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| Research Ethics Approval Procedure for Partner Institutions and Students |
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## Introduction

Wrexham University is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of rigor and best practices in all its research activities. This dedication extends to research projects conducted under the University’s name by its academic partner programmes. All research should be conducted ethically, responsibly and with integrity, our principles and commitment to ethical research are outlined in the [University Research Ethics Policy.](https://wrexham.ac.uk/media/marketing/research/Research-Ethics-Policy.pdf) All academic partners providing validated and franchised programmes with Wrexham University must adhere to the guidelines and ethical principles established in this policy along with any of their own institutions research ethics policies and procedures.

This procedure sets out further details of the requirement for ethical review of undergraduate and taught postgraduate projects delivered by our academic partners.

## Scope

The following procedure applies to all Wrexham University validated and franchised programmes being delivered by a partner institution, in and outside the UK. This procedure excludes online HEP programmes who must follow Wrexham university procedures and apply for ethical approval through the online research ethics application system.

## Principles

In addition to the principles outlined in the University Research Ethics Policy, all partners must comply with the following guidelines:

1. Students conducting small-scale research projects for assessment should understand the ethical principles and responsibilities they have when conducting a study under the auspices of Wrexham University.
2. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that student research projects address all potential ethical issues. They must also ensure that the application submitted for ethical review is completed to a high standard and includes all relevant information and documentation.
3. Students should receive training in research methods and ethics before embarking on their research projects to support their degree programmes.
4. Students should be advised not to undertake projects which are considered more than minimal risk.
5. Supervisors and Wrexham University Academic Links must ensure that all research projects receive ethical approval before they begin.

## Partner Ethical Review Process

Students enrolled on a Wrexham University programme should adhere to the procedures and application process established by the partner institution they are studying at. Our academic partners must establish procedures for conducting independent reviews and approving research ethics applications which adhere to the ethical principles set in the Wrexham University Research Ethics Policy.

All research ethics procedures and processes put in place by existing or new partner institutions must be approved by the Wrexham University Research Ethics Committee.

Where possible, when applications from Wrexham University students are being assessed a Wrexham University representative should be included on the Ethical Review Board (ERB) or Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the partner institution.

In cases where partner institutions do not have an application form for ethical review, they should use the form provided in Appendix 2 of this document. This application form is structured with the same framework and questions as those found in the online Wrexham Research Ethics System.

Students should conduct research that is classified as minimal risk. Partner institutions should determine how minimal risk research is defined guided by Wrexham University ‘More than Minimal Risk’ triggers outlined in Appendix 1. If the partner ethics committee determines that the proposed research involves more than minimal risk and does not have the necessary ethical review structure for a thorough review, the supervisor or academic link should refer the application to the Wrexham University Research Ethics Committee.

## Reporting

Partner Ethical Review Boards (ERBs) or Research Ethics Committees (RECs) are required to submit a report to the University Faculty Research Ethics Committee every semester. This report should include details of all ethical approvals granted for enrolled students at Wrexham University. Specifically, it must contain information for each application reviewed, including the student’s name, project title, supervisor(s), ethical considerations assessed, and the approval date. Where it has been identified that the relevant ethical approvals have not been obtained the Wrexham University [Academic Integrity Procedure](https://wrexham.ac.uk/media/marketing/quality-and-student-admin-documents/Academic-Integrity-Procedure.pdf) must be followed.

In addition, any [adverse events](https://mailglyndwrac.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/EthicsSystemDocuments/EeU01U1DUcJOowcrqYEou40BVXEj8NgnsYCPCEry2YcYpQ?e=iO3Exq) resulting from research conducted by a student enrolled on a Wrexham University validated of franchised programme should be reported to [rescadmin@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:rescadmin@wrexham.ac.uk). If academic staff in a partner institute identify a breach of research ethics approval or academic integrity, the Wrexham University [Academic Integrity Procedure](https://wrexham.ac.uk/media/marketing/quality-and-student-admin-documents/Academic-Integrity-Procedure.pdf) must be followed.

# Appendix 1: Wrexham University More than Minimal Risk Research

Wrexham University is committed to upholding the highest standards of rigour and best practices in all research activities. Research ethics reviews evaluate both the likelihood and severity of potential risks, considering the differences in ethical considerations for each situation.

