working with sensitive material (the specific policy is also available: [Policy on researching and handling materials or topics of a sensitive nature - Edge Hill University](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/policy-on-researching-and-handling-sensitive-material/))

### Research using animals

At present, no research using animals takes place at Edge Hill University.[[1]](#footnote-1) Should these circumstances change, the laws, rules and guidelines below must be adhered to.

In the UK, research and teaching activities involving animals considered to be sentient are governed by a range of legislation, including the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. All members of the University carrying out procedures regulated under the Act must, by law, have had prior training, relevant experience, and authority from the Home Office. All projects affecting such animals are subject to formal ethical review within the University.

You must consider, at an early stage in the design of any research involving animals, the opportunities for reduction, replacement and refinement of animal involvement (the 3Rs). For further information in this area please consult the Association of Medical Research Charities’ (AMRC) [guidelines on promoting good practice in research involving animals.](https://www.amrc.org.uk/Listing/Category/the-use-of-animals-in-research)

Any researcher who wishes to work with animals will need to find a third-party institution with the requisite governance framework in place to carry out the experiments. For further details, contact the Research Office.

## Insurance and indemnity

All research can raise potential insurance and indemnity issues. The University needs to be aware of new research projects (and/or the decision to undertake particular research tasks) in order to ensure that:

* Any risks are identified and managed appropriately
* Research activity can be covered by existing insurances or additional cover purchased
* The University is compliant with the terms of existing insurance policies.

The need to ensure that insurance and indemnity issues are fully understood and addressed when a research project is being designed, before research funding applications are submitted, and before any unfunded research begins is one of the primary reasons why you are required to seek institutional approval – via funding and ethical approval mechanisms - before commencing a new research activity.

You should undertake a risk assessment of all proposed activity when applying for funding (since the outcome of a risk assessment may affect method and budget) and before beginning the research. All key team members should be involved in this risk assessment process and be advised of the outcome. The University’s Research Risk Assessment guidance and a template Risk Assessment Form are available on the [Health and Safety SharePoint](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/healthandsafety/SitePages/Risk-%26-COSHH-Assessment.aspx) Please also refer to the document [[Governance---Research-Risk-Assessment-Guidance](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/Research/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B55E52C46-DD26-4D7E-A995-C9B06EE702F6%7D&file=Governance---Research-Risk-Assessment-Guidance---V3.2---2024.01.03.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen=1).](file:///C://Users/Williaka/Downloads/Health%20and%20Safety%20in%20Research%20Procedure%20-%20August%202019%20(3).pdf)

### Insurance

Whenever the University is involved in any research activities, whether these activities are funded, unfunded or internally funded, then appropriate insurance cover must be in place. Involvement can mean, for example:

* Where the University has designed the research project;
* Where the University is managing the research project;
* If the University is receiving funding for the research, or
* The research involves University staff, students and/or its facilities.

Please note that it is unlikely that another institution’s insurance policies (e.g. NHS, other HEI or commercial organisation) will cover research undertaken by Edge Hill, even in cases where the other institution is the project lead; therefore, Edge Hill must ensure all its research activities are covered under its own policies. Equally, the University's insurance cover is unlikely to cover any third parties, so it is the responsibility of the third party to ensure they have appropriate insurance in place.

The University’s insurance covers staff members who have honorary contracts for the research they undertake as part of their role at the University but not for any element of the project which is undertaken outside the scope of their role at the University; i.e. where the honorary member of staff is employed by an NHS Trust then the University insurance would not cover clinical or surgical procedures that individual performs as an NHS Trust employee. Where an honorary member of staff is acting as the principal investigator for a study, it is advisable to contact the University’s Insurance Officer to ensure that the project is covered under the University's existing policy.

Whether research involves human participants or not, the principal investigator will still need to consider whether any ethical approval or additional insurance cover is required before the research can begin Where such approval is required, evidence that approvals and/or additional cover are in place will be necessary before any research can commence. Initial enquiries regarding whether a project requires ethical approval can be directed to faculty research ethics committees.

### Indemnity

Separate to insurance, an indemnity is an undertaking by one party (indemnifying party) to compensate for (or to provide protection against) injury, loss, incurred penalties, or from a contingent liability suffered by another party (indemnified party).

If the University gives an indemnity that is not covered by its insurance and there is then a breach of contract, the University would be required to meet the cost of the indemnity out of its own assets which could potentially be very costly and should therefore be avoided.

