University of Glasgow

The ethics of research in the social sciences: an overview

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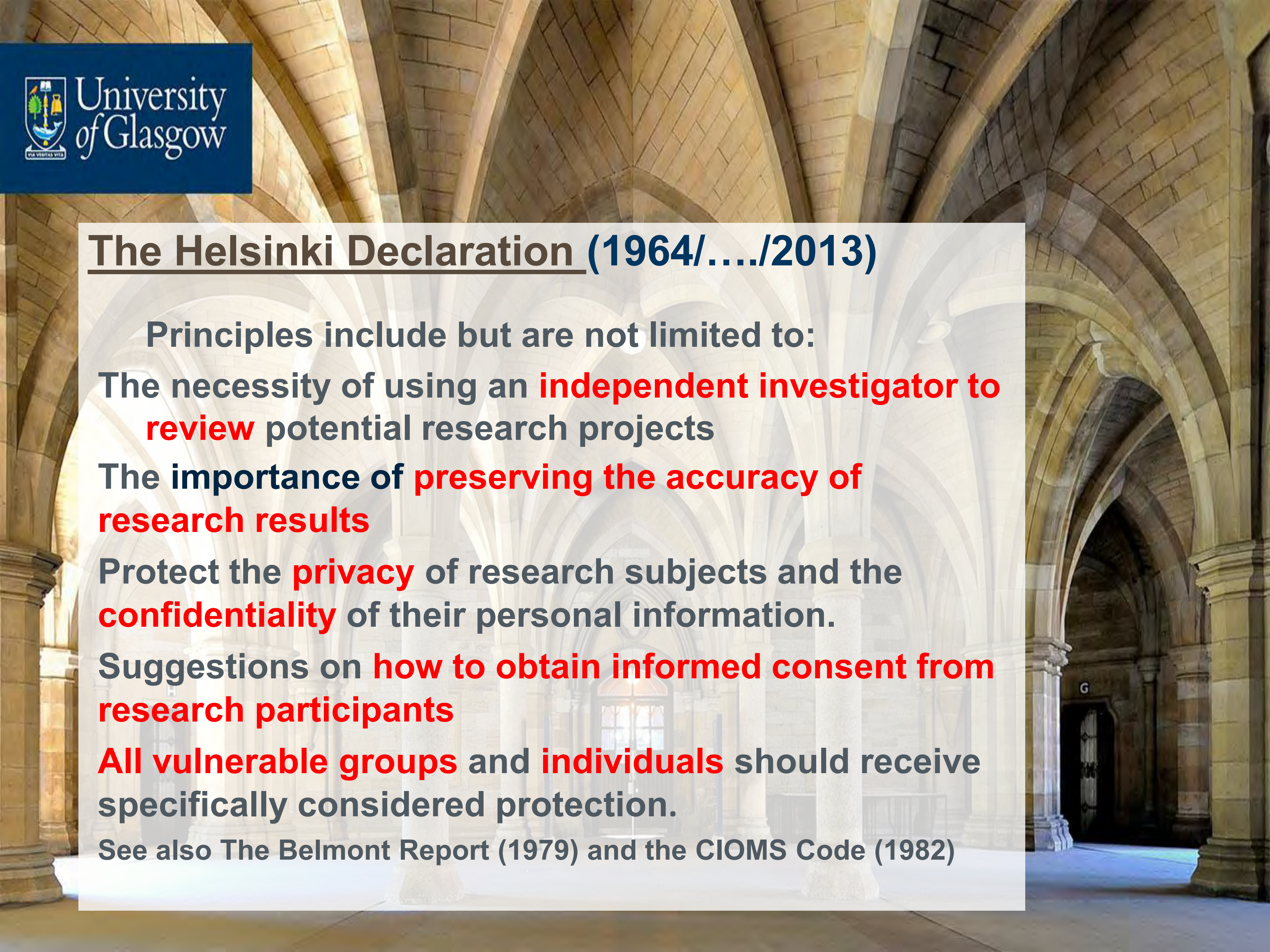
INSPIRING PEOPLE

Outline:

- What are ethics in research?
- Why and what do we need to be aware of?
- How can you ensure your research is ethical?

What are research ethics and how have they evolved?

- **Philosophically, can be linked to the works of Aristotle – Nichomachean Ethics (350 BCE) – and the pursuit of the good or virtuous life.**
- **In relation to research, conventional wisdom holds that a major driver was the Nuremberg Trials post 1945; specifically The Doctors Trial.**
  - **The accused physicians *tortured, brutalized, crippled, and murdered thousands of victims in the name of research.* ***
- **Development of the Nuremberg Code as part of the judgement**
  - **Contained 10 Principles and served as foundation for ethical clinical research.**



The Helsinki Declaration (1964/…./2013)

Principles include but are not limited to:

The necessity of using an independent investigator to review potential research projects

The importance of preserving the accuracy of research results

Protect the privacy of research subjects and the confidentiality of their personal information.

Suggestions on how to obtain informed consent from research participants

All vulnerable groups and individuals should receive specifically considered protection.

See also The Belmont Report (1979) and the CIOMS Code (1982)

Ethical Controversies

- **Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1932-1972)**

  For forty years, from 1932 to 1972, 399 African-American males were denied treatment for syphilis and deceived by officials of the United States Public Health Service. (http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm)

- **Milgram's Study of Obedience (1961)**

  The aim of the experiment was to investigate what level of obedience would be shown when participants were told by an authority figure to administer electric shocks to another person. (http://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html)

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=yr5cjyokVUs

- **Stanford Prison Experiment (1971)**

  What happens when you put good people in an evil place? Does humanity win over evil, or does evil triumph? In only a few days, guards became sadistic and prisoners became depressed and showed signs of extreme stress. (http://www.prisonexp.org/)

Developments in the Social Sciences

In order to maintain a climate of trust in the **practice and outcomes of social research**, it is inevitable that systems of **ethical assurance** will be **established** and will need to be **maintained** by all those engaged in work of this nature. The **trust** of the **public**, **professional colleagues**, those who commission and fund research and **those being studied** requires an e**ffective system of ethical review**, clear lines of responsibility and a **manageable degree of independent overview**. (Iphofen, 2011: p.5)

Iphofen, R. (2011) Ethical Decision Making in Social Research: A Practical Guide, New York: Palgrave MacMillan

Developments in the Social Sciences

Knowing what constitutes ethical research is important for all people who conduct research projects or use and apply the results from research findings.

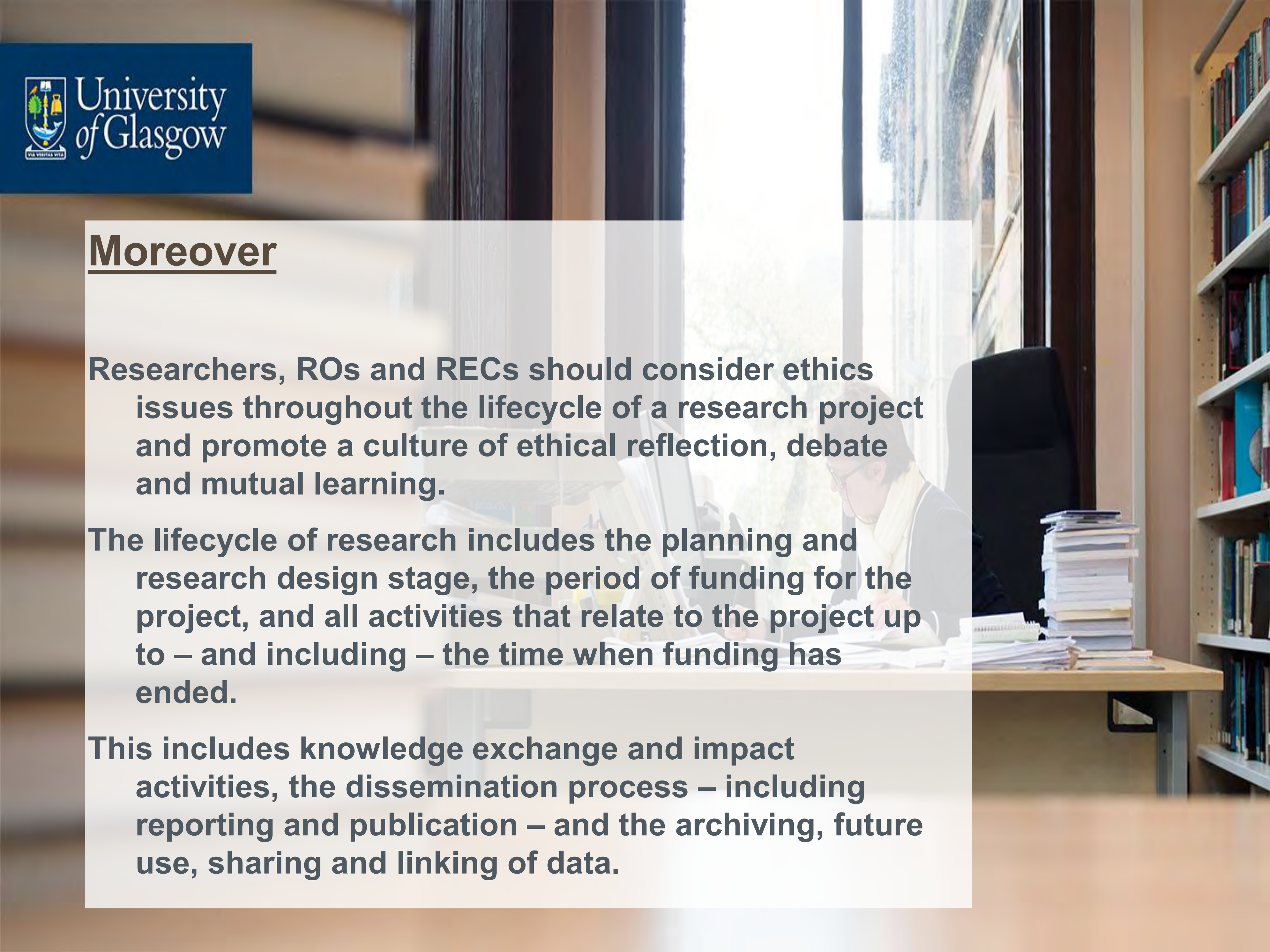
All researchers should be familiar with the basic ethical principles and have up-to-date knowledge about policies and procedures designed to ensure the safety of research subjects and to prevent sloppy or irresponsible research, because ignorance of policies designed to protect research subjects is not considered a viable excuse for ethically questionable projects.

Therefore, the duty lies with the researcher to seek out and fully understand the policies and theories designed to guarantee upstanding research practices. (2003)

ESRC Research Ethics Framework 2005…2015

Our six key principles for ethical research are:

- Research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society and minimise risk and harm
- The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected
- Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed
- Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency
- Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined
- Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit.

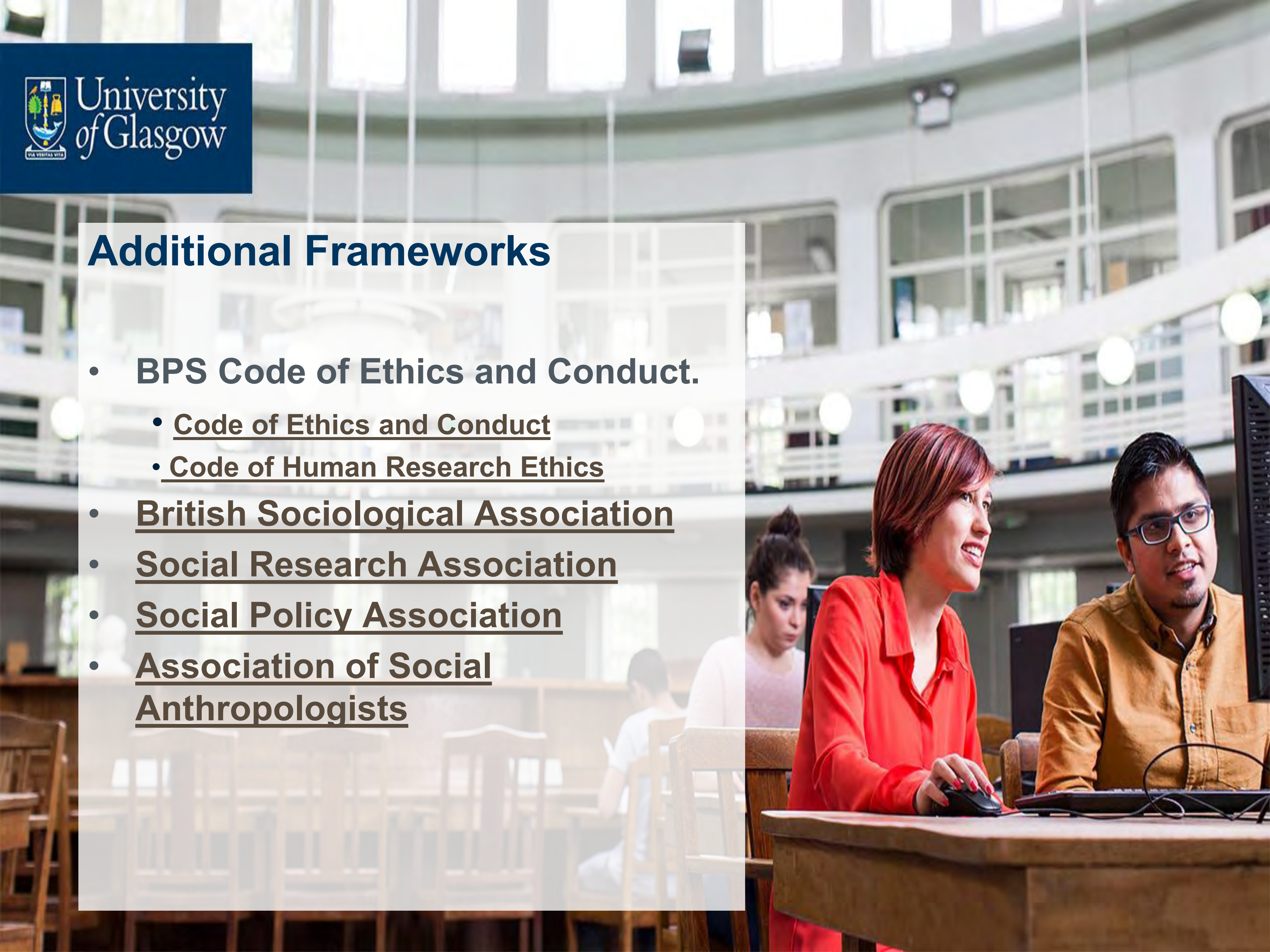


Moreover

Researchers, ROs and RECs should consider ethics issues throughout the lifecycle of a research project and promote a culture of ethical reflection, debate and mutual learning.