Minimal risk does not mean that the standards for ethical review are lowered; rather, applications determined to involve minimal risk may be reviewed by fewer individuals or may not require a full committee review. It is important to note that a perception of minimal risk should never be used as a justification for submitting a poor-quality research ethics application.

**Research that involves ‘more than minimal risk’ may include the following scenarios:**

* **Vulnerable Populations**: This category encompasses children, young people, and potentially vulnerable individuals. Vulnerability can be defined in various ways; therefore, researchers should evaluate potential vulnerabilities within the specific context of their research.
* **Sensitive Topics:** Research involving potentially sensitive, embarrassing, or distressing topics may include participants’ sexual behaviour, illegal or political activities, experiences of violence, abuse, exploitation, mental health issues, or aspects of their personal or family lives, including their gender or ethnic identity.
* **Participants Lacking Decision-Making Capacity:** Researchers must be cautious when working with participants who may lack the capacity to make informed decisions or who lose that capacity during the research project. In the UK, conducting research with these individuals may require NHS ethical approval under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
* **Identifiable Participants:** Research that generates or utilises data involving individuals who can be identified may require careful consideration. This includes data from individuals in public roles or those representing professional viewpoints (such as elite interviews).
* **Human Material and Remains:** Any research involving human biological materials or remains falls into this category.
* **Invasive Interventions:** This includes research that requires invasive procedures such as the administration of substances, surgical incisions, or other physical interventions.
* **Animal Research:** Research that involves animals must adhere to specific ethical guidelines.
* **Deception and Covert Research:** Any research that involves deception, covert observation, or is conducted without participants’ valid and informed consent raises ethical concerns.
* **Access to Sensitive Records**: Research that involves access to personal or sensitive confidential information, or working with sensitive administrative or controlled data, necessitates careful ethical scrutiny.
* **Duty to Disclose:** Topics that raise the question of whether there is a duty to disclose information shared during the research.

Research that involves more than minimal risk will not *normally* be considered for a undergraduate or postgraduate taught student programme of study.

**Examples of Minimal Risk Research:**

* Surveys of the general population that involve non-sensitive or non-distressing topics.
* Interviews or focus groups with professionals discussing their area of expertise or with the general population on non-sensitive subjects.
* Research involving non-invasive or minimally invasive activities, such as cognitive tasks, reading materials, or reviewing videos.
* Overt observational studies where participants are not considered vulnerable within the research context.

# Appendix 2: Research Ethics Application for Partner Institutions.

### **Project Details**: Section 1

### **Project**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project Title: |  |
| Name: |  |
| Institution: |  |
| Programme: |  |
| Supervisor Name: |  |

**Collaborators**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please list any Collaborators: |  | Collaborators are members of the research team. Please note all collaborators should be added to ensure they are listed in the ethical approval of the research. |

### **Project Date**s

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project Start Date: |  | The start date of the research should not be before ethical approval has been obtained. Please enter the expected end date, please note ethical approval for a project is in place for 5 years. |
| Project End Dat: |  |

### **Application Type**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Does your research involve:  *Please select: if your research involves Human Material, Animals, of a negative impact to environment please contact rescadmin@wrexham.ac.uk* | **Human Participants**: *Please complete Section 2, 3, 5 & 6*  **Personal Data**: *Please complete Section 2, 4, 5 & 6*  **None of the above**: Please complete Section 2, 5 & 6 | **Human Participants:** a person who is the subject of the research project. This information may be gathered directly from the individual or obtained indirectly.  **Personal Data**: data that relates to a living individual who can be identified or who are identifiable, directly from the information in question; or who can be indirectly identified from that information in combination with other information.  **None of the above**- If answered ‘None of the above’, your study does not require review by a University Research Ethics Committee. |

### **Aims & Objectives**: Section 2

### **Research Aims**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please provide a summary of your research aims and objectives: |  | Please provide a summary of your research aims and the research methodology.  This section should be descriptive, giving a brief overview of the project, detailing the main aims and objectives and the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by the researcher to conduct a study. Long scientific descriptions and technical language should be avoided. |
| Please provide details of your research design and methodology: |  |
| Please describe the potential benefits and impact of your research: |  |

