



# **Southampton Solent University Research Ethics Policy and Procedure**

Autumn 2024



# Southampton Solent University Research Ethics Policy and

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## Statement of Principles

1. The University's Ethics Policy is set out in the list of Principles shown below. The implementation and monitoring of this Policy is the responsibility of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, as detailed in Section 3D of the Academic Handbook<sup>1</sup>. This policy is to be reviewed yearly during the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee (REIC) Autumn meeting. Each ethics standing panel shall promote procedures for ensuring the implementation of the policy and report annually to the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee.
2. To support the University's Strategy 2025<sup>2</sup> in respect of Research and Knowledge Exchange, the Ethics Policy aims to promote values that underpin an inclusive community which recognises openness and respect within all aspects of university life. In relation to ethical considerations all members of the University have the right to raise issues with their standing/specialist panel representative on the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee.
3. These Principles are applicable to all staff, students, and franchise students at Southampton Solent University, its satellite locations, and any limited companies set up under its auspices. Where the term 'departments' is used, for ease and consistency, this encompasses all the following: departments, institutes, centres and teams. It is a fundamental principle that all staff and students engaged in teaching, research, and innovation adopt a continuing personal commitment to act ethically, to encourage ethical behaviour in those with whom they collaborate and follow the standing/specialist panel and University Ethics Policy and procedures.
4. Should a conflict arise between the Southampton Solent University Ethics Policy and that of a relevant professional or statutory body, a request may be put forward to the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, including a rationale, for any deviation from the University Policy.
5. In the first instance it will be the responsibility of the researcher to monitor the conduct of research that has received ethical approval (for students, in consultation with supervisors). Departments are responsible for ensuring that students and staff complete an ethics review where required and obtain approval before commencing any data collection. The policy relates to all research carried out at or in conjunction with Southampton Solent University – whether funded or unfunded – involving human participants, animal subjects, or involving data relating to directly identifiable human subjects (whether living or recently deceased); it also applies to research which does not involve human participants such as financial data, conducted by principal researchers. It does not relate to other ethical judgements. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'principal researcher/PI' refers to members of the Solent's community including academics, contract research staff, professional services staff, postgraduate researchers, Master's students, undergraduate students, and franchise students.
6. As a Higher Education establishment the University adheres to the relevant concordats and guidelines for research and ethics, for example: the British Educational Research Association (BERA), the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) and British Medical Association (BMA).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/quality-management/academic-handbook/3d-research-innovation-and-enterprise-committee.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.solent.ac.uk/strategy-2025>

# Policy

## Research ethics review procedure

7. Where research involves human participants (for example, for interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, etc.), or involves data relating to directly identifiable human subjects (including user-generated data on social media platforms), research is considered medium/high risk and will be referred to the relevant panel or committee.
8. When reflecting on the ethical implications of their research, researchers should refer not only to this policy but also to any/all the following where relevant: disciplinary frameworks, funders' guidance, legal statutes, cultural norms of those they intend to involve in their research. Researchers should also be familiar with the basic principles of the Belmont Report<sup>3</sup>, which are: Respect for persons (and their autonomy), Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Distributive justice (ensuring benefits and burdens are shared equitably).
9. Departmental deputy chairs and panel members will be selected by the Heads and Deputy Heads of each department. Ethics applications considered Medium and High Risk will be fielded to the panel members by the deputy chair.
10. If surveys are to be used to collect primary data, then the only permitted platform for this is JISC. Psychology may use Pavlovia (PsychoPy), as confirmed by the University Ethics Committee in Summer 2023.
11. Ethical approval must be obtained via the online ethical review form<sup>4</sup> guidance on how to complete the form can be found on the ethics and integrity portal page<sup>5</sup>. The form will allow researchers to provide specific details of their research and submit supporting documents, such as consent forms and surveys. Applications for ethics review will be categorised as follows;
12. **Low:**  
**Low risk research may consist of the following;**
  - Research that does not involve humans or living animals in any way
  - Does not involve sensitive materials or topics that might be considered offensive, distressing, politically or socially sensitive, deeply personal or in breach of the law (for example criminal activities, sexual behaviour, ethnic status, personal appearance, experience of violence, addiction, religion, or financial circumstances);
  - Does not have a detrimental impact on the environment, habitat or species; and
  - Does not involve the development for export of 'controlled' goods regulated by the Export Control Organisation (ECO)

Student researchers will have their applications reviewed by their supervisors. Staff researchers' applications will be reviewed by the Ethics Standing Panel for the department.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> [https://solent.ethicsreview.org.uk/users/sign\\_in](https://solent.ethicsreview.org.uk/users/sign_in)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.solent.ac.uk/research-innovation-enterprise/research-at-solent/support/ethics-and-integrity>

Researchers will receive an automatic notification of any comments, approvals, or rejections. If an application is not deemed to be low risk, then it will progress to the next stage of the review process.