The lifecycle of research includes the planning and research design stage, the period of funding for the project, and all activities that relate to the project up to – and including – the time when funding has ended.

This includes knowledge exchange and impact activities, the dissemination process – including reporting and publication – and the archiving, future use, sharing and linking of data.



Additional Frameworks

- BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct.
  - Code of Ethics and Conduct
  - Code of Human Research Ethics
- British Sociological Association
- Social Research Association
- Social Policy Association
- Association of Social Anthropologists

Academy of Social Sciences

In March 2015 the Academy of Social Science's Council formally adopted five guiding ethics principles for social science research and commended them to its member Learned Societies and the community of social science researchers. The Five Principles are:

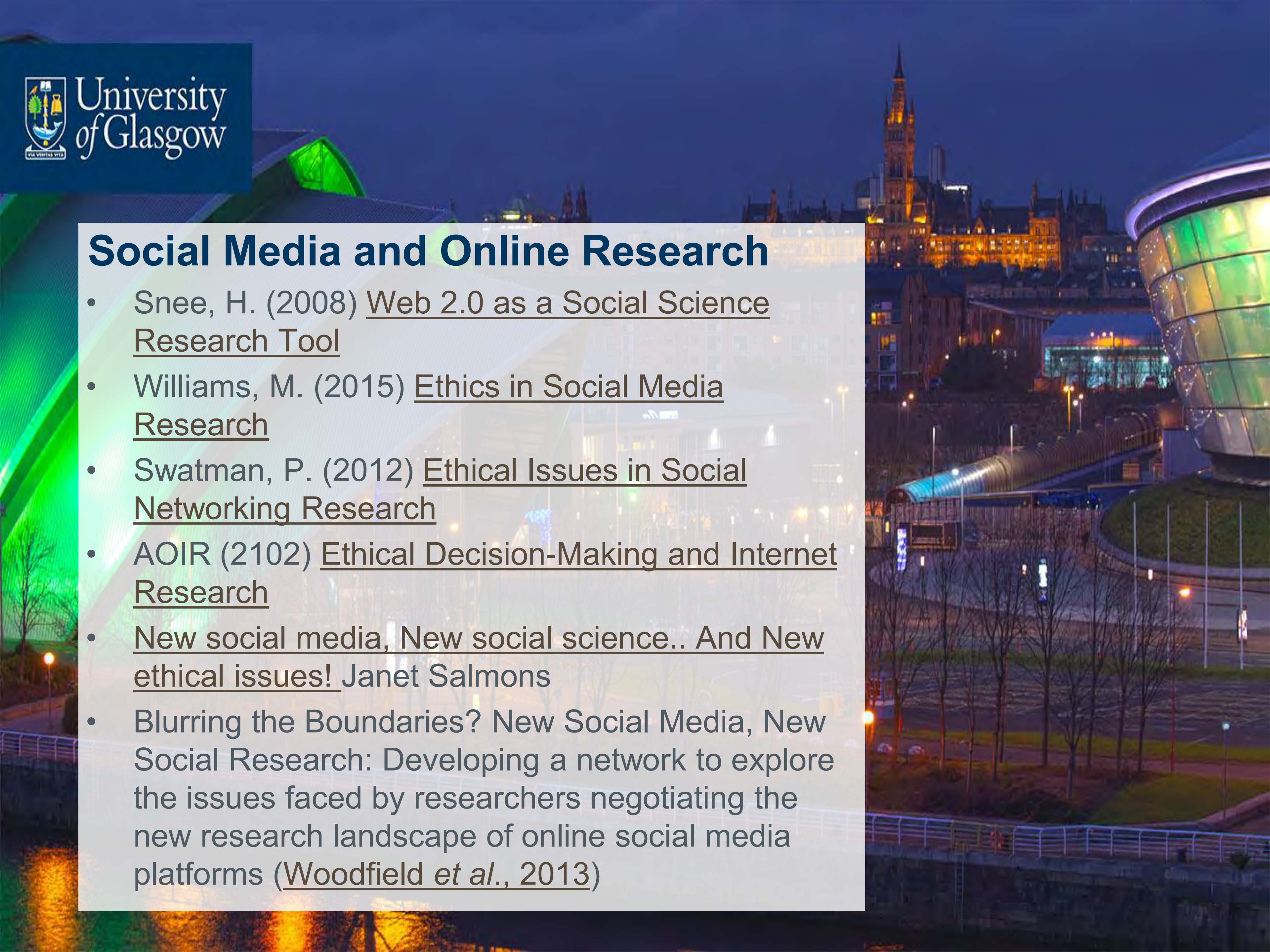
1. Social science is fundamental to a democratic society and should be inclusive of different interests, values, funders, methods and perspectives.

2. All social science should respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values, and dignity of individuals, groups and communities.

3. All social science should be conducted with integrity throughout, employing the most appropriate methods for the research purpose.

4. All social scientists should act with regard to their social responsibilities in conducting and disseminating their research.

5. All social science should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm.



Social Media and Online Research

- Snee, H. (2008) Web 2.0 as a Social Science Research Tool
- Williams, M. (2015) Ethics in Social Media Research
- Swatman, P. (2012) Ethical Issues in Social Networking Research
- AOIR (2102) Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research
- New social media, New social science.. And New ethical issues! Janet Salmons
- Blurring the Boundaries? New Social Media, New Social Research: Developing a network to explore the issues faced by researchers negotiating the new research landscape of online social media platforms (Woodfield *et al*., 2013)

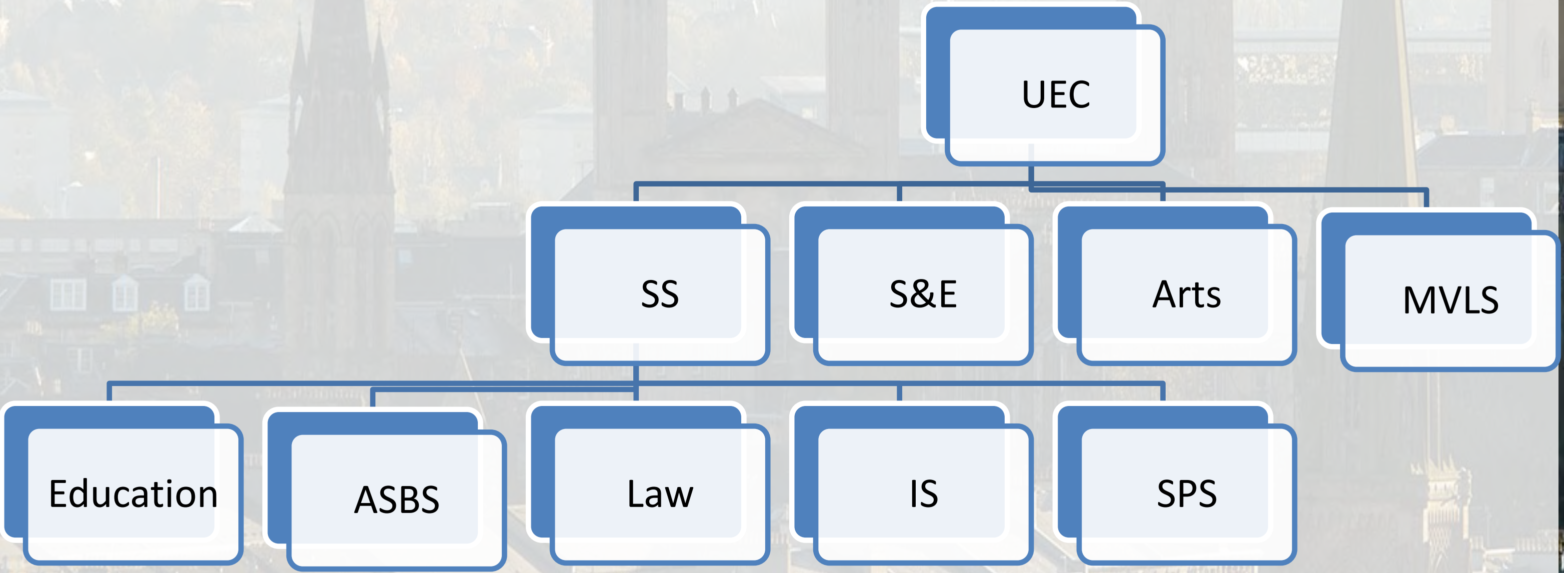
More generally

- *International Journal of Internet Research Ethics* Issue 3.1, December 2010
- *Research Ethics* the Journal of the Association for Research Ethics

And some caution advised:

- **#SocialEthics: A guide to embedding ethics in social media research**
- **The road to representivity – a Demos and Ipsos MORI report on sociological research using Twitter**
- **Research using Social Media; Users' Views (Beninger et al., 2104)**
- **Unlocking the value of social media – a review of research ethics (DEMOS, 2015)**

Ethics Structure @ Glasgow



UEC

SS

S&E

Arts

MVLS

Education

ASBS

Law

IS

SPS

Ethical review process @ Glasgow

Non-clinical research involving human subjects ***(participants)***

http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/rsio/researchstrategypolicies/ourpolicies/ethicshomepage/

All staff and students **must** secure ethical approval for any research involving human participants or human data or material

Applies if University staff or facilities are involved, whether the research is funded or not and whatever the source of funding.

Includes data collected experimentally, by questionnaire, by interview, observationally, by computer, telephone, or over the Internet

The ethical review process does not include research where the information about human subjects is publicly and lawfully available, e.g. information published in the census, population statistics published by government departments; personal letters, diaries etc. held in public libraries.*

Ethical approval must be granted **before** research is undertaken.

Application routes

Before you can start any research project involving human participants, material or data in the College, you have to get approval from the **College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee (PGR and Staff)** or your **School's Ethics Forum (UG and PGT).**

Ethical review application process

College Research Ethics Webpage:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/

Information for applicants:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/informationforapplicants/

Forms and Guidance Notes:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/

Who to contact

College Research Ethics Committee:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/committee/ethicscontacts/

Information for Applicants

Working with People

Working with Children

Working with potentially vulnerable adults

Working with Glasgow University Students

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme

Lone working considerations

Recruiting Participants

Electronic Recruiting

Providing information to potential participants

Consent forms

Confidentiality

Payment to research participants

Copyright and qualitative research

Retention and Disposal of Data

Data Sharing for Staff and Postgraduate Research Students

Informing participants of results of research

Publishing research

Useful web links

Process Documentation

Necessary additional documentation can include:

- Questionnaire / list of questions / draft experimental materials / observation protocols.
- Participant Information sheet (Plain language Statement)
- Consent Form
- Posters/letters/flyers to recruit participants
- Access permissions – e.g. local authority / head teacher
- PVG certificate / “disclosure” if required (rarely)
- Any existing ethical approval relating to study design

Some common issues

Responsibilities to research participants

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Informed Consent

Vulnerable People/groups

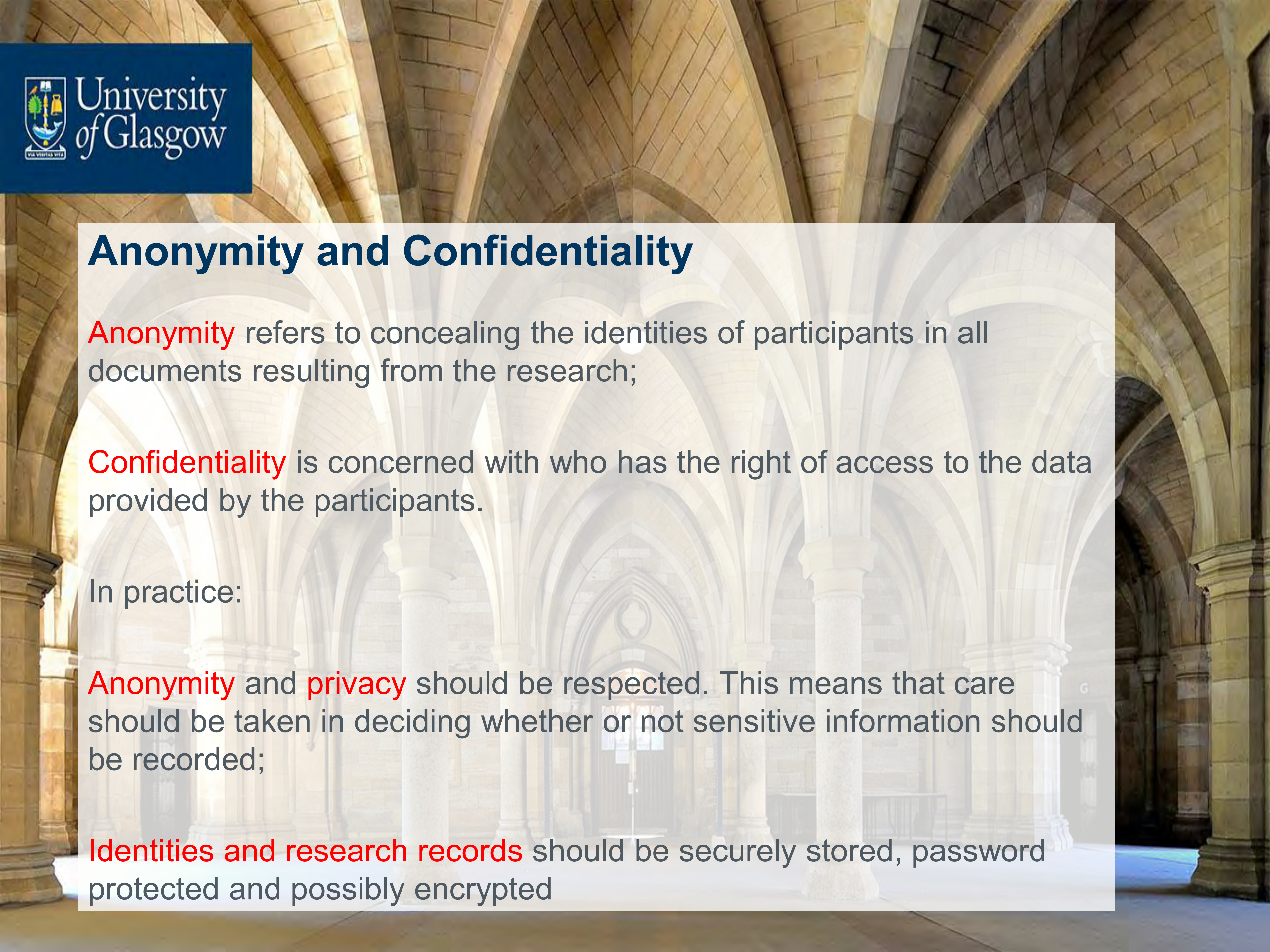
Responsibilities to participants

Minimise disturbance to both those participating in the research and to their relationships with their environment and those gatekeepers who may control access to participants -since these relationships will continue long after the researcher has left;

Take special care where research participants are particularly vulnerable by virtue of age, social status and powerlessness;

Take care to avoid falsification or misrepresentation of evidence, data, findings or conclusions;

Clarify with participants the extent to which they are allowed to see transcripts of any interviews and field notes and to alter the content or interpretation of the data.