### **Gatekeeper**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Are there any gatekeepers involved in this project? If **YES,** please describe who the gatekeeper is and their role in the project |  | A gatekeeper is someone whose permission is needed in order to access an individual or groups of potential research participants. |

### **Risk**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please detail the potential risks involved in this research for the participant(s) and how these will be mitigated and managed |  | All research which involves interaction with human participants or personal data carry some level of risk. It is essential that the possible risks and adverse events are identified, discussed and potential mitigations discussed in the application. |
| Please detail the potential risks involved in this research for the researcher(s) and how these will be mitigated and managed |  |

### **Method**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please select what methods will be used in this research project: *(Select all that apply):* | Interviews  Focus Groups  Survey/ Questionnaire  Observations  Non-invasive experiment  Invasive experiment  Secondary analysis  Audits/ Service Evaluations taking place in the NHS.  Internet-mediated research/ data mining  Visual/ Audio Methods  Autoethnography  Other | Different research methods have different ethical considerations. Consider the ethical implications of the method(s) you are using. For example, observations might compromise the ethical principle of consent, or for Focus Groups, the withdrawal process. |
| Please discuss the ethical considerations of your research method: |  |

### **Human Participants**: Section 3

### **Participants**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please provide details of the participants involved in the research project, including any inclusion or exclusion criteria's: |  | Provide details of the key characteristics of your participants (for example, age, gender). State and briefly justify any inclusion and exclusion criteria that will be used for both identification and recruitment of participants. |
| State the number of participants to be recruited and explain how the sample size was decided: |  |

### **Population**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Does your research involve any of the following participant groups *(select all that apply)* | Children and young people under the age of 18  Potentially vulnerable groups  Participants who lack capacity to make decisions or who during the research project come to lack capacity.  Participants who may be identifiable in the material used or generated.  None of the above | The following groups to include in your research project might be considered more than minimal risk, you should ensure you have considered the ethical considerations of involving these groups in research. |

### **Location**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please provide details of the research site(s): |  | Specify where the research will be conducted within the chosen research site(s). If your research is conducted online, please detail the platforms that will be used. |

### **Recruitment**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| How will potential participants be identified, approached and recruited? |  | Please provide details of your recruitment strategy, ensure you attach all poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) that will be used for recruitment'. The process of reimbursement or compensation should not be coercive or interfere with the freely given, informed consent procedure. |
| If participants receive reimbursements of expenses or compensation, please detail the amount and this process. |  |

### **Consent**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please explain the process of obtaining informed consent from participants: |  | Participants should be provided with sufficient information on the study through the use of participant information sheets and participant consent forms, wherever possible. Please detail the process of obtaining consent, including how long participants will have to consider taking part. |

### Ethical Considerations

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Will your study design involve deliberately deceiving participants in any? |  | **Deception**  Deception involves misleading participants as to the true nature of the study. The use of deception must be justified by its potential scientific value to the research. Whenever possible, researchers must debrief subjects about the deception. |
| If **Yes,** explain how and when deception will be employed and why the use of this is necessary to the research. Please detail if a debrief will be used at the end of the study. |  |
| Does your research include discussion of sensitive, emotive or distressing topics |  | **Sensitive Topics**  The following may be considered sensitive topics: sexual behaviour, illegal or political behaviour, experience of violence, abuse or exploitation, mental health, gender, ethnicity or immigration status. In studies which consider sensitive topics a debrief can be vitally important in order to signpost participants to relevant sources of support. |
| If **Yes**, how will the potential risks of sensitivity or distress be managed and minimized. Please detail if a debrief will be used at the end of the study. |  |
| Will your research raise any potentially issues of disclosure |  | **Disclosure**  The confidentiality of information supplied by participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected. Researchers should consider if it is necessary to collect data, which might result in having to disclose confidential information. |
| If **YES**, please provide details of the security measures and protocols in place to protect the participant and researcher if issues of disclosure arise |  |

### **Personal Data**: Section 4

### **Source**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please provide details of the source of the personal data. |  | Detail the personal data that will be collected in the project including the source of this data. If you are receiving personal data for further processing, please detail the current owner or dataset that will be access. |
| Please provide details of how you will be collecting the personal data set: |  |