The University has a number of insurance policies in place to cover some types of indemnities; however, there are some indemnities which are not covered or are unable to be covered. It is essential, therefore, that the Research Office checks any contractual indemnity clauses within a contract to ensure these are covered by the University's existing insurance policies.

### HRA applications (insurance and indemnity)

Edge Hill University can act as a sponsor for projects that are carried out within the NHS or within a social care setting. These projects are submitted via [IRAS](https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/ELearning/index.html) (Integrated Research Application System) applications. Please refer to the [“Guidance when Applying for Sponsorship”](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Governance/About.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=xrgH5e) document on the University’s SharePoint pages . The Research Governance and Contracts Managers authorise the applications on behalf of the University. General queries regarding authorisation can be directed to the chair of the Faculty of Health and Social Care Research Ethics Committee or the Research Office. It is vital that proposed activity is covered by the terms of the University’s indemnity and insurance agreements. Detailed information on the process of making an application via the IRAS system can be found on the IRAS system.

## Open research

The University is committed to open research, as outlined in the [Open Research Statement](https://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/15836/1/EHU%20-%20Open%20Research%20statement.pdf). This means you should ensure that your work is made available to colleagues in a timely, open, transparent, and accurate manner and that you are honest in your communication to the general public. Therefore, unless there is good cause (e.g. a funder or publisher restriction), all publications and other research outputs need to be deposited in the University’s research repository subject to any embargo requirements in line with the University’s [Open Access and Publications Policy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/open-access-policy/). Best practice, guidance and resources can be found on our [Open Research webpages](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/research/open-research/). The Open Research Team provides support and advice to all staff and postgraduate research students (openaccess@edgehill.ac.uk).

Research data should be made open where possible in an appropriate disciplinary repository or the University’s data repository, Figshare. You should familiarise yourself with the University’s [Research Data Management Policy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-data-management-policy/), along with the [UKRI common principles on research data](https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/making-your-research-data-open/) and the [FAIR Principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable)](https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/).

Individual Research Councils and many funders have policies on data management which you should follow if in receipt of support from those organisations.

Personal data must be managed in line with UK data protection legislation, and the data protection laws of any other country in which your research is being conducted. Personal data must not normally be transferred outside the European Economic Area. A transfer can only be made where there is adequate protection for the rights and freedoms of individuals in relation to the processing of information about them. For further advice in this area researchers and heads of departments should contact the University’s Data Protection Officer.

Best practice, guidance and resources on managing and sharing data can be found on our [Research Data Management webpages.](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/ls/SitePages/Research-Data-Management.aspx) The Research Data Manager provides support and advice to all staff and postgraduate research students (rdm@edgehill.ac.uk).

## Monitoring and audit

The University and its researchers must ensure that research projects comply with any monitoring and audit requirements. These requirements and the person responsible will be reviewed and confirmed at the beginning of a project.

The University ensures that researchers charged with carrying out such monitoring and audit tasks have sufficient training, resources and support to fulfil the requirements of the role required of them.

You should consider any requirements for monitoring and audit at an early stage in the design of your project, ensuring that adequate resources are available for the requirements to be met.

The University monitors and audits research projects to ensure that they are being carried out in accordance with good practice, legal and ethical requirements and any other guidelines as appropriate. This approach is informed by following a risk based and proportional approach.

You should co-operate with the monitoring and audit of your research by applicable bodies and undertake monitoring and audit tasks when required. You should also engage and co-operate with any outcomes from this work. If you become aware of a need for monitoring and audit where it is not already scheduled, you should report that need to the appropriate person(s).

## Peer review

As researchers you should take seriously your commitment to the research community by participating in refereeing, reviewing and evaluation. Peer review is an important part of good practice in the publication and dissemination of research and research findings, the assessment of applications for research grants, and in the ethics review of research projects. Where you carry out peer review you should do so to the highest standards of thoroughness and objectivity. You should follow the guidelines for peer review of any organisation for which you carry out such work as well as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidance for publication ethics.

Researchers who agree to peer review must be aware of and avoid both status bias (also known as the Matthew effect) and implicit bias (commonly known as unconscious bias) throughout the review process. To facilitate this, they could encourage the relevant body requesting the peer review to anonymise reviewers to author names and affiliations.

Researchers should maintain strict confidentiality and not retain or copy any material under review without the express written permission of the organisation which requested the review. Maintaining confidentiality includes not sharing any material with generative AI tools. They should not make use of research designs, data, or research findings from a grant application, manuscript, or other material under review without the express permission of the author(s) and should not allow others to do so. Researchers acting as peer reviewers must declare any relevant competing interests and decline to peer review if they have significant conflicts.