Anonymity and Confidentiality

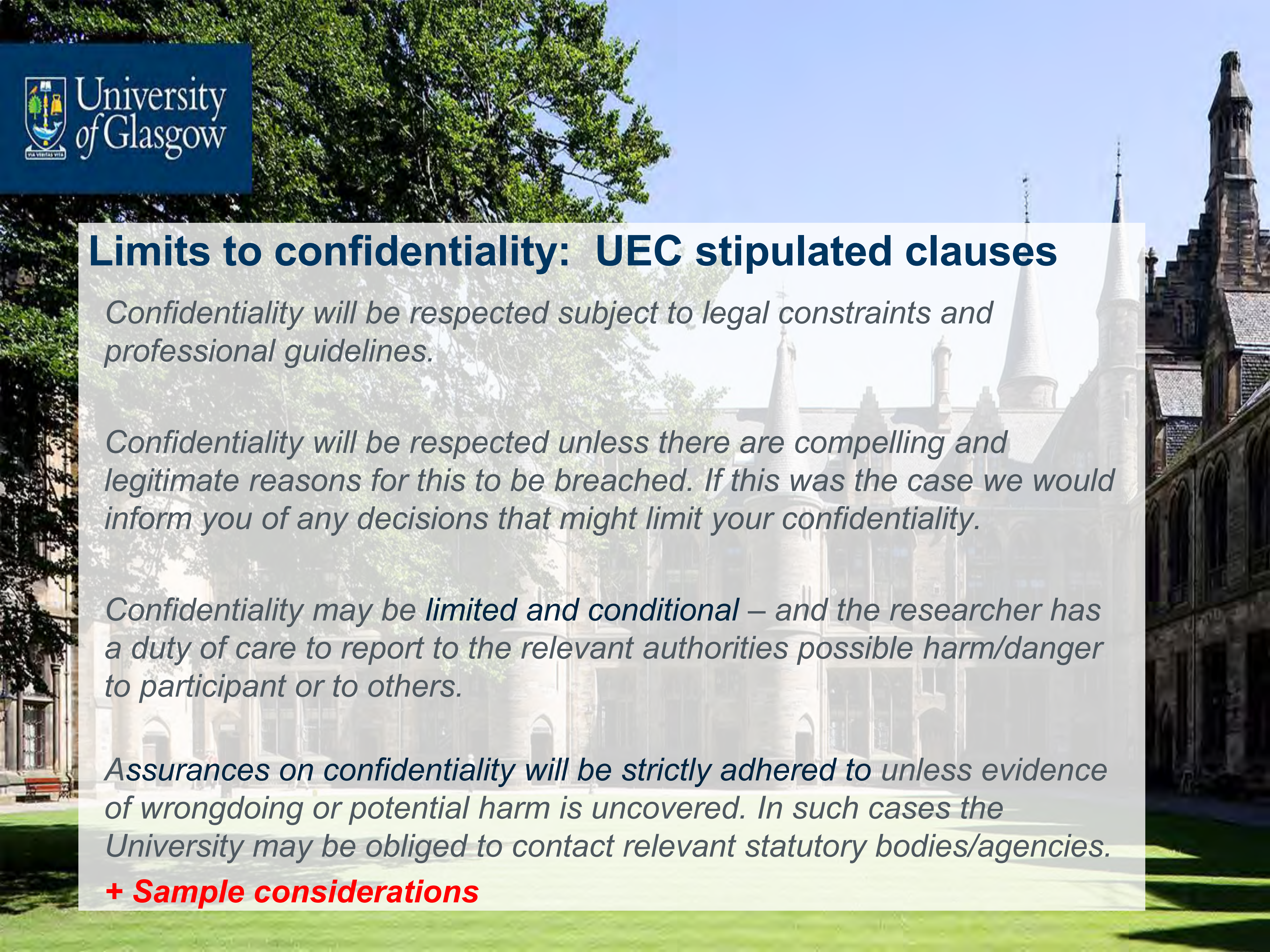
Anonymity refers to concealing the identities of participants in all documents resulting from the research;

Confidentiality is concerned with who has the right of access to the data provided by the participants.

In practice:

Anonymity and privacy should be respected. This means that care should be taken in deciding whether or not sensitive information should be recorded;

Identities and research records should be securely stored, password protected and possibly encrypted



Limits to confidentiality: UEC stipulated clauses

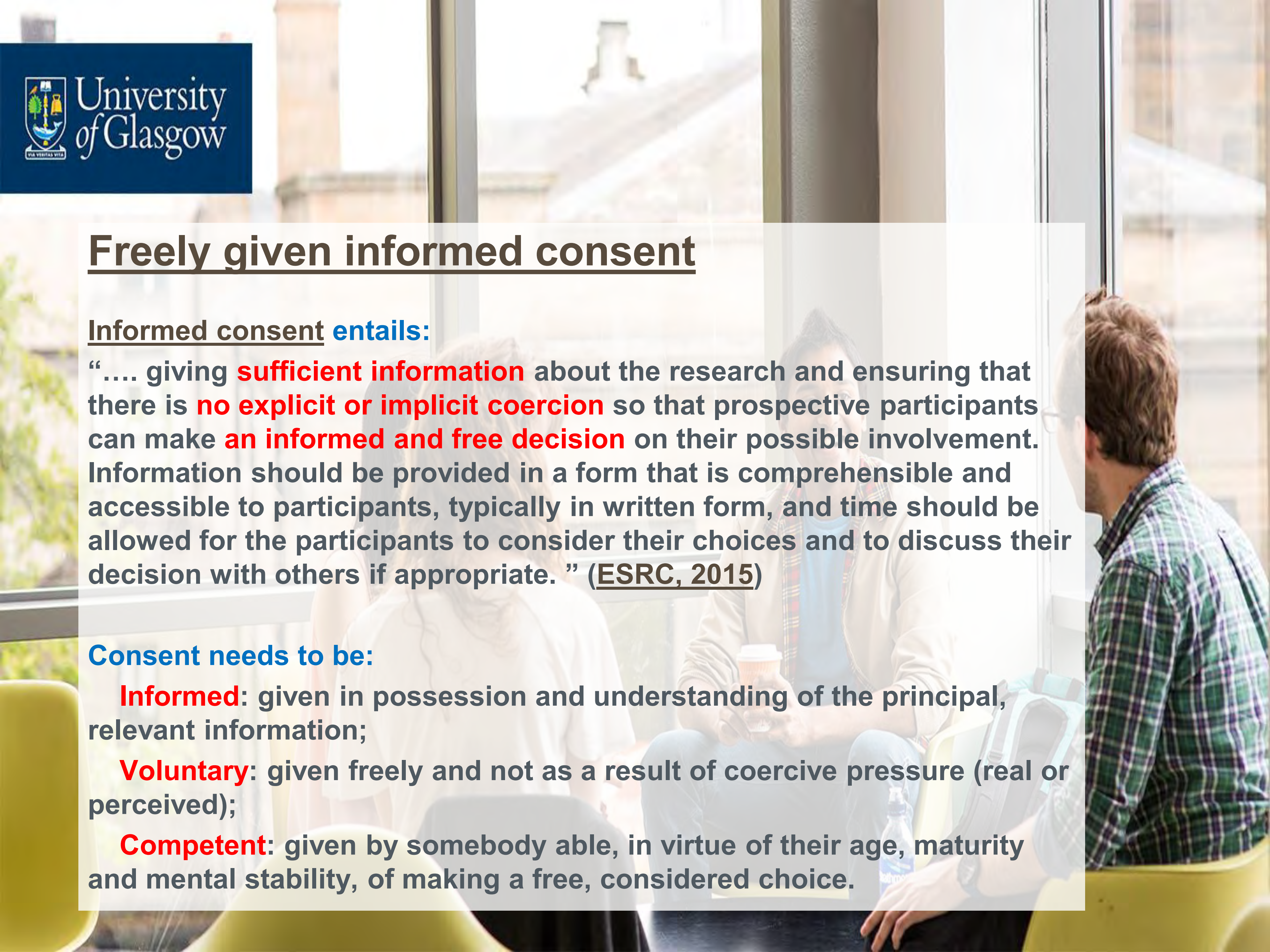
Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.

Confidentiality may be limited and conditional – and the researcher has a duty of care to report to the relevant authorities possible harm/danger to participant or to others.

Assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

+ Sample considerations



Freely given informed consent

Informed consent entails:

"…. giving sufficient information about the research and ensuring that there is no explicit or implicit coercion so that prospective participants can make an informed and free decision on their possible involvement. Information should be provided in a form that is comprehensible and accessible to participants, typically in written form, and time should be allowed for the participants to consider their choices and to discuss their decision with others if appropriate. " (ESRC, 2015)

Consent needs to be:

Informed: given in possession and understanding of the principal, relevant information;

Voluntary: given freely and not as a result of coercive pressure (real or perceived);

Competent: given by somebody able, in virtue of their age, maturity and mental stability, of making a free, considered choice.

Consent and Plain Language Statement (PLS)

Information about the nature and purpose of the research;

A statement that participation is voluntary, including the choice to opt out of the research at any time;

Information about the data collection method and the option to agree/refuse to being recorded (if applicable);

A description of the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained and an option to choose anonymity;

A description of any possible risks or discomforts to the participant;

A description of any possible benefits to participant or others;

Contact details for any questions about the research;

An option to agree or refuse to participate (signature of participant, date, signature of witness/researcher);

A description of the intended uses, and disposal/storage/access and documentation procedures for data including an option to agree/disagree with these procedures.

Data storage, sharing and access

Increasingly funders require data to be archived and made available to other genuine researchers with varying conditionality attached

Is this stated on PLS?

Did you get specific consent for this?

If yes, what are archival and access issues and conditions of use?

http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/legal?index=6

Documentation outlining consent has to differentiate between consent to participate and consent to allow data to be published and shared. (UK Data Archive)

I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Archive/University of Glasgow Secure Data Repository.

I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Main sections on application form

Section 2 Ethical Risks – potential risks considered and evidence of how mitigated

Section 5 Project details - (start/finish dates for project including data collection)

Section 6 Justification for the Research - Why is this research significant to the wider community? Impact on practice/policy; benefits for researcher, community and participants; justification of any risks

Section 7b Research Methodology and data collection - explain the reason for the particular chosen method, the estimated time commitment required of participants, how the data will be analysed and methods of providing confidentiality

Section 8 Confidentiality & Data Handling – methods of protecting confidentiality and anonymity for each method applied (survey, interview, focus groups, etc.); storage and security

Section 10 Participants – how will they be recruited - provide details; Incentives? Number? Dependent Relationship? Location?

Section 11 Permission to Access Participants – gatekeepers and access – plus specific instructions if Glasgow University students to be directly targeted

Section 12 Informed consent – PLS details; any special considerations required – children, adults unable to consent, cultural issues?

Section 15 Risk – lone field work, distress to participants and processes

Common problems with applications

Inadequate, insufficiently informative, description of research project proposed.

Inadequate consideration of research ethics risks involved (by applicant and where applicable by supervisors).

Poorly prepared research materials, including inappropriate technical language in “plain language statements” / participant information sheets.

Failure to follow guidance: e.g. omitting to identify, in PLS, an independent person to refer questions/concerns; a lack of detail where required

Inadequate consent forms.

Other Issues:

Insufficient time before project starts. There is a fast track process but only for special cases – e.g. where funding body demands a quick response. Normally should allow up to 6 weeks.*

Gatekeepers, informed consent and confidentiality.