### 13. **Medium:**

**Research that is not considered low risk is approved through the Departmental Ethics panel, below are some examples.**

- Primary data involving humans, for example, interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations of people, etc.
- User generated data (e.g., from discussion forums, social media platforms, vlogs or blogs, comments on posts or articles)
- The collection of any personal data/identifiable information (e.g., names, email addresses, IP addresses, social media profiles or meta-data, visual material, etc.), or use of any secondary data that include any personal data/ identifiable information
- Any other information that could identify (or potentially lead to the identification of) a living individual. For example, where information from micro datasets, if combined, could lead to the identification of individuals, or where an online search for particular wording could lead to the identification of an individual.
- The potential that findings/conclusions/publication may have damaging repercussions for any individuals (reputation, stigma, bullying) or groups with protected characteristics
- Research where there may be a detrimental impact on the environment, habitat or species
- Any other reason why the research might raise ethical issues You must obtain approval of your ethics review before you commence any data collection

Both student and staff researchers with projects deemed medium risk will have their research reviewed by the departmental ethics panel

### 14. **High:**

**High risk applications are deemed to be those where the research:**

- Will involve vulnerable<sup>6</sup> groups or sensitive<sup>7</sup> topics
- Will involve children/minors
- May involve the development for export of 'controlled' goods
- Will involve living animal subjects
- Might induce emotional or psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation
- Involves deception of participants or that is intentionally conducted without their full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out
- Might have negative repercussions for individuals or groups
- Requires permission of a gatekeeper<sup>8</sup> for initial access to participants (where involvement of the gatekeeper might raise issues of whether participants' involvement is truly voluntary);
- Will involve more than minimal risk of harm (whether emotional or physical) to the

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<sup>6</sup> Vulnerable as defined in the vulnerable participants section of this policy

<sup>7</sup> Sensitive topics include illegal activities; extremism and radicalization, mental health, trauma, violence, identity, sexuality, substance abuse, body image, child abuse/neglect, family violence, parental separation, death

<sup>8</sup> This includes internal access to the Solent Community by Solent staff/students. Please contact [ethics@solent.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@solent.ac.uk) for more info

- participants or the researcher(s)
- Research conducted overseas

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

High risk applications in most cases can be reviewed by the departmental panel but the panel may refer projects to Research Ethics and Integrity Committee (REIC) on a case-by-case basis for advice or review if there are specific concerns.

15. Where cohorts of students are undertaking projects as part of their coursework, and these projects are expected to stay within the parameters of low risk outlined above, the course leader may submit a single consolidated ethics review form, via the online ethics system for the cohort that covers the types of projects the students will be conducting. This is to prevent a large buildup of applications coming in at peak times of the year.
16. Any queries regarding the ethics review procedure should be directed to the Research Ethics and Integrity officer at [ethics@solent.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@solent.ac.uk) in the first instance.
17. The Request for Ethical Approval Form will be submitted to the supervisor (student researchers only) or Chair of the relevant Ethics Standing/Specialist Panel via the Solent Ethics App<sup>9</sup>. Additional and relevant information may also be submitted, as appropriate, for example the proposed research questionnaire, information about informed consent, written communication with the gatekeeper, etc
18. The Chair of the relevant Ethics Standing/Specialist Panel will appoint two members of the Panel from the most appropriate discipline/service and together they will undertake the Ethical Review. The Chair should ensure that the two members, given their position, role or duty within the Department/Hub/Service, have no interest which might affect, or be perceived as being capable of affecting, their judgement.
19. The Chair may also appoint one additional member of staff outside of the Panel membership to undertake Ethical Review when there is a requirement for specialist/expert knowledge not available to the panel membership. This would particularly apply to collaborative/cross-disciplinary projects. The appointment is valid for the duration of the said review only.
20. Should a Chair or Panellist wish to apply for ethical review for their own project, their application should be submitted to an alternative department/service via the App. Applications under these circumstances should first be brought to the attention of the Ethics and Integrity Officer, so they can advise which department to submit to. Appointments under these circumstances are valid for the duration of the said review only.
21. Researchers will receive an outcome of their initial application within 10 working days. If approvers require further information or revisions, the approver may request this via the App, once the researcher has provided the additional information, the approver has a further 10 working days to inform the student of their decision.
22. The Ethics Review process leads to three kinds of decisions:
  - Approved (ethically sound, permission to proceed);

