

# Policy on Ethical Approval at Wrexham University

## Introduction

Wrexham University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics, rigour, and integrity in all its research and seeks to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of all those involved in the research it produces. To fulfil this commitment, the University requires that all research conducted under the auspices of the University which involves human participants, human material, personal data, animals, or research which may have an impact on the environment, must receive research ethics approval before it commences. The University's Research Ethics Committee cannot provide retrospective approval of research proposals. If you collect data before you have gained approval, you will not be able to use that data and may be subject to investigation of potential research misconduct.

## Scope

This policy provides a framework to ensure that all research is conducted in accordance with fundamental ethical principles. It applies with equal force to projects undertaken by staff or students of the University in any location, including joint work with third-party organisations. Research should be interpreted broadly to include all investigations being conducted under the auspices of the University which generate knowledge, understanding, or assessment, whether funded or unfunded.

## Principles

The University is committed to ensuring that its research activities involving human participants, human material, personal data, animals, or research which may have an impact on the environment are carried out safely and in a way which respects the rights, dignity, and welfare of all involved. The guiding principles of the University are outlined as followed.

1. Research should aim to maximise the benefits for individuals and society and minimise the potential risk and harm. All potential risks and harm should be mitigated by robust precautions and all participants involved must be warned before participating.
2. Where possible, all participants in research must take part voluntarily, free from any coercion or undue influence, and their rights, dignity, and autonomy should be respected and appropriately protected.
3. The confidentiality of the information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected. Wherever possible, data should be anonymised and there should be full compliance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data can only be disclosed when permission to disclose is part of the consent procedure.
4. Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided, they should be made explicit.
5. Research should be designed, reviewed, and undertaken to ensure recognised standards of integrity are met, and quality and transparency are assured.
6. The research must conform to all relevant statutory requirements, and to the requirements of the institution in which the research is undertaken.

## Responsibilities

The University's Research Committee is responsible for providing policy and guidance on research ethics and research integrity, ensuring an effective and robust process is in place.

The University's research ethics committees are responsible for promoting the interest of participants in research through the review of applications seeking research ethics approval and ensuring they are carried out in accordance with the University's research ethics principles, policies, and procedures.

Staff members are responsible for considering the ethical implications of their research projects, conducting their research in accordance with the University principles and procedures and obtaining formal research ethics approval from the relevant research ethics committee before research commences.

In the case of research undertaken by undergraduate or postgraduate students, the Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the above responsibilities are met.

### Review Process

The University is committed to providing an independent process of ethical review that is proportionate to the potential risk involved. This process includes a range of procedures for specific application types. All relevant procedures can be found at the end of this policy.

#### *Research that has already received ethical approval*

Research that has received prior approval from another recognised research ethics committee will still need to receive ethical approval from the University. The University Research Ethics Committee will usually review and approve these applications by recognising the approval and documentation submitted by the external ethics committee.

#### *NHS REC approval*

Research requiring the ethical review procedures of the National Health Service are required to submit an application through the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS). Where this is the case, the University will oversee this process and there is no need to get additional ethical approval from one of the University Research Ethics Committees.

#### *Research Involving Animals and Environmental Impact*

Please note that Wrexham University does not hold an establishment license required by the Animal Scientific Procedure Act 1986. Any research involving animals or research which may have an impact on the environment by staff and students should receive ethical approval from the University before commencing work and refer to the relevant procedures.

### Reporting Adverse Events

All staff and students should be familiar with the reporting of adverse events procedure before commencing any research.

### Appeals

If an application has been rejected by one of the University's Research Ethics committees or the conditions or modifications requested by the committee are deemed unacceptable by the applicant for justified research reasons, the applicant may appeal the decision of the review. Further details of this process can be found in the Research Ethics Appeal Procedure.

## Breach of Policy and Complaints

The University regards any breach of this policy or any breach of the approved terms of a project, as a very serious matter, which may result in research misconduct proceedings. Suspected breaches of this policy should be reported to the University Research Ethics Committee [rescadmin@glyndwr.a.cuk](mailto:rescadmin@glyndwr.a.cuk) who under the regulations can withhold, suspend, or withdraw approval of research, whether as part of disciplinary proceedings or otherwise.