Amendments to approved application

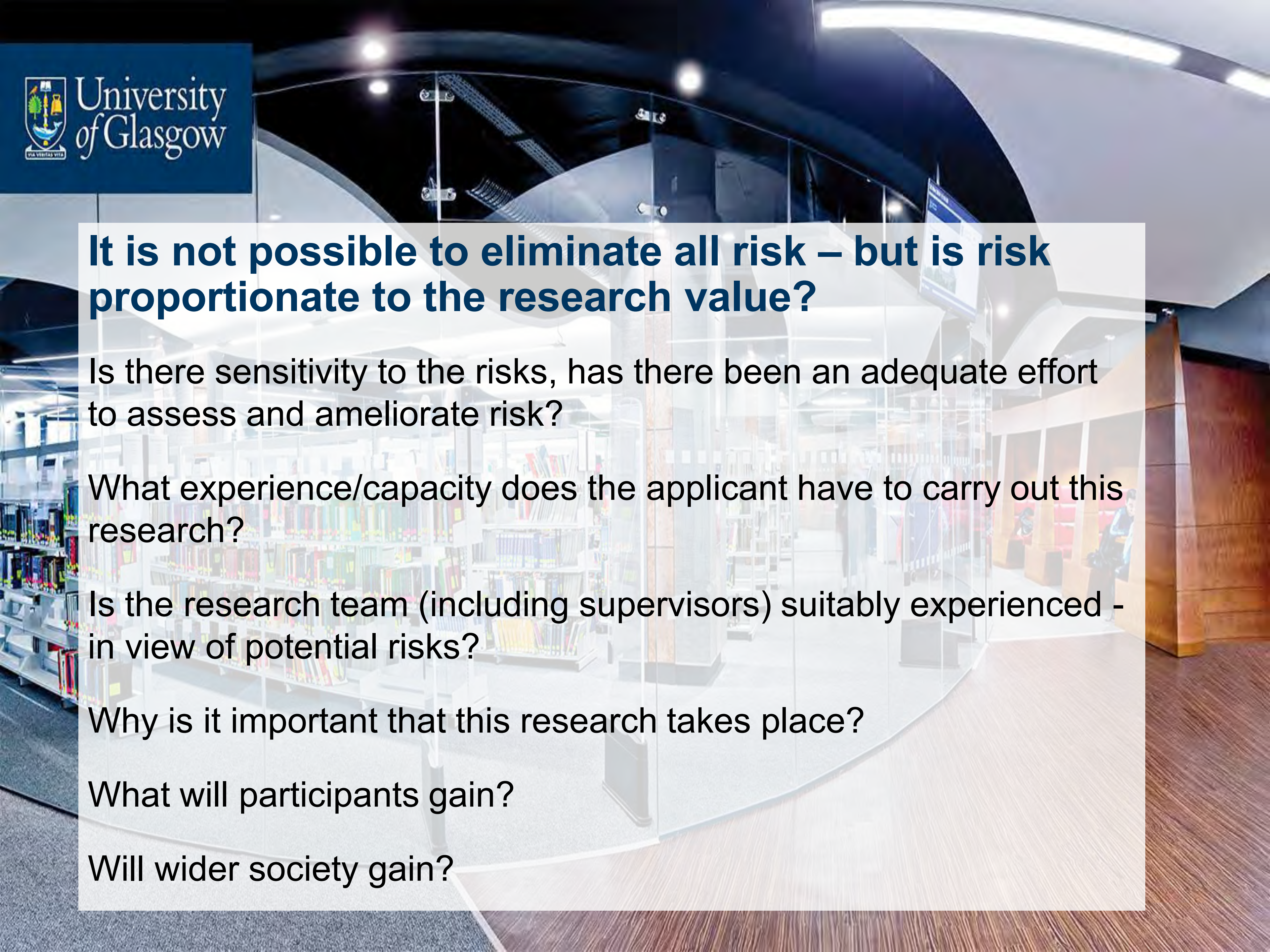
Notify the committee/forum, and obtain approval, if there are proposed:

- Changes to the study design.
- Changes to procedures undertaken by participants.
- Changes/addition to the key study documents.
- Changes to key/senior supervisory staff
- Changes to time-scale.

A note on children/vulnerable groups

Vulnerable groups: Principle of informed consent

> “Ensure that …, particularly children and vulnerable adults, are given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose, and anticipated consequences of any …research participation, so that they may give informed consent to the extent that their capabilities allow.
>
> The British Psychological Society code of ethics and conduct (2009, p. 12)
>
> http://www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/ethics-standards/ethics-standards
>
> see also: **Risk Guidance Document**, which is available on the College ethics website.



It is not possible to eliminate all risk – but is risk proportionate to the research value?

Is there sensitivity to the risks, has there been an adequate effort to assess and ameliorate risk?

What experience/capacity does the applicant have to carry out this research?

Is the research team (including supervisors) suitably experienced - in view of potential risks?

Why is it important that this research takes place?

What will participants gain?

Will wider society gain?

Where to access help

Familiarise yourself with guidance and information available on the College ethics site: http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/

Information, advice and guidance can be obtained either from SEFs* and/or CREC*

* School Ethics Forum

* College Research Ethics Committee

University of Glasgow

Finally:

Social scientists do not have an unalienable right to conduct research involving other people *(Oakes, 2002). That we continue to have the freedom to conduct such work depends on us acting in ways that are not harmful and are just. Ethical behaviour may help assure the climate of trust in which we continue our socially useful labours (AAAS, 1995; Jorgensen, 1971; Mitchell and Draper, 1982; PRE, 2002; Walsh, 1992). If we act honestly and honourably, people may rely on us to recognize their needs and sensitivities and consequently may be more willing to contribute openly and fully to the work we undertake.* (Israel and Hay, 2006: p3)

The Norwegian National
RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEES

Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology

NESH • The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities

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CONTENT

PREFACE

The three National Research Ethics Committees (NEM, NENT and NESH) were established in 1990, based on the Proposition to the Storting No. 28 (1988–1989) *Om forskning*. In 2007, the Research Ethics Act provided a legal mandate for the three committees and also for the establishment of a National Commission for the Investigation of Research Misconduct. With effect from 1 January 2013, the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (FEK) was established as an independent administrative agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. The three committees and the commission are part of the administrative agency, and they all have a central role promoting research ethics in the national research system.

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) is an impartial advisory body established to provide guidelines for research ethics and to promote good and responsible research.

The first version of NESH's guidelines was adopted in 1993 and later amended in 1999 and 2006. The present round of revision has been discussed in NESH since 2013, and a new version was sent on national consultation in May 2015. This is the fourth edition of NESH's *Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology.*[1]

The main change in this edition is that the distinction between law and ethics is defined more precisely, particularly in the introduction. Also, the institutional division of labour is clarified in the introduction. Thus, the guidelines now mainly consist of ethical advice and guidance for good scientific practice. Two new guidelines have been incorporated regarding co-authorship and impartiality. Also, the order of guidelines 25–28 has been reversed, so that the guidelines regarding 25) Co-authorship and 26) Good citation practice now appear before the guidelines regarding 27) Plagiarism and 28) Scientific integrity.

Oslo, June 2016

Bjørn Hvinden (Committee Chair), Kirsten Johanne Bang, Kjersti Fjørtoft, Ingegerd Holand, Roar Johnsen, Ivar Kolstad, Tor Monsen, Anne Nevøy, Erling Sandmo, May-Len Skilbrei, Elisabeth Staksrud, Knut Martin Tande, Pål Ulleberg, Lisbeth Øyum, and Vidar Enebakk (Head of Secretariat).

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[1] NESH, *Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology,* Oslo (1993) 2016.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the guidelines for research ethics is to provide researchers and the research community with information about recognised norms of research ethics. The guidelines provide guidance and advice. They are intended to help develop ethical discretion and reflection, to clarify ethical dilemmas, and to promote good scientific practice. They are also intended to prevent scientific misconduct. They may be used as tools in the assessment of individual cases, in the planning of a research projects, or when reporting and publishing findings and results.

NESH's guidelines have been drawn up to cover the social sciences, humanities, law and theology, but they may also have a wider area of application, including fields like pedagogy and psychology. The text uses «humanities and social sciences» as an umbrella term to cover the scope of the guidelines.

The guidelines for research ethics are binding on both individuals and institutions. Both researchers and research institutions have independent responsibilities for ensuring that their research is good and responsible. It is important that the institutions clarify their roles and responsibilities for research ethics at every level. All institutions must have procedures for funding, administration and management that ensure that their research complies with recognized ethical norms and guidelines.

Research ethics

The term *research ethics* refers to a wide variety of values, norms, and institutional arrangements that help constitute and regulate scientific activities. Research ethics is a codification of scientific morality in practice. Guidelines for research ethics specify the basic norms and values of the research community. They are based on general ethics of science, just as general ethics is based on the morality of society at large.

The guidelines for research ethics mainly cover research, but they also deal with other research-related activities such as teaching, dissemination of research, experts advice and management of institutions. The term *research* also covers the work of students at all levels and doctoral research fellows, and the institutions are responsible for providing relevant training in research ethics. The guidelines apply to all public and private research, whether this means basic, applied or commissioned research. They also govern activities at consulting firms to the extent that they perform research-related tasks, for example systematic acquisition and processing of information about persons, groups or organisations in order to develop new knowledge on a specific matter.

The guidelines are based on recognized norms for research ethics, regulating research in different areas and in different relationships:

1) norms that constitute good scientific practice, related to the quest for accurate, adequate and relevant knowledge (academic freedom, originality, openness, trustworthiness etc.)
2) norms that regulate the research community (integrity, accountability, impartiality, criticism etc.)
3) the relationship to people who take part in the research (respect, human dignity, confidentiality, free and informed consent etc.)
4) the relationship to the rest of society (independence, conflicts of interest, social responsibility, dissemination of research etc.)

The first two groups of ethical norms are *internal*, linked to the self-regulation of the research community, while the latter two groups are *external*, linked to the relationship between research and society.[2] Sometimes the lines between these norms are blurred; for example, accountability is a requirement for trustworthiness. In other cases, norms are in opposition to each other, making it necessary to balance different considerations; for example weighing society's need for new knowledge against the possible strain imposed on people involved and other parties affected. In some projects, the research also raises completely new questions, for example associated with research using the internet, where the recognised norms and guidelines are not always adequate.[3] In such cases, researchers and the research community have a particular responsibility to clarify ethical dilemmas and exercise good judgement.

Ethical guidelines and legislation

Universities and university colleges have a statutory responsibility for ensuring that research, education and academic and artistic development are of high quality «and conducted in accordance with recognised scientific, artistic, pedagogical and ethical principles».[4] There is also an Act relating to ethics and integrity in research (the Research

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[2] Internationally the first two are usually linked to the term *Research Integrity* (RI), while the latter two are linked to the wider term *Responsible Research and Innovation* (RRI).

[3] NESH, *Ethical Guidelines for Internet Research*, Oslo (2003) 2016. See also *Ethical Guidelines for Research on Human Remains*, Oslo, 2013, drawn up by the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains, which is a subordinate committee to NESH.

[4] Section 1-5 of the Universities and Colleges Act.

Ethics Act), which «seeks to ensure that all research carried out by public and private institutions is conducted in accordance with recognised ethical standards».[5]

The guidelines for research ethics do not serve the same role or function as legislation. The guidelines primarily serve as tools for researchers and the research community. They identify relevant factors that researchers should take into account, while acknowledging that researchers often have to weigh such factors against each other, as well as against other requirements and obligations.

Even though the distinction between law and ethics is often unclear, they are fundamentally different. They are both normative, but ethical norms are formulated as guidelines rather than prescriptions and prohibitions. The guidelines for research ethics are intended to serve an advisory, guiding and preventive function. They state what researchers should take into consideration and do for their research to be responsible. Accordingly, research ethics is in accordance with the principle of academic freedom self-regulation. This is why the primary responsibility for research ethics lies with researchers and research institutions. Without this freedom and responsibility, research ethics loses much of its moral value.

Some of the ethical norms laid down in the guidelines for research ethics can also be found in the legislation. For example, the requirement of privacy and the consideration of human dignity has a legal basis in the Personal Data Act and is also covered by the guidelines for research ethics (Part B).[6] If researchers fail to observe the statutory requirements, they may be subject to penalties and other sanctions. Such reactions will then ensue because the researchers have broken the law, not because they have acted in conflict with the guidelines for research ethics.

NESH thus issues guidelines for research ethics, but it is not a supervisory or controlling body, nor does it have a judicial function or power to impose sanctions. Neither does NESH give prior approval of research projects. NESH's role in following up the guidelines is primarily to respond to inquires about specific research plans and to provide assessments and advice when researchers have to weigh and balance different research ethics considerations. Secondly, NESH makes statements on individual cases that raise questions of principle regarding research ethics. Thirdly, NESH may address current and important matters of research ethics on its own initiative. Finally, NESH will also contribute to the efforts to prevent scientific misconduct.

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[5] Section 1 of the Research Ethics Act.

[6] The Personal Data Act.

Other institutions and authorities

In cases that not only deal with research ethics, but also legislation and rights, there is an overlap between NESH and several other authorities that deal with special considerations and requirements. Even though others deal with the legal aspects of such cases, research ethics is always a supplementary consideration.

a) **The National Commission for the Investigation of Research Misconduct** oversees integrity in research. The Commission [Granskningsutvalget] assesses and handles specific cases where serious breaches of good scientific practice are suspected, as defined in the Research Ethics Act.[7]

b) Medical and health-related research projects intended to develop new knowledge about illness and health must be reviewed in accordance with the Health Research Act. Such projects require prior approval by a **Regional Committee for Medical and Health Research Ethics** (REK).[8]

c) Personal data collected by the public administration is normally subject to confidentiality. The Public Administration Act allows exemption from the duty of confidentiality regarding information for use in research under certain circumstances, and within the Act's field of application. The individual ministry may grant an exemption from the duty of confidentiality, but the authority to grant exemption is often delegated to underlying agencies. A statement confirming an exemption must be obtained from the **Council for Confidentiality and Research** [Rådet for taushetsplikt], pursuant to the Public Administration Regulations.[9] Such a statement is nevertheless unnecessary if the administrative body that reviews the matter of an exemption finds it clear that the application should be granted or denied, or if the researcher plans to directly contact the persons who are entitled to confidentiality.

d) The Personal Data Act requires that persons who process personal data protect personal integrity and privacy.[10] Personal data consists of information and assessments that either directly or indirectly are linkable to a person, for example names, national identification numbers or e-mail addresses, or by compiling background data. Electronic processing of such information is subject to an *obligation to notify* and in general, this processing must be based on free and informed *consent*. When an institution has a data protection

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[7] Section 5 of the Research Ethics Act.

[8] Section 9 of the Health Research Act.