While carrying out peer review, researchers may become aware of possible misconduct or have ethical concerns about the design or conduct of the research. In such cases they should inform, in confidence, an appropriate representative of the organisation which requested the review, such as the editor of the relevant journal, publisher staff, or the chair of the relevant grants or ethics committee. Investigation of allegations of research misconduct is the responsibility of the publisher, funder, organisation, or other relevant bodies.

Researchers who submit material containing research data or information derived from machine learning algorithms and non-sensitive data should ensure all programming scripts (e.g., using Python, R or other scripting language) and data are openly accessible to reviewers.

### Peer review for external funding bodies or other research organisations

If you are invited to join a peer review college established by a research funder, or otherwise invited by a research funder to act as a peer reviewer of a research funding proposal, you should follow all aspects of the procedures and processes set out by that funder.

Although detailed guidance varies, all research councils require peer reviewers to act in accordance with a number of key principles. These include:

* Confidentiality: keeping all information disclosed confidential, to use it only for the purposes of peer review and to dispose of it accordingly when peer review has been completed.
* Respect: Applicants should be treated with respect throughout the peer review process. Their application is likely to represent their best effort and this should be recognised in providing comments. Although the application – and the ability of the applicant to undertake the research programme outlined – need to be assessed objectively and robustly, peer reviewers should ensure that they confine their assessments to the application presented rather than the applicant. Applicants’ proposals represent their intellectual property and this must also be respected. Reviewers should avoid any plagiaristic and unacknowledged appropriation of the applicants’ ideas.
* Impartiality: Reviewers should adopt a stance of impartiality in assessing the strengths and weakness of research proposals. They should be open to new ideas and approaches, ensuring that their own theoretical or methodological preferences are not used as the bases for judgements. Any conflict of interest which might threaten the impartiality of the review must be declared to the funder in line with their detailed guidance.
* Transparency: The basis on which reviewers make gradings and arrive at judgements should be made clear, in line with the funder’s detailed guidance.
* Timeliness: It is important to applicants, funders and the wider research community that proposals are reviewed in a timely fashion. Reviewers should follow the timescales set out by the funder, and/or communicate any difficulties in doing so at the earliest opportunity.
* Developmental assistance: Although the primary role of peer reviewers is to assess the merits of funding applications to funders, a secondary role is to provide comments and feedback that will be of use to the applicant in their learning and development as researchers.

### Internal peer review

You may be required to act as an internal peer reviewer of funding applications prepared by your colleagues for submission to an external funder.

An overview of the University’s approach to internal peer review is provided here: [University Peer Review](https://edgehill.sharepoint.com/sites/Research/SitePages/Funding/Ext/Peer_review.aspx?web=1) . The University provides a standard template for internal peer reviewers to use when providing comments on proposals.

The University expects staff acting as internal peer reviewers to act in accordance with the same principles outlined above for staff acting as peer reviewers on behalf of funders.

## Publication and authorship

You have a duty to publish and disseminate research in a manner that reports the research and all the findings of the research accurately and without selection that could be misleading. Compliance with open research practices will add another layer of protection against this. See the guidance available here: [Open Research webpages](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/research/open-research/).

In accepting funding or other support for research, the University will ensure that sponsors and funders of research:

* Respect the duty of researchers to publish their research and the findings of their research (subject to any appropriate confidentiality arrangements and ownership of intellectual property as set out in funding agreements);
* Do not discourage or suppress appropriate publication or dissemination, and
* Do not attempt to influence the presentation or interpretation of findings inappropriately.

The University provides support to help you address any issues which may arise in the potential publication and dissemination of research that involves confidential or proprietary information, issues relating to patents or intellectual property, findings with serious implications for public health, contractual or other legal obligations and or interest from the media or general public.

You should address issues relating to publication and authorship, especially the roles of all collaborators and contributors, at an early stage in the design of the project, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the life of the project. Decisions on publication and authorship should be agreed jointly and communicated to all members of the research team.

Any person – including research students, research assistants, research officers, technical officers and other support staff – who have participated in a substantial way in conceiving, executing or interpreting the relevant research must be given the opportunity to be included as an author of a publication derived from that research.

Authorship should be restricted to those contributors and collaborators who have made a significant intellectual or practical contribution to the work. Authorship should not be allocated to honorary or "guest" authors (i.e., those who do not fulfil criteria of authorship). Anyone listed as an author of any work must be prepared to take public responsibility for it, ensure its accuracy and be able to identify their contribution to it. You should list the contribution of all individuals who do not meet the criteria for authorship in an acknowledgements section. All funders and sponsors of research should be clearly acknowledged and any competing interests listed.

