Partner Development Day

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RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY AND PRACTICE AT LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
University Research Ethics Requirements

Any research project undertaken by staff or students of the university which involves human participants or human subjects must have received ethical approval. This may be given at local, faculty or university level, depending on the nature of the research proposal.
Human Participants & Human Subjects

Human Participants

• living human beings, including embryos and foetuses, human tissue and body parts;
• human beings who have recently died, including cadavers, human remains and body parts;
• collective organisations for example companies, corporations, community groups.
Human Subjects

The subject(s) of data and records which have been collected and stored as a record at individual level - for example medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal and administrative records; and test results including scholastic achievements.
What might be some principles for ethical research?
Principles for ethical research

• Participants should be no worse off as a result of their participation in the project.
• Participation should be on the basis of informed consent either by the person and/or his or her legal guardian.
• Provisions for withdrawal from the project should be in place.
• The interests of children, vulnerable adults and other vulnerable groups should be given specific consideration.
• Participants should not be subjected to undue intrusion, distress, indignity, physical discomfort, personal embarrassment or other harm.
Four principles for ethical research

• The work should be designed to do some good
• The work and the way in which it is done should not do any harm.
• You must ensure that those involved give their consent.
• You should consider the requirements for anonymity of subjects
Proposals

• It is expected that postgraduate dissertations should be submitted for authorisation or approval.

• It is also expected that dissertation proposals should be such that either *authorisation or approval may be made at local level.*
Local Ethical Approval – what it is and what it isn’t

Approvable at local level

• Projects in which the ethical issues are not complex or sensitive;
• Projects where there is minimal risk of harm either to participants or researcher;
• Projects where adequate supervision of the project is demonstrable.
Local Ethical Approval – what it is and what it isn’t

_Not approvable at local level_

• All requests of approval of projects involving children or vulnerable persons will normally be referred to the faculty;
• All requests for approval of Occluded or Covert research projects.
Proposals & Local Approval

Dissertations should be formulated so as to qualify for local level authorisation or approval.

• Where inter-action with external bodies is proposed consideration should be given to the potential burden, inconvenience or added responsibility on that outside body which the project would entail; and whether the research outcomes for the community as a whole justify requests being made to these bodies.

• The supervisor will be able to supervise adequately any ethical issues during the course of the research project.
What happens to the proposal?

Research Ethics Co-ordinators (in consultation with supervisors) determine either:

• The proposal does not fall within the remit of ethical clearance and therefore the proposal is *authorised*.

• The proposal is given *ethical approval*.

• The proposal cannot be approved at local level.
Dealing with ethical issues in practice

- Inform people about what you are doing and why you are doing it.
- Obtain their informed consent to use the information they provide and agree the level of anonymity that is to be applied.
- Inform them who your supervisor is and provide contact details for both you and your supervisor.
- Offer your respondents feedback.
Dealing with ethical issues in practice

• Respect their privacy and anonymity.
• Unless anonymity is waived, data should be stored anonymously.
• Do what you said you will do
• Always thank the people who take part. If practicable offer to let them see the final report.
Ethics and writing up the research

• Plagiarism - this has to be avoided at all costs.
• Cover all relevant points of view – as well as those that contradict yours.
• Don’t manufacture information, it is very obvious when this has been done.
Policy documents can be found at:

https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staff/Research_Ethics.htm