[9] Section 13 d of the Public Administration Act; see the Public Administration Regulations.

[10] Section 1 of the Personal Data Act.

officer, the obligation to notify the Data Protection Authority is replaced by an obligation to notify a data protection officer.[11] Some research institutions have local data protection officers, but the **Data Protection Official for Research** [Personvernombudet for forskning] at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (formerly NSD) performs this task for many research institutions in Norway.

The main task of the data protection officer is to ensure that institutions are able to perform their statutory obligations related to internal control and quality assurance of own research. The data protection officer may also offer guidance and advice on matters regarding privacy. Projects that involve processing personal data may not begin until a data protection officer has reviewed the project.

e) According to the Personal Data Act, it is a general rule that the **Data Protection Authority** [Datatilsynet] must grant a licence for the processing of *sensitive* personal data, but research projects are exempt from this obligation to obtain a licence if a data protection officer has recommended the project.[12] Sensitive personal data include information about a person's health, race or ethnic background, sexuality, and their political, philosophical or religious beliefs. Some projects that process sensitive personal data are not covered by the exemption in the Personal Data Regulations, nor do they require a license from the Data Protection Authority.[13]

If the project is subject to an obligation to obtain a licence, the Data Protection Official for Research may assist with the writing of the application for a license and help send it to the Data Protection Authority. The Authority's responsibilities include assessing whether society's interest in new knowledge clearly outweighs the burdens the research may impose on individuals. The Data Protection Authority may issue a license under the assumption that specific conditions are met. Such conditions will be legally binding on researchers. Projects that are subject to an obligation to obtain a licence cannot be initiated until the Data Protection Authority has given such a licence.

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[11] Section 31 of the Personal Data Act; Section 7-12 of the Personal Data Regulations.

[12] Section 33 subsection 1 of the Personal Data Act; Section 7-27 of the Personal Data Regulations.

[13] Projects that trigger an obligation to obtain a licence include projects that process sensitive personal data and

- Are of a large scale (over 5 000 persons) and of a long duration (over 15 years), and/or
- Use large data sets that have not been adequately anonymized or pseudonymised, and/or
- Make non-response analyses not based on consent, and/or
- Use data from the pseudonymous health registers (IPLOS and NorPD [Reseptregisteret]).

A) RESEARCH, SOCIETY AND ETHICS

1 Norms and values of research

Researchers are obliged to comply with recognised norms of research ethics.

Research is a quest for new and improved or deeper insight. It is a systematic and socially organised activity governed by various specific and values. The most fundamental obligation of science is the pursuit for truth. At the same time, research can never fully achieve this goal. Most conclusions are contingent and limited. Nevertheless, the norms of science have a value in themselves as guidelines and regulatory principles for the research community's collective pursuit for truth.

In the humanities and social sciences, involvement and interpretation are often integral parts of the research process. Different academic approaches and theoretical positions may also allow for different, but nonetheless reasonable, interpretations of the same material. Consequently, it is important to reflect on and account for how one's own values and attitudes affect the choice of topic, data sources and interpretations. Integrity in documentation, consistency in argumentation, impartiality in assessment and openness regarding uncertainty are common obligations in research ethics, irrespective of the values, positions or perspectives of the researchers.

2 Freedom of research

Both researchers and research institutions are responsible for preserving the freedom and independence of research, especially when the topic is controversial or when strategic or commercial considerations impose pressure and constraints on research.

Scientific norms regarding originality, openness and trustworthiness may conflict with the desire of other parties to prevent or govern research. Research must be safeguarded against internal or external pressure that limits the exploration of well-defined problems that may intersect financial, political, social, cultural or religious interests and traditions. This is part of the reason why academic freedom was made statutory in 2007, ordering institutions to promote and protect academic freedom.[14] However, the independence of research exists as a norm independently of this codification, while at the same time the law now states that teaching and research must comply with recognised scientific and ethical principles.

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[14] Section 1-5 of the Universities and Colleges Act.

It is the soundness and relevance of the arguments and the quality of the documentation that should provide the foundation for research based conclusions – and for knowledge production in research in general – not any established interests and traditions in or outside the research community.

The duty and obligation of openness and publication means that neither researchers nor research institutions may withhold or selectively report results and conclusions. Any attempts to impose or dictate what results the research should lead to, are illegitimate. This calls for arrangements to ensure both the independence of institutions and the independence of researchers within the institutions. Research presupposes the freedom to seek, produce and disseminate scientific knowledge to the wider public.

The level of independence varies between basic, applied and commissioned research. All research must nonetheless be protected from pressure that endangers good and responsible research. In addition, commissioned research outside the university and university college sector must also have procedures for protecting the integrity of research, as set out in the Ministry of Education and Research's «Standard agreement for research and report assignments» (2012).[15]

3 Responsibility of research

Responsible research requires freedom from control and constraints, while trust in research requires the exercise of responsibility by both researchers and research institutions.

Scientific, ethical and legal norms and values regulate the responsibility of research. Research also has a social responsibility, whether it be instrumental as a foundation for societal decisions, *critical* as a source of correctives and alternative choices of action, or *deliberative* as a supplier of research-based knowledge to the public discourse.

Great demands are placed on the justifications of the researchers for their choice of questions, methods and analytical perspectives, and also on the quality of the documentation used to support conclusions, so that preconceived notions and unwitting opinions have minimal influence on the research. The methodological requirements posed by the research community in respect of argumentation, reasoning, documentation and willingness to revise opinions in the light of well-founded criticism may serve as a model for how to deal with disagreement in other segments of society.

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[15] The Ministry of Education and Research, «Standard agreement for research and report assignments», Oslo 2012. See also the report from the National Research Ethics Committees, *Oppdragsforskning: åpenhet, kvalitet, etterrettelighet*, Oslo 2003 [Commissioned research: transparency, quality, accountability].

Research is valuable, but it can also cause harm. Good and responsible research also includes assessing unintended and undesirable consequences. Researchers must make sure that the research does not violate laws and regulations, or represent a risk to poeple, society and nature – in accordance with the principles of sustainability and precaution in research ethics.[16]

4 Responsibility of institutions

Research institutions must guarantee that research is good and responsible by preventing misconduct and promoting the guidelines for research ethics.

The institutions must facilitate the development and maintenance of good scientific practice. They should communicate the guidelines for research ethics to their employees and students, and also provide training in research ethics and the relevant rules of law that govern research. This would facilitate individual reflection on research ethics and good discussions in the research communities about norms and dilemmas related to research ethics.

The institutions must ensure that they manage the guiding and advisory function of research ethics properly, so that the distribution of roles and responsibilities is clear. In this context, the guidelines for research ethics will be an important tool for preventing undesirable practice and ensuring that research is good and responsible. The institutions should also have clear procedures for handling suspicions and accusations of serious breaches of good scientific practice, for example by establishing misconduct committees with responsibility for oversight and investigation.

B) RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS

5 Human dignity

Researchers must base their work on a fundamental respect for human dignity.

Human dignity is closely linked to individual inviolability. Respect for human dignity and personal integrity is formalised and laid down in a series of international laws and conventions on human rights.[17] In research ethics, this means that individuals have interests and integrity, which cannot be set aside in research in order to achieve greater understanding

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[16] NENT, *Føre-var prinsippet: Mellom forskning og politikk* [The precautionary principle: Between research and politics], NENT publication no. 11, Oslo 1997.

[17] Article 102 of the Norwegian Constitution.

or to benefit society in other ways. Researchers must protect personal integrity, preserve individual freedom and self-determination, respect privacy and family life, and safeguard against harm and unreasonable strain. While research may help promote human dignity, it can also threaten it. Researchers must therefore show respect for human dignity in their choice of topic, in relation to the research subjects, and when reporting and publishing research results.

6 Privacy

Researchers must respect the participants' autonomy, integrity, freedom and right of co-determination.

From a legal perspective, the protection of privacy is linked to the processing of personal data. Thus, research must be conducted in accordance with basic considerations for data protection, such as personal integrity, privacy and responsible use and storage of personal data. However, privacy also has a wider scope in research ethics, and researchers must exercise due caution and responsibility

- when self-respect or other values of importance to individuals are at stake;
- when individuals have little influence on the decision to participate in research, for example in connection with research using the internet or at an institution;
- when individuals have impaired or absent capacity to protect their own needs and interests;
- when individuals actively contribute in acquiring data for research, for example by agreeing to be observed or interviewed;
- when individuals can be identified, directly or indirectly, either as participants or as part of communities recognisable in publications or in other dissemination of research;
- when a third party is affected by the research.

7 Duty to inform

Researchers must provide participants with adequate information about the field of research, the purpose of the research, who has funded the project, who will receive access to the information, the intended use of the results, and the consequences of participation in the research project.

The type of information required depends on the nature of the research; whether it takes the form of field studies, experiments or using the internet. There are various considerations associated with different types of source material and data; whether it is a matter of personal data, sensitive information, previously acquired material, anonymised material or information acquired from the internet. When collecting and processing personal data, especially sensitive personal data, researchers also have a statutory *obligation to notify* the subjects or participants in the research and must also obtain their *consent* (see Introduction and point 8).

Researchers must provide information in a neutral manner, so that the subjects are not exposed to undue pressure. The information must be adapted to the participatns' cultural background and communicated in a language they understand. In some research projects, it may be necessary to use an interpreter to provide the necessary information. It may also be relevant to provide information about possible benefits associated with participating in the research, but this information must be clear and not raise unreasonable expectations on the part of the research subjects. Where relevant, researchers are required to make it clear that participation in the research does not affect their right to public services or the outcome of their cases and applications.

One exception from the main rule is when the research is conducted by means of observation in public arenas, on streets and in public squares. Researchers can normally carry out such research without informing the people involved. At the same time, registration of information and interaction using technical equipment (camera, video, tape recorders, etc.) implies that the observation material will be stored. This registration and storage may thus provide the foundation for a personal data register. In general, this requires that people are informed that they are the subjects of research, how long the material will be stored, and who will be using it. Research on and via the internet has a special status, and not everything that is openly available on the internet is public. NESH has therefore developed separate guidelines for internet research.[18]

Another exception is public figures, who may find that the increased attention they meet threatens their individual freedom. However, as they have voluntarily sought public attention, or have accepted positions that entail publicity, their freedom cannot be said to be threatened to the same extent as that of other persons. Public figures must expect the public aspects of their work to be the subject of research. They should nonetheless be informed of the purpose of the research when they take part as informants, out of consideration for their self-determination and freedom.

A third exception is when information cannot be given before the research is initiated, for example if a researcher cannot disclose the real purpose of an experiment. Such exceptions must be justified by the value of the research and the lack of alternatives, and the researcher must take particular care to comply with respect for human dignity and protection of individuals. It is often possible to give participants general information on the project

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[18] NESH, *Ethical Guidelines for Internet Research*, Oslo (2003) 2016.

in advance, and detailed information afterwards, both about the project and about why they were not fully informed beforehand.

8 Consent and obligation to notify

When a research project deals with personal data, researchers are obliged to inform the participants or subjects of research and to obtain their consent. The consent must be freely given, informed, and in an explicit form.

The obligation to obtain consent is set out in the Personal Data Act, and all processing of personal data in research must be reported to a data protection officer. When researchers process *sensitive* personal data, either a license is required from the Data Protection Authority or a *recommendation* from a data protection officer (see the Introduction).

The obligation to obtain consent will prevent violations of personal integrity, and safeguard the freedom and self-determination of the participants. The consent must be based on information about the purpose of the project, the methods, risks, possible discomfort, and other consequences of importance to the participants. Consent also makes it possible to conduct research that involves a certain risk of strain.

Freely given consent means that the consent has been obtained without external pressure or constraints on individual freedom. Such pressure may arise from the presence of the researcher, or it can be mediated through persons in authority with whom the researcher has been in contact. Rewarding or paying participants may also influence the informants' motivation to take part in research projects, and may influence the responses provided by the participants, thus constituting a source of error in the data collected.

The fact that consent is *informed* means that a researcher has provided adequate information about what it means to take part in a research project. The need for clear information is particularly great when the research involves a risk of strain (see point 7).

That the consent is given *in an explicit form* means that the participants clearly state that they understand what it actually means to take part in the research project. They must have real opportunities to refrain from taking part without this presenting an disadvantage, and they must be fully aware that they can end their participation at any time without this having any negative consequences. Researchers must ensure that the participants have actually understood this information. This responsibility does not end even if an agreement has been signed, requiring researchers to be alert at all times.

It should also be possible to *document* the consent, both to substantiate the researcher's responsibility and to safeguard the rights of research subjects. Usually, there should be a signed consent form, but sometimes other types of documentation may be more suitable.

Impaired or absent capacity to consent

Freely given and informed consent is difficult to obtain in some types of research. Such research can raise ethical concerns if the need for protection against harm, or the need for freedom, self-determination and privacy are jeopardised to any significant extent. In such cases, researchers have a special responsibility for protecting the integrity of the individuals. This may apply, for example, to research involving individuals that either have an impaired or absent capacity to give a free and informed consent.

The question of impaired or absent capacity to consent is usually raised in connection with research involving children, the mentally ill, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons suffering from dementia and intoxicated individuals. Individuals unable to give a free and informed consent will generally only be included in research when a) it cannot be conducted on individuals who are able to give consent, and b) it can be shown to be probable that the research in question is of direct or substantial benefit to the individuals or group being studied. In some cases, it may be a matter of research where the knowledge may benefit the group in question, but where any direct benefit to the individuals included is absent, uncertain or in the remote future. A prerequisite for including individuals who cannot give a free and informed consent is that any risk and strain associated with the study are negligible for the individuals included.

Research without consent

Although a free and informed consent is the general rule, exceptions can be made in situations in which the research does not imply direct contact with the participants, where the data being processed is not particularly sensitive, and where the utility value of the research clearly exceeds any disadvantages for the individuals involved. One example is the use of existing registry data, where it is not feasible to obtain consent from all of the persons covered by the registers. In such cases, researchers have a special responsibility to explain in detail the potential beneficial value of the results, and for informing the parties involved and the general public about the purpose and results of the project, for example through the internet or other media like newspapers, radio and television (see also point 10).