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<sup>9</sup> Applications are reviewed by panellists from their own department only, except where this poses a conflict of interest

- Amendments required, revise and resubmit (suitable changes required)<sup>10</sup> or
- Rejected (Study cannot be conducted - not suitable as a research study)

## External Review and collaboration

23. In some instances, research may fall under the rubric of other external ethics review bodies (e.g., NHS Research Ethics Committees, or the Research Ethics Committee of another university). In these cases, the researcher should provide details of the external review body in the third parties and collaboration section of the Solent Ethics App. The researcher should provide a copy of the letter of ethics approval from the external body. Full ethical review may not be required in addition to this<sup>11</sup>, and a record of the external approval will be kept on file.
24. Where research involves more than one institution, each institution retains formal responsibility for overseeing the ethical review of research conducted under its auspices. Researchers should seek approval and accept the decisions made by the Research Ethics Committee of both institutions.
25. The terms of the research and innovation activity being undertaken on behalf of a sponsor must be agreed in advance. Wherever the work is undertaken in collaboration with other institutions, either in the UK or abroad, it is essential to ensure that the policies of those institutions meet the standards of the University's Ethics Policy. The terms will usually include the specification of the research and innovation, the roles and responsibilities of the person carrying out the activity. The need for confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements must be negotiated in advance.

## Psychology, Nursing studies, and Sport & Exercise Science

26. Students and staff engaging in research within these fields are required to fill in an additional section of the ethics review form with questions specific to their sector.

## Amendments

27. Amendments can be made within the ethics review system at any time in the application process, including after approval. Deputy chairs and/or supervisors will be notified of amendments to the application and will be able to review and comment as normal. Depending on the nature of the changes made, panel review may be necessary.

## Vulnerable groups

28. Research involving vulnerable groups is automatically considered medium to high risk depending on the nature of the research
29. Please note that Southampton Solent follow the ESRC<sup>12</sup> definition of vulnerability as follows: 'Vulnerability may be defined in different ways and may arise as a result of being in an abusive relationship, vulnerability due to age, potential marginalisation, disability, and due to

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that there is no limit to the number of revisions and this number will not affect the perceived validity of the study

<sup>11</sup> The Chair of Ethics will take this decision

<sup>12</sup> Economic and Social Research Council definition <https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/research-with-potentially-vulnerable-people/>

disadvantageous power relationships within personal and professional roles. Participants may not be conventionally 'vulnerable' but may be in a dependent relationship that means they can feel coerced or pressured into taking part, so extra care is needed to ensure their participation is truly voluntary.'

30. Conversely, participants may appear to belong to a vulnerable group under the above definition, but do not self-identify as vulnerable. Care should be taken not to assume that a participant is vulnerable because, for example, they identify as disabled. We acknowledge that not all research subjects who fall into a specific vulnerability category identify as such, but that in this case the researcher should act on the assumption that the sample group (all research subjects) is.

## Research involving children

31. Research involving children and/or minors is automatically considered high risk.
32. Where staff or students are involved in regulated activity with children, the relevant DBS checks are undertaken by People and Development or by the panellists. Any research involving the requirement of a DBS also must be a Solent approved Enhanced DBS (applicable to professional practice courses and where there are coaching placements). Any staff, volunteers or student ambassadors that do not have a valid DBS check should not participate unsupervised in a regulated activity (as defined by the DBS criteria) with children or vulnerable adults.
33. Where gatekeepers are approached in research involving children, consent can only be given if a parental assent form has been signed.