### **Publicly Available**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Is the data set publicly available? |  | Information in any form that is generally accessible, without restriction, to the public. Please consider publicly available may not mean within the public domain or re use for research purposes. |
| If, **NO**, please detail how you have obtained permission to access the data. |  |

### **Consent**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please give details if you have consent in place to access and process the personal data for research purposes. |  | Please consider if consent was sought to process and share personal data for research purposes outside the original scope of data collection. |

### **Data Management**: Section 5

### **Data Type**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What data will you collect or create? |  | Please list all types, format and volume of the data that will be collected during the duration of the project. Outline how the data will be collected/created, including what standards or methodologies will be used. |
| How will the data be collected or created? |  |

### **Data Storage**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Where will the data be stored and backed up during the research? |  | All research data, electronic and physical data should be stored confidentially and securely. |

### **Access**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Who will have access to the data during the research |  | Please provide details of who will have access to the data during the duration of the research project, please note students should provide access to the data to their supervisor. |

### **Retention & Destruction**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset? |  | Consider how the data may be reused e.g. to validate your research findings, conduct new studies. Student research data should be stored until the end of studies +1 year and transferred to the supervisor if required to be retained for a longer period. |
| Please describe how the data will be destroyed at the end of the retention period |  |

### **Open Access**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| If the data will be open access for use by other researchers, please detail this process |  | Researchers should make their data as openly as possible. Please detail the procedure in place to share and make any data openly available and what restrictions and controls will be in place. |

### **Dissemination**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| How will the results of the study be reported and disseminated? |  | Provide details of how you will share and what outputs will be produced from your findings. Consider if there are any ethical considerations for disseminating your research. |
| Describe any ethical considerations relevant to the dissemination of findings: |  |

### **Storage**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| How will the data collected be stored?   * Anonymised, * Pseudonymised, * Identifiable |  | **Anonymised**- information which does not relate to an identified or identifiable person  **Pseudonymised**- the data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information  **Identifiable**- any information, personal or indirect, that can link a participant to the research study |

### **Disclosure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please provide details of any potential data disclosures and limits to confidentiality and how these will be managed |  | Please consider any issues which may arise during the research project which pose a threat to the confidentiality of the data. |

### **Data Transfer**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Will you transfer personal data outside the UK |  | UK Data protection legislation prohibits the transfer of personal data outside of the United Kingdom, unless appropriate safeguards are in place. |

### **Governance**: Section 6

### **Further ethical issues**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please identify and detail any further ethical considerations related to your project |  | If there are any further ethical considerations which haven't been identified in the application, please detail them here. |

### **Experience**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please provide details of the research ethics training you have received and your experience in the methods you will be employing in this research |  | You should have adequate training and experience in research ethics and the methods being employed before research commences. |

### **C**o**nflicts of interest**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest that are relevant to this research study and provide details of the process that has been agreed to manage these |  | A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances that create a risk that an individual’s ability to apply judgement or act in one role is, or could be, impaired or influenced by a secondary interest. |

### Attachments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document Types** | **Tick all that apply** | Please submit all relevant documentation when submitting your application. Please indicate in this section what has been included in the application and the version of each document. |
| Participant Information Sheet |  |
| Consent Form |  |
| Recruitment Advert |  |
| Gatekeeper Approval |  |
| Debrief |  |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment |  |
| Disclosure Procedure |  |
| Distress Procedure |  |
| Research Tool |  |
| Risk Assessment |  |
| Other |  |

### Applicant Declaration

I confirm that the information in this research ethics application, including any supporting documentation is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I confirm that I have read the Wrexham University Research Ethics Policy ant have considered the principles of the policy within this application and should report an adverse event to the project the University Research Ethics Committee. I understand that I may not proceed with primary data collection / experimental work until I have received confirmation of ethical approval.

**Date: Applicant Signed:**

### Supervisor’s Approval

**Date: Supervisor Signed**

### Research Ethics Approval

**Date: Ethics Approver Signed:**

### Notification to Wrexham University:

**Date: Submitted By:**

**Submitted To:**