9 Confidentiality

Generally, researchers must process data acquired about personal matters confidentially. Personal data must normally be de-identified, while publication and dissemination of the research material must normally be anonymised. In certain situations, researchers must nonetheless balance confidentiality and the obligation to notify.

When researchers promise confidentiality to participants, the pledge implies that the information will not be passed on in ways that can identify the individuals. Both the credibility of the researchers and the participants' trust in research are closely linked to confidentiality. At the same time, the requirement of confidentiality has a legal aspect associated with protection of personal integrity and privacy, and both the Public Administration Act and the Personal Data Act set limits on the type of confidentiality researchers can promise participants. Researchers must therefore communicate clearly the limits of the pledge of confidentiality.

Sometimes a conflict can arise between the duty of confidentiality and the obligation to notify. The research may reveal censurable or illegal situations that can expose researchers to conflicting loyalties, particularly with a view to the promise of confidentiality. Researchers must therefore not allow themselves to become dependent on the participants, and such conflicts can be prevented by explaining the limits on the promise of confidentiality. This also applies to processing of data that is subject to protection of sources.[19]

In given situations, the duty of confidentiality must yield to the *duty to prevent a criminal offence*.[20] Researchers are legally bound to prevent a criminal offence or report it to the police, without regard for the duty of confidentiality. This includes suspicion of espionage, acts of terrorism, murder, rape, incest or domestic violence.[21] Children are particularly entitled to protection, and when abuse or neglect are suspected, researchers also have a *duty of disclosure* and must report the matter to the child welfare authorities. This applies to everyone, notwithstanding the duty of confidentiality.[22]

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[19] Eivind Smith, *Taushetsplikt og kildevern for forskere* [Confidentiality and protection of sources for researchers], NESH, Oslo 1998.

[20] Section 196 of the General Civil Penal Code.

[21] The National Research Ethics Committees, *Forskeres taushetsplikt og meldeplikt* [Researchers' duty of confidentiality and duty of notification], edited by Hallvard Fossheim (NESH) and Helene Ingierd (NENT), Oslo 2013.

[22] Section 6-4 of the Child Welfare Act.

10 Limited re-use

Identifiable personal data collected for a specific research purpose cannot automatically be used for other research.

Generally, re-use of identifiable personal data requires the consent of the participants. This does not apply to *anonymised* data, acquired for example for use in statistics, where the researcher cannot link persons and data. When the data have been anonymised, the researcher does not know which person the data and the material come from. However, anonymity must not be confused with *de-identified* data, where personal data are removed, so that no unauthorised persons are able to establish who the research subjects are, but where the researcher is able to link individuals and data.

Re-use of such de-identified data requires consent if researchers supplement registry studies with data obtained through active contact with the participants. When re-using and linking this type of data set, for example in registry studies that are large-scale, of a long duration, or which use geodata, it may also be possible to locate or identify individuals indirectly. In such cases, researchers should make renewed attempts to obtain consent, even though this is difficult in practice. If researchers do not find it possible to obtain consent, they have a particular responsibility to explain why the research is of such great benifit that it justifies deviating from this principle. In such cases, researchers have a general responsibility to inform the persons involved and the general public (see point 7).

11 Storage of personal data

Data related to identifiable individuals must be stored responsibly. Such data must not be stored any longer than what is necessary to achieve the objective for which it was collected.

Data protection involves not only the protection of individuals against abuse of personal data, but also of citizens in relation to the State. This is why strict rules govern the establishment of public personal data registers. However, this must be balanced against the benefits achieved through research on registry data. It is also important to preserve material for future generations, but research institutions must follow the rules regarding proper storage. It is vital to establish and observe good routines for ensuring the quality of data registers and for any re-use and deletion of registers or other data, which may be linked to individuals (see the Personal Data Act).

Storage of personal data normally triggers an obligation to obtain consent. The legislation places strict requirements on safe storage of lists of names or other data that permit the identification of individuals. If storage of such data is necessary, the identifiable personal data must be stored securely and separately from other research data. The other material stored may contain a reference number to link it to the list of personal data. All research material must be kept securely, and inaccessible to unauthorised persons.

It must be clearly decided and communicated to the participants in advance whether or not the material is to be destroyed at the end of the project. It must also be explained plainly how, and in what form, the material will be stored to make it possible to verify analyses and conclusions or for other researchers to re-use the material. The material must be stored securely at a dedicated institution like the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (formerly NSD) or the National Archives of Norway.

Generally, it is important to ensure that public archives and private archives of value to research are kept for posterity and made available for research. The National Archives play an important role here.[23]

12 Responsibility for avoiding harm

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that participants are not exposed to serious physical harm or other severe or unreasonable strain as result of the research.

In humanities and social science research, there is usually little risk of participants being exposed to serious physical harm. However, serious mental strain is a possibility. This may be more difficult to define and predict, and it can be difficult to assess the long-term effects, if any. «Strain» is used here in a broad sense, and it covers both everyday discomfort, risk of retraumatisation, and also more serious mental strain which the research may cause the participants. Researchers nevertheless have responsibility for participants not being subjected to serious or unreasonable pain or stress.

The risk of causing minor strain must be balanced against both the benifit of the research for society and the value for the participants. Researchers must justify such benifit and value as specifically as possible, also to the parties involved (through information retrospectively). Researchers should also ensure that individuals involved are offered professional follow-up in order to process any problems that have arisen as a result of participation in the project.

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[23] The Archives Act.

13 Respect for third parties

Researchers should consider and anticipate effects on third parties that are not directly included in the research.

Interviews, archival studies and observations often result in the researcher gaining access to information about far more individuals than those who are the focus of the study. The research may have an impact on the privacy and close relationships of individuals who are not included in the research, but who are drawn in as parties closely related to the participants. In some cases, for example when a researcher observes groups and communities, it can be difficult to protect the privacy of individuals who have not given consent directly, or who have actively declined, but who nevertheless remain in the situation. Researchers have a responsibility nonetheless to protect the privacy of those individuals who are directly or indirectly affected by the research project.

Studies can be conducted in small and transparent communities, and the protection of third parties is especially important in such circumstances. Researchers should take account of the possible negative consequences for third parties. This is particularly important when vulnerable individuals, like children and minors, are indirectly involved in the research.

In a society in which research results are used to assess and adjust decisions, it can be very difficult to prevent research from having negative consequences for groups and institutions. Researchers should be aware of potential unintended consequences of their research, for example that other members of a group feel unreasonably exposed. The consideration of strain on the part of third parties should be weighed against the consideration of the critical function of the research and the pursuit of truth.

14 Protection of children

Children and adolescents who take part in research are particularly entitled to protection.

Research on children and their lives and living conditions is valuable and important. Children and adolescents are key contributors to this research. Their specific needs and interests must be protected in ways supplementary to the general treatment of adult subjects. Children are developing individuals, and they have different needs and abilities at various phases. Researchers must know enough about children to be able to adapt both their methods and the direction of their research to the ages of the participants. Age-specific information must be provided about the project and the consequences of the research, and they must be informed that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time. Consent is more problematic for research on children than research on adults. Children are often more willing to obey authority than adults, and they often feel that they cannot object. Nor are they always able to see the consequences of participating in research.[24]

In general, minors who have turned 15 can consent to researchers collecting and using their personal data. If a child is under the age of 15, researchers must usually obtain consent from their parents or guardians. An exception is made for sensitive personal data, which can only be acquired with the consent of the parents. In such cases, authorisation from the Data Protection Authority or a recommendation from a data protection officer is also required.[25]

At the same time, it is important to treat minors as independent individuals. According to the Children Act, a child who has reached seven years of age, or younger children who are able to form their own opinions on a matter, must be provided with information and the opportunity to express their opinions. When a child has reached twelve years of age, a great deal of weight must be attached to his or her opinions. In addition to the parents or guardians giving formal consent, it is necessary that the children themselves accept participation to the extent that they are able to do so.

There may also be conflicts of interest between children and their parents or guardians. In that event, it is important to clarify the child's capacity to grant consent on their own behalf. In some cases, it may be right to let children and adolescents take part in the research without the consent of their parents. The requirement of confidentiality particularly applies when children take part in research. However, situations can arise in which researchers are either legally or ethically required to provide confidential information, whether it be to the child's next-of-kin, adult helpers or the child welfare service. The obligation to notify applies, for example, if researchers learn that children are subject to abuse, assault or neglect (see point 9).

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[24] The National Research Ethics Committees, *Barn i forskning. Etiske dimensjoner* [Children in research. Ethical dimensions], edited by Hallvard Fossheim (NESH), Jacob Hølen (NEM) and Helene Ingierd (NESH), Oslo 2013.

[25] The Consumer Ombudsman and the Data Protection Authority, *Barn og unges personopplysninger: Veiledning for innhenting og bruk* [Guidelines for the collection and use of personal data on children and young persons], Oslo 2004.

15 Respect for privacy and family life

Researchers must respect individuals' privacy and family life. Participants are entitled to check whether confidential information about them is made available to others.

Respect for privacy aims at protecting individuals against unwanted interference and exposure. This applies not only to emotional issues, but also to questions that involve sickness and health, political and religious opinions, and sexuality.

Researchers should be especially attentive when they ask questions regarding intimate matters and they should avoid putting pressure on participants. What participants perceive as sensitive information may vary from one individual or group to the next.

It can be difficult to distinguish between the private and the public sphere, for example when conducting research on and via the internet. When using material from such interactions, researchers must be duly aware of the fact that people's understanding of what is private and what is public in such media may vary.[26]

16 Respect for the values and motives of others

Researchers must not ascribe irrational or unworthy motives to participants without providing convincing documentation and justification. Researchers must show respect for the values and views of research participants, not least when they differ from those generally accepted by society at large.

Research is often concerned with the behaviour and values of minorities, e.g. religious groups, ethnic minorities, youth groups, or political subcultures. Some persons may find this research to be intrusive or offensive. Researchers must take seriously the participants' understanding of themselves and avoid representations that diminish their legitimate rights

In many research projects in the humanities and social sciences, where actions are often used in explanations, the participants' motives often play a key role. There is frequently uncertainty associated with exploration of motives, not least when it comes to research on other cultures or historical periods. A clear distinction should therefore be drawn between description and interpretation, or between documentation of actual courses of events and different interpretations of such events.

At the same time, the participants' motives are often directly associated with their social roles. For example, researchers may assume that politicians seek influence, that

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[26] NESH, *Ethical Guidelines for Internet Research*, Oslo (2003) 2016.

business leaders seek profit, or that there are conflicts between generations. Stronger evidence is required to ascribe more unusual motives to participants. Special documentation and argumentation are required for providing accounts of actions that ascribe unworthy motives to participants or motives other than those they invoke themselves.

17 Respect for posthumous reputations

It is important to act with care when conducting research on deceased persons.

Respect, documentation and accountability are also required when conducting research on deceased persons. Out of respect for the deceased and their beraved, researchers should choose their words with care. Archives and documents left behind by deceased persons may also contain sensitive personal data, and researchers must handle information about deceased persons and their descendants with care and respect. Research on graves and human remains must be conducted with respect by the researchers.[27]

18 Defining roles and responsibilities

Researchers are responsible for explaining to the participants the limitations, expectations and requirements associated with their role as researchers.

In situations where researchers relate to participants in a variety of capacities, they are responsible for defining the limits of their role and responsibility as a researcher. Examples are a combination of the roles of researcher and therapist when evaluating possible courses of treatment or the roles of researcher and teacher in a teaching situation. Participant observation in fieldwork may also lead researchers to establish friendships and close relationships with (some) participants or students. Parallel roles may serve a valuable purpose in research, but the use of information obtained by virtue of such parallel roles also requires a free and informed consent if used for research purposes.

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[27] The National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains, *Etiske retningslinjer for forskning på menneskelige levninger* [Ethical Guidelines for Research on Human Remains], Oslo 2013.

C) RESPECT FOR GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS

19 Respect for private interests

Researchers must respect the legitimate reasons that private companies, interest organisations etc. may have for not wanting information about themselves, their members or their plans to be published.

It may be of great interest to the general public to learn about how private companies and interest organisations operate in society. Companies and organisations are under no legal obligation to provide information except where specific statutory provisions apply to certain types of information. Such institutions should nonetheless make their archives available for research. If they deny access, this must be respected.

Researchers who choose to undertake research on organisations that are opposed to the research are subject to particular requirements regarding meticulous documentation and use of methods. Situations may arise where researchers have reason to suspect abuse or serious violations of the law. It may still be ethically acceptable to continue the research providing that the abuse cannot be exposed or documented in any other way.

20 Respect for public administration

Public bodies should make themselves available for research into their activities.

People have a legitimate interest in how social institutions function. This implies that researchers must have the greatest possible access to public administration and bodies.

It should be possible to research public archives. Access may be restricted, with reference to privacy, overriding national interests, or national security. Classified material should be declassified as soon as it is prudent to do so.

21 Respect for vulnerable groups

Researchers have a special responsibility to respect the interests of vulnerable groups throughout the entire research process.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups are not always equipped to defend their interests when dealing with researchers. Accordingly, researchers cannot take for granted that ordinary procedures for eliciting information and consent will ensure individuals' self-determination or protect them from unreasonable strain.

Individuals who belong to disadvantaged groups may not want to be the subjects of research for fear of being viewed by the general public in an unfavourable light. In such cases, researchers must place particular emphasis on the requirements regarding information and consent. On the other hand, society has a legitimate interest for example in surveying living conditions, measuring the effectiveness of social welfare schemes, or charting the paths in and out of destructive and anti-social behaviour. Protecting a vulnerable group is occasionally counter-productive. In reality, such efforts may serve to protect society at large from gaining insight into processes that lead to discrimination and rejection.

Researchers who collect information about the characteristics and behaviour of individuals and groups should be cautious about using classifications or designations that give rise to unreasonable generalisation, and which in practice result in the stigmatisation of particular social groups.