In addition to meeting the above requirements regarding publication, you must ensure that the work of any relevant person is recognised and appropriately acknowledged in all publications derived from research to which they have made a contribution.

You should issue corrections or retract work if necessary, the processes for which should be made clear, the reasons should be stated, and you should give credit for issuing prompt corrections post publication. Researchers should consider and mitigate risks associated with research following interpretation of early results (e.g., from rapid publications in open peer review journals where review process is incomplete or preprints) by the media, general public, or other beneficiaries.

You should consider negative results to be valid as positive findings for publication and dissemination.

You should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest in relation to your research when reporting your findings at meetings or in publications.

You must clearly acknowledge all sources used in your research and seek permission from any individuals if a substantial amount of their work has been used in the publication. A publication which is substantially similar to other publications derived from the same research must contain appropriate reference to the other publications. If you submit substantially similar work to more than one publisher you should disclose that fact to the publishers at the time of submission.

Publication and dissemination of work electronically or on the web should be treated with the same degree of integrity as every other form of publication.

Where work has been funded by a UK Research Council, you should ensure that all publications (and other outcomes) are recorded against your funding award on ResearchFish and ensure that, as a minimum, you respond to annual requests for updates. Other funders also use ResearchFish or may have similar processes and you should comply with their requirements, as detailed in your funding agreement.

Some funders may specify the journals to which publications must be submitted as a condition of their funding or have requirements for publications and data to be placed in an open access repository within a defined period. You must comply with any such requirement you have accepted through your funding agreement.

Researchers who are discouraged from publishing and disseminating their research or its findings, or subjected to attempts to influence the presentation or interpretation of findings inappropriately, should discuss this with their research supervisor(s) or line manager, so that the matter can be resolved.

### Further information

Center for Open Science. (2020). Guidelines for Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) in Journal Policies and Practices “The TOP Guidelines”: [OSF | Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) Guidelines Wiki](https://osf.io/9f6gx/wiki/Guidelines/)

Committee on Publication Ethics, COPE. (2023). Authorship and AI tools. [Authorship and AI tools | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](https://publicationethics.org/cope-position-statements/ai-author) Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines:

[CRediT – Contributor Role Taxonomy](https://credit.niso.org/)

[MeRIT | Method Reporting with Initials for Transparency](https://www.merit.help/)

[UKRN | UK Reproducibility Network](https://www.ukrn.org/about/) – improving reproducibility and reliability in research

## Research misconduct

The University has a [Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct [](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/code-of-practice-for-the-investigation-of-research-misconduct/)which it will follow in necessary circumstances.

## UKRIO researcher checklist

The United Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) has provided a checklist to help you design, plan and implement research studies. Edge Hill University strongly recommends that all staff and students undertaking research use this checklist. This is available here: [Recommended Checklist For Researchers.](https://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Recommended-Checklist-for-Researchers.pdf)

# Key to Relevant Documents

[Research Strategy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-strategy/)

[Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/code-of-practice-for-the-investigation-of-research-misconduct/)

[Research Ethics Policy & Standard Operating Procedures for Ethical Approval](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/research-ethics-policy/)

[Policy on researching and handling materials or topics of a sensitive nature](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/policy-on-researching-and-handling-sensitive-material/)

[Edge Hill University Open Access Policy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/open-access-policy/)

[Research Data Management Policy](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-data-management-policy/)

[Research Data Management | Library and Learning Services | Edge Hill University](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/research/managing-data/) [Information compliance](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/compliance/Home) small padlock to denote a secure file

[Intellectual property](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/intellectual-property-policy/) small padlock to denote a secure file

[Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Practice](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/freedom-of-speech-and-code-of-practice/)

UK RIO - [Code of Practice for Research](https://ukrio.org/news/revised-ukrio-code-of-practice-for-research/)

# Endmatter

| Title | Code of Practice for Research |
| --- | --- |
| Policy Owner | Director of Research Office |
| Approved by | University Research & Innovation Committee |
| Date of Approval | 5 June 2025 (TBC) |
| Date for Review | July 2028 |

1. *Research is carried out on invertebrates. These organisms are considered of low neural complexity (e.g. spiders and beetles) and so are excluded from UK and EU laws regarding animal research. There are teaching activities where small mammals are captured and then released after data has been taken, but no research is carried out on these groups.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)