22 Preservation of cultural monuments and remains

Researchers must respect the need to preserve all types of cultural monuments and remains.

The need for preservation of sites, monuments, artefacts, texts, archives, remains and information about the past is based on the interest of present and future generations in learning about their own history and culture and that of others.[28] When researchers handle human remains from archaeological excavations, they should be especially aware of the ethical problems associated with research on this type of material. Human remains dating back to before the Reformation (1537) and Sami remains that are more than 100 years old are automatically protected under the Cultural Heritage Act. With a few exceptions, other remains from the post-Reformation period do not receive this protection. Remains from post-1537 may also be of great interest to research. Consequently, more recent remains from archaeological excavations should also be protected to provide source material for future generations.[29]

Perspectives and research interests vary from one generation to the next. This means that also information about our own times should be preserved, so that it is possible for future generations to conduct research on it. Research that destroys source material raises special ethical considerations. The utility value must be balanced against how much the research destroys or changes the material. We must conduct research in a way that allows future generations of researchers to learn what they consider to be important.

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[28] International Council of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, ICOM (2004) 2013.

[29] The National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains, *Ethical Guidelines for Research on Human Remains*, Oslo 2013.

Researchers and research institutions must not be involved in looting, theft or dubious trade in protected artefacts. Respect for the provenance of the research material requires particular attention.[30] Researchers, museums and research institutions must show due care and not acquire (for themselves or others) protected objects and cultural history source material that have not been procured in a transparent, honest and verifiable manner for research purposes. Research on material whose provenance is disputed should be avoided. When conducting research on such material, research institutions and professionals have a particular responsibility for transparency regarding provenance.

23 Research on other cultures

A particular requirement of research on other cultures is that there ought to be dialogue with representatives of the culture being studied.

When conducting research on other cultures, it is important to have knowledge of local traditions, traditional knowledge and social matters. As far as possible, researchers should enter into a dialogue with the local inhabitants, representatives of the culture in question and the local authorities. An interest in local co-determination or control may come into conflict with the research requirements regarding quality and impartiality. This places great demands on the initiation, planning and execution of research projects. When conducting research on other cultures, either in other countries or in minority cultures, researchers should avoid using classifications or designations that allow unreasonable generalisation.

Similar considerations also apply to historical research where time has passed since the events in question. Researchers should avoid devaluating people from past cultures and historical periods. Here, as under other circumstances, researchers in the humanities and social sciences must make a clear distinction between documentation and evaluation.

24 Limits on cultural recognition

Researchers must strike a balance between recognising cultural differences and recognising other fundamental values and general human rights.

Respect for and loyalty to the cultures in which the research is being conducted do not mean that aspects such as discrimination and culturally motivated abuse must be accepted.

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[30] Section 23a of the Cultural Heritage Act.

When undertaking a normative analysis of such situations, the researcher must make a clear distinction between a description of norms and practices in the culture being studied and the normative discussions of these factors related to specific values.

The researcher must be especially cautious when researching phenomena like culturally motivated violation of life and health or breaches of other human rights.

D) THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

25 Co-authorship

Researchers must observe good publication practice, respect the contributions of other researchers, and observe recognised standards of authorship and cooperation.

Academic publishing is critical for ensuring that research is open and accountable. At the same time, publishing raises different ethical challenges and dilemmas. The research community is characterised by strong competition and great pressure to publish, which often puts pressure on recognised norms of research ethics. For example, the norm of originality may easily conflict with the norm of humility, and differences in authority and power may easily come into conflict with integrity and impartiality. Co-authorship is also linked to the distribution of responsibilities among different contributors.

In principle, four criteria define rightful authorship. They must all be met, as stated in the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE):

1 The researcher must have made a substantial contribution to the conception and design *or* the data acquisition or the data analysis and interpretation; *and*
2 the researcher must have contributed to drafting the manuscript *or* critical revision of the intellectual content of the publication; *and*
3 the researcher must have approved the final version before publication; *and*
4 the researcher must be able to accept responsibility for and be accountable for the work as a whole (albeit not necessarily all technical details) unless otherwise specified.[31]

It is common practice in the humanities and social sciences to require that co-authors have actually helped write and complete the manuscript. Only those who have actually contributed to the analysis *and* writing of a scientific work may be credited as co-authors. In other

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[31] www.icmje.org/recommendations/.

words, it is not enough to have contributed to the intellectual work with the article in a broad sense, for example a combination of data acquisition, critical revision and approval of the end product. Other contributors must be credited or thanked in footnotes or a closing note *(Acknowledgements)*.

All forms of honorary authorship are unacceptable. Authorship must be limited to persons who have provided significant intellectual input to the research. General guidance, provision of funding or data acquisition do not in themselves qualify for co-authorship.

An agreement must be made as early as possible in the research process, not least in large and interdisciplinary research projects, as to who will be listed as the co-authors of a publication, and how responsibilities and tasks are to be distributed among the authors.

26 Good citation practice

All researchers and students are obliged to follow good citation practice. This is a prerequisite for critical examination and important for enabling further research.

Researchers and students are under an obligation to provide accurate references to the literature they use, whether this is primary or secondary literature. This must be accounted for explicitly, also when re-using text from one's own publications (so-called «duplication» or more misleadingly referred to as «self-plagiarism») in the form of proper citation, for example in a preface or in footnotes. When researchers and students obtain information from sources outside their research – such as public documents or the internet – they must provide accurate references that make it possible to trace the information back to the source. References should usually specify chapters or pages, so that other persons can check the quotes and references. This enables critical examination of assertions and arguments, including of how the sources are used.

Both scientific disciplines and research institutions are responsible for establishing and communicating rules for good citation practice, as well as for creating understanding of these norms, ensuring compliance, and reacting to misconduct. Each researcher or student must conduct their research with integrity, and handle their sources honestly. Supervisors have a special responsibility for following up students' knowledge of and attitudes towards research ethics, so that they may exercise good citation practice in future work.[32]

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[32] «God skikk. Om bruk av litteratur og kilder i allmenne, historiske framstillinger» [Good practice. About the use of literature and sources in general historical accounts], report commissioned by the Norwegian Publishers' Association, the Norwegian Historical Association and the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association, Oslo 2006.

27 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable and constitutes a serious breach of recognised norms of research ethics.

A plagiarist undermines not only his or her own reputation as a researcher, but also the credibility of the research. Both researchers and research institutions are responsible for preventing plagiarism.

Plagiarism in research ethics is taking something from someone else and presenting it as one's own without correctly citing their sources. Plagiarism violates the duty of truthfulness in science, and the requirement of originality, humility and collegiality. Researchers who build on the work of others must cite their sources in accordance with good practice.

The most obvious type of plagiarism is pure duplication. Plagiarism can nonetheless take other forms, for example the use of ideas, hypotheses, concepts, theories, interpretations, designs, illustrations, results etc. Citing another work early in one's own text and then making extensive further use of it without subsequent citation may also be plagiarism.

It is important to distinguish between direct quotes and paraphrasing in footnotes and endnotes as well as in the text. Paraphrasing must not be so close to the original text that it in reality constitutes a quote. If several paraphrases are connected, the entire interpretation and argumentation may be based on the work of others. If so, this may also constitute plagiarism.

28 Scientific integrity

Both researchers and research institutions must promote norms for good scientific practice.

Scientific integrity is about maintaining and complying with good scientific practice.

Misconduct is serious breach of good scientific practice associated with the collective commitment to the pursuit for truth. Researchers have an obligation to truthfulness, and scientific misconduct implies misleading others through lying, concealment or distortion. The most serious examples of misconduct are *fabrication and falsification* of data and plagiarism.[33] The norm of scientific integrity applies in full to all types of research and in every stage of the research process.

Institutions are required to have routines that promote integrity and prevent misconduct. Institutions must also have procedures for handling suspicions and accusations of scientific misconduct.

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[33] Section 5 of the Research Ethics Act.

Universities, university colleges and other educational institutions have a special responsibility to ensure that students and others receive training in research ethics and scientific integrity. This means that norms for good citation practice and good scientific practice must be communicated in teaching and supervision throughout students' academic careers, and that established researchers should serve as good role models in their teaching and research.

29 Data sharing

Research material should be made available to other researchers for secondary analysis and further use.

Sharing of research data is often a prerequisite for building up knowledge, comparing results and critically testing the work of others. Improved openness and quality assurance can be achieved by sharing data.[34] At the same time, data sharing gives rise to ethical challenges relating to privacy and confidentiality. Therefore, the norm of transparency and data-sharing, particularly in large-scale registry research, should be balanced against other considerations and requirements of research ethics.

Generally, those responsible for collecting material have the priority right to use it in analyses and in publications. Data acquired with the aid of public funding must be made publicly available after a short period.

30 Impartiality

Both researchers and research institutions are obliged to report and consider possible conflicts of interest and of roles.

All researchers are obliged to respect the requirements regarding their own impartiality and that of others. Partiality can make research less reliable and independent, for example by leading to biased publication or selective reporting. Researchers may not take part in processes that involve approving, funding or judging their own research or the consequences of that research. Nor may researchers take part in evaluating measures that they have been involved in developing or implementing, or which are the result of their own research.

Impartiality requirements are the responsibility not only of researchers, but also of research institutions. Research institutions should as a matter of routine raise the question of

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[34] The Research Council of Norway, *Open Access to Research Data*, Policy for Open Access, Oslo 2014.

impartiality and potential conflicts of interests in matters where this is relevant. Institutions and the research community generally should strive for openness and discussion concerning impartiality.

Ethical considerations often have a wider reach than purely legal rules and impartiality requirements [habilitet].[35] Conflicting interests can detract from the quality of research, also indirectly, when persons who are parties or stakeholders state their view without taking part in the research themselves. In other cases, it is not only the credibility of the research that is relevant, but also the requirement that the research should be objective. If it is reasonable to raise doubt about a researcher's impartiality, or if a researcher has a possible conflict of interests, this may undermine confidence in the research, both in the academic community and among the public generally.

31 Relations with colleagues

Research should be conducted in compliance with norms of research ethics, for example with regard to openness, fairness and (self-criticism, thereby contributing to research cultures that promote good research.

Research institutions must create conditions for research cultures that is conducive to good research. They must strive to maintain a culture based on constructive discourse and management of collegial disagreement. They should encourage well-balanced recruitment of researchers. Criticism must not be silenced by referring to obligations of loyalty or requirements of obedience. Fairness must be maintained, such as the requirement to avoid tendentious renderings of the work of researchers whose views differ from one's own. Researchers must ensure through exchange of information and constructive criticism that their group's research is as good as possible. Research communities must maintain high methodological standards and encourage fair debate on the applications and limitations of various methods and analytical techniques.

Good research cultures are characterised by researchers who read each other's work and give one another positive and negative criticism. It is a breach of ethical norms if researchers keep serious criticism of existing research to themselves, and do not present it in relevant circles to ensure that problematics are considered from all angles. This is consistent with the scientific norm of systematic and organised scepticism. Relevant circles may extend to a broader public than the specialist community.

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[35] Section 6 of the Public Administration Act.

Most disciplines are characterised by competing schools of thought and disagreement on fundamental questions of scientific theory. Those responsible for the academic assessment of the work of others must therefore be willing to seriously consider arguments and ways of thinking that are recognised in other research traditions than their own. Academic assessments must be characterised by professional carefulness, fairness and openness. Researchers frequently participate in evaluations for academic posts. They evaluate master's and doctoral theses, project applications, journal articles and similar. In such contexts, the assessor must review their own impartiality and work professionally and objectively.

32 The student-supervisor relationship

Supervisors are obliged to act in the students' best interests and not to take advantage of their dependence. This applies to academic results and personal matters.

Supervisors must be conscious of the asymmetry of the supervisory situation, and not take advantage of their academic authority or use their authority in a manner liable to cause the student offence. Supervisors must not take advantage of students' dependence.

If a supervisor wishes to use in his or her own research material from work that the student has not yet completed, the supervisor and the student must make an agreement to this effect. If the student has collected the material personally, it should only be used after the student is finished with the material, normally after taking the examination. The institution should draw up a standard agreement for this situation. Supervisors must employ good citation practice when using a student's material and work. Supervisors must also take note of how others use students' work before it is completed, and if relevant how the supervisor's contribution should be indicated. Similarly, students should employ good citation practice in relation to their supervisors.

In a supervisory situation, double relationships may arise, leading to compromised impartiality when the candidate's work is to be assessed. The supervisor's integrity must be protected as well as the candidate's. It must not be possible for anyone to cast doubt as to where the line goes between private and professional matters, nor as to a supervisor's impartiality. If the relationship between supervisor and candidate becomes overly close, the general rule is that the supervisor should withdraw from the position.

33 Responsibilities of supervisors and project managers

Supervisors and project managers must assume responsibility for the research ethics problems faced by students or project team members.

Supervisors and project managers are also responsible for taking account of participants and others who are affected by the projects of students and project team members. They must assume responsibility for dealing with the problems that may arise for those conducting the project, especially if conducting the research become particularly stressful or problematic for them. Supervisors and project managers also have a shared responsibility for disseminating the results of projects. This responsibility also involves dealing with challenges presented by research ethics.

E) COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

34 Different types of research

Both researchers and research institutions must ensure that the funding and organisation of research is not in conflict with the norms of open, reliable and independent research.

An overarching responsibility of research policy is to maintain the balance between different types of research, both between different disciplines and between commissioned research and researcher-driven research (pure and applied research). Different types of funding and organisation give rise to different research ethics issues and dilemmas in the relationship between science and society. Many of the challenges that used to be restricted to commissioned research, relating to norms such as openness, accountability and independence, may be equally relevant today for other types of research as well.

Research communities interact with society in general. When society funds research, it is because it expects something in return. Society's expectations concerning utility and relevance are not irreconcilable with the requirement that research must be free and independent, but this places demands on transparency with respect to terms of contract, ownership, confidentiality and the right to publish.

Knowledge is a collective good, and if research becomes too privatised, it will inhibit both the development of knowledge and the contribution of research to society. At the same time, commissioned research, where external principals decide on the subject, are an important part of society's aggregate knowledge development. For that reason, there must be a balance between commissioned research and researcher-driven research. Research funders should be aware of established standards for the organisation of research and reporting assignments.[36]

35 Commissioned research

Both public and private commissioners have a legitimate right to set the parameters for research assignments, as long as those parameters does not conflict with the other requirements made with regard to the research. However, that does not exempt researchers and research institutions from their share of the responsibility for the agreements they sign with commissioners.

Researchers and research institutions do not merely report their own results; they also represent the credibility of the research community as a reliable source of knowledge. The commissioner has a right to steer or influence the subject and issues addressed, but not the choice of method, results or conclusions drawn by the researcher on the basis of the results. Both researchers and research institutions have a right and a duty to point out the uncertainties and limitations of the research, for example when the results are to be used in policy decisions.

36 The responsibility of researchers in large projects

Researchers who take part in large research projects have a shared responsibility for those projects. It should be clear how an individual researcher has contributed to a research project.

When research is organised into large, hierarchically managed projects, the relationship between individual researchers and the project management is analogous to the relationship between the researcher/research institution and the commissioner. If researchers experiences a conflict between loyalty to the institution or project and an ethically acceptable approach, the basic principle is that the individual researcher has a responsibility for their own participation. Researchers are also responsible for disclosing circumstances that are not acceptable according to research ethics.

Copyright and the right to publish must be regulated by explicit agreements. This also applies to the relationship between the commissioner, the research institution and the researcher in connection with commissioned research and reports.

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[36] Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, «Standard agreement for research and report assignments», Oslo 2012.

37 Independence and conflict of interests

Both researchers and research institutions should maintain their independence in relation to their principals.

Both researchers and research institutions must avoid becoming dependent on their commissioners. Dependence may undermine their impartiality and the scientific quality of the research. This is particularly true if a single commissioner is responsible for a substantial portion of the researcher's or research institution's funding. It is therefore important for the researcher/institution and the commissioner not to have convergent interests to the point that they threaten the independence of the research (the vested interest threat). The sale of advisory or consulting services to actors who also have an interest in the research having a particular outcome may increase the vested interest threat.

Non-financial factors may also threaten independent research. Personal ties, either through family relations or as a result of long-term connections between the research institution/researcher and those taking part in the research projects may lead to dependence in several ways. These ties may lead to the research being used to promote the views and interests of certain parties (representative party threat), or it may lead to there not being sufficient distance between the researcher and the participants (threat to confidentiality), or it may lead to independence being threatened because the participants are in a position where they can influence the researcher (threat of pressure).

In some situations, the role of independent research may come into conflict with other roles the researcher may have, for example as adviser or consultant. If a researcher accepts an assignment that may undermine the institution's credibility, it is necessary to report the situation at the very least. In some situations, the conflict between roles will be so strong that the roles should not be combined.

38 Transparency in research funding

Both researchers and commissioners have a duty to make it publicly known who is funding the research.

It must be clear who is funding the research. Transparency concerning funding makes it easier for researchers to protect themselves against undue pressure and thus ensure the freedom and independence of the research. Moreover, commissioners have a reasonable claim to have their funding of research publicly known.

When researchers are going to publish and use results, they have an independent responsibility to be open and transparent about all ties (commissioners and funding etc.) that might have a bearing on the credibility of the research/reporting that has been conducted.

39 Presentation and use of results

Both researchers and commissioners have a responsibility to prevent research results from being presented in a misleading manner. It is unethical to delimit the subject of the research with a view to producing particularly desirable results, or to present research results in an intentionally skewed manner.

Commissioners may not withhold research results in such a way that the findings that are made public give a distorted picture of one or more circumstances. Researchers must be protected against undue pressure from the commissioner to draw particular conclusions, and in certain situations should invoke their right to withdraw from assignments.

Commissioners must accept that researchers have a right to discuss their mandates as part of research reporting: for example, to point out that perspectives, interpretations or considerations of manifest professional or practical relevance have been omitted from the mandate. The requirements regarding source material and valid reasoning are especially important when research may have consequences for the reputation or integrity of individuals or groups, or when it may affect political decisions. In such cases, it is particularly important for researchers to discuss alternative interpretations of their findings, or to point out scientific uncertainty. If the results are used in a selective or tendentious manner by a commissioner, researchers has an obligation to point this out, and to demand that the misleading presentation be corrected.

40 Right and duty to publish

Knowledge is a collective good, and as a general rule, all results should be published. This is also important to enable the results to be critically examined or re-used.

Generally, researchers have a right and duty to publish complete descriptions and results of research projects. This may be important both for preventing research results from being presented selectively or in a skewed manner, and for giving others the opportunity to test the results.

However, private companies and government agencies may have a legitimate desire to protect themselves and their interests. Both negotiating strategies and the interests of national security may dictate that publication should be postponed or, in special cases, that the results should not be published. With exceptions for such situations and privacy considerations, commissioners and researchers should endeavour to ensure that the public has access to results. Any restrictions on the right to publish must be stipulated by contract at the start of the project.

F) DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH

41 Dissemination as an academic responsibility

Researchers and research institutions are obliged to disseminate scientific knowledge to a broader audience outside the research community.

Dissemination of research involves communicating scientific results, methods and values from specialised research fields to people outside the disciplines. Dissemination may be aimed at researchers in other disciplines, or at a broader audience. It may be a matter of disseminating established insights into the discipline, or results from more recent research.

The relationship between research and reporting is especially close in the humanities and social sciences, where a scholarly publication often also is a form of dissemination. In some cases there is not even a clear line between research and dissemination, because the knowledge is mediated as part of a public debate which in turn influences the research questions and answers.

One of the main reasons for dissemination of research is to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the general public. Dissemination is also important for a well-functioning democratic society. Dissemination should contribute to maintaining and developing cultural traditions, to informing public opinion and to the dissemination of knowledge of relevance to society. Society has invested large sums in research, and therefore has a right to share the results.

42 Requirements for individuals and institutions

Research institutions must create conditions for extensive and broad dissemination of research characterised by high quality and relevance.

Research dissemination makes ethical demands on individuals and institutions alike. Universities and university colleges have a special responsibility to disseminate knowledge, results and scientific norms and values, both in their teaching of students and in relation to public administration, cultural life and business and industry.[37] Institutions should promote dissemination, for example when appointing staff, in teaching, or through financial incentives. Institutions should also encourage dissemination in different arenas and through new kinds of learning, knowledge sharing and discourse, whether it be through the media, lecture series, conferences for non-academics or through public hearings.

Dissemination of research is also associated with freedom of expression and the infrastructure requirement in Article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution: «The authorities of the state shall create conditions that facilitate open and enlightened public discourse.»[38] Also the academic communities must contribute to these public discourses. Constitutional democracies with well-functioning public administrations and market economies are contingent on spheres in civil society that are primarily characterised not by principles of profitability and management logic, but by the principle that it is arguments that should count.

Universities and university colleges also have a responsibility to maintain and further develop Norwegian as an academic language.[39] A Norwegian academic language is important for disseminating results both to those involved and to the general public and in the public discourse.

Good dissemination calls for interaction and cooperation between research institutions and other institutions such as the mass media, schools, art institutions, communities with various beliefs and voluntary associations. Dissemination may take place with varying participation by researchers and others (such as journalists and teachers), and may be written, verbal or based on other approaches (such as exhibitions and electronic media). All those who take part in such dissemination are subject to the same norms of research ethics.

43 Interdisciplinary discourse and public deliberation

An important part of dissemination of research in a modern society emerges from the interaction between specialists in various academic disciplines and the public discourse.

Many of the major challenges facing society related, for example, to ecology, globalisation and human rights, call for interdisciplinary cooperation and the integration of academic knowledge from a number of fields. There is therefore a strong need to translate and communicate knowledge both across different disciplines and to a broader public. The development

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[37] Section 1-1, 1-3 of the Universities and Colleges Act.

[38] Article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution.

[39] Section 1-7 of the Universities and Colleges Act.

of multi-disciplinary fora at research institutions provides a good basis both for discourse among specialists and for dissemination to the broader public.

Interdisciplinary discourse can define the basic demands made of a culture of academic discourse. Researchers must express themselves clearly enough for colleagues from other fields and other participants in the discourse to take a reasoned position on their assertions. As in the case of internal academic discussions, renderings of the contributions of others must not be tendentious and persons with other opinions must not have unreasonable views falsely attributed to them.

Dissemination should be clear and plainly express both academic uncertainty and the limitations of individual disciplines. Researchers should express clearly the limitations from the perspective of their own discipline and expertise in the field in question, which may make it easier for readers and the general public to determine whether other disciplinary perspectives could lead to other interpretations. Such interdisciplinary and inter-institutional discussions can serve as a sort of extended peer review.

44 Participation in public debate

Researchers should contribute scientific arguments to the public debate. Researchers should express themselves fairly and clearly in order to avoid tendentious interpretations of research results.

When researchers take part in public debate, they are using academic expertise as a basis for contributions to the formation of public opinion. They may contribute information in an area that is being debated, they may take a reasoned position on controversial topics, or they may seek to introduce new topics onto the public agenda.

Researchers have a responsibility to express themselves clearly and precisely, so that their research cannot be interpreted tendentiously and misused in political, cultural, social and economic contexts. Researchers should also engage in discussions about reasonable interpretations and justifiable use of research results. Other organisations and institutions, such as public relations departments, the mass media, political parties, interest organisations, enterprises and administrative bodies also have a responsibility to conduct themselves reasonably and acceptably in this context.

Participation in public debates places great demands on fairness, reasoning and clarity. There may be grey areas between participation as a researcher and participation as a citizen. Researchers should state their discipline and not only their degree or position, when acting in the capacity of expert. When academics take part as citizens, they should not use their titles or refer to special academic expertise.

45 Accountability in dissemination

The requirement of accountability is equally stringent in dissemination as in publication.

The audience of popularised academic presentations cannot be expected to be able to verify assertions made by specialised researchers. Accordingly, the requirement of accountability is equally stringent in dissemination as in academic publication.

Footnotes/endnotes and reference lists may seem cumbersome, but they can also help the interested reader to navigate through a large body of literature. It is also important to remember that specialists in other disciplines are part of the relevant audience.

Researchers may share hypotheses, theories and preliminary findings with the public in the course of a project, but must be cautious about presenting preliminary results as final conclusions.

46 Reporting results to participants

Researchers have a special obligation to report results back to the participants in a comprehensible and acceptable manner.

Participants in research have a right to receive something in return. This also applies to research where large groups of informants are involved. Dissemination of research may help to meet this requirement when direct contact with each participant is not possible.

Participants must also have the opportunity to correct misunderstandings where this is possible. Dialogue between researchers and participants in the course of the research project may often strengthen the research. Researchers must present the results so that key findings and insights are communicated in a manner that can be understood by the participants.

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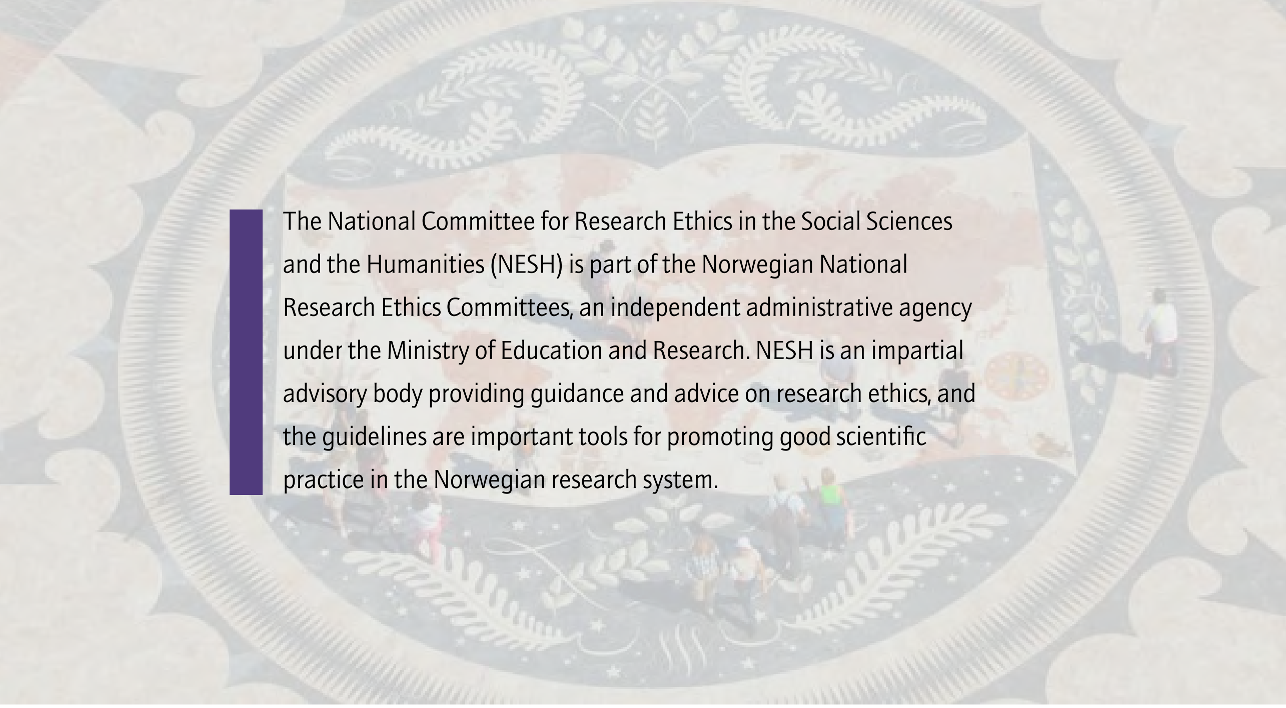

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) is part of the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, an independent administrative agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. NESH is an impartial advisory body providing guidance and advice on research ethics, and the guidelines are important tools for promoting good scientific practice in the Norwegian research system.

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