## Informed consent and age of consent

34. Ethical conduct in research and innovation demands respect for the rights of others directly or indirectly affected by the research. For human participants, both their physical and personal autonomy should be respected. However, whilst it is recognised that much scientific research involving the use of human participants will, by its very nature, often conceal from participants the true purpose of the enquiry or experiment, this concealment should be at the minimum level essential to conduct that research.
35. There should also be no reasonable expectation that harm would come to participants and that it should conform to the requirements of relevant professional bodies and any legal requirements. Additionally, participants should be fully informed and briefed upon completion with opportunities to be informed of the findings. Other than these circumstances, participation in the research and innovation should be on the basis of fully informed consent and participants' rights to privacy should be guaranteed. Written consent should be obtained where appropriate.
36. There should be no coercion of any kind and, where remuneration is offered, this should be declared and carried out in an ethical manner. Care should be taken that it is not offered as an inducement to surrender ethical rights or accept risk of physical or psychological harm. Any remuneration should therefore only be at a rate appropriate to recompense the individual concerned for their time and expenses.
37. At the onset of the investigation, investigators should make plain to participants their right to



withdraw from the research at any time, irrespective of whether payment or other inducement has been offered.

38. Persons carrying out the research and innovation should consider the ethical implications of that activity, including the physiological, psychological, social, political, religious, cultural and economic consequences of the work for the participants, possible observers and society prior to its commencement.
39. Where participants are not able to give informed consent, the person carrying out the scholarly activity should have regard to the advice of the appropriate body. Under the Mental Capacity Act, no one gives consent on behalf of a person lacking capacity. Instead, the researcher is required to seek advice from a consultee on what the wishes and feelings of the person might be and whether they should take part. The consultee gives advice, not consent in law.
40. All research and innovation involving children under the age of 18 requires the informed consent of parents (or those in loco parents), or the single consent of a person or gatekeeper for a group of children **only** if a parental assent form has been signed. Where real consent cannot be obtained due to impairments in understanding or communication, advice must be sought from the appropriate standing/specialist panel representative of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee.

### Recruitment of participants using social media

41. No external study calls for participants should be shared on Southampton Solent University social media unless expressly permitted by a senior manager<sup>13</sup>.
42. Approval for sharing should only be granted if there is confidence that the study would be considered ethical under the Southampton Solent University ethical approval process (regardless of it having external ethical approval or not). This option greatly lessens the chances of reputational damage to Southampton Solent University whilst also recognising that there may be some cases whereby sharing an external call for participants is appropriate<sup>14</sup>.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

43. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research is a quickly evolving process, in the first instance any use of AI in research at Solent must adhere to the principles of this ethics policy, as well as the AI and Academic Integrity Policy<sup>15</sup>, and consider aspects of data privacy and information security.
44. If a department does not permit the use of Generative AI for student projects, then this must be clearly communicated, along with the fact that unauthorised use may amount to academic misconduct.
45. Any use of AI by staff or students at any stage of research should be highlighted in the ethics application, and further details should be provided if requested by the ethics panel. Any

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<sup>13</sup> Senior manager is defined as a Head/Deputy Head of Department or departmental Ethics Deputy Chair

<sup>14</sup> There are cases when sharing such posts may be appropriate, for example if a research study is being conducted by known peers and a reciprocal arrangement is in place.

<sup>15</sup> <https://students.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/solent-learning-and-teaching-institute/ai-and-academic-integrity-policy.pdf>

participants in the research must also be made aware of the use of generative AI, for what purpose and how this affects their data.

### Deceptive and covert scholarly activity

46. While it is recognised that there is a continuum of covert – overt research and innovation whereby the person carrying out the research and innovation is required to keep the content of the research and innovation to him/herself, the person/s carrying out the research and innovation should endeavour, wherever possible and practicable, to avoid the use of deception in their research and innovation.

### Anonymity and legal consideration

47. The anonymity and privacy of participants in research and innovation should be respected. Personal information relating to these participants must be held in a confidential and secure place in line with GDPR. For further information, please refer to Annex B of this document and Solent’s data protection policy<sup>16</sup>. Further queries can be directed to the Information Rights & Records Senior Officer reachable at [information.rights@solent.ac.uk](mailto:information.rights@solent.ac.uk).
48. In the event that confidentiality and/or anonymity cannot be guaranteed, the participant must be warned of this in advance. Should the investigator find themselves in the position where they are required by law to break any undertaking of confidentiality, they should seek guidance from the Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee.
49. The agreement on intellectual property should be made clear at the outset when writing the terms of the agreement and in line with the Southampton Solent University’s Intellectual Property Rights Policy
50. The constraints of the contract must not compromise the overriding principles of non-maleficence and beneficence, legal obligations, and any pre-existing rights.

### Research conducted outside the UK

51. Any student or staff member conducting research abroad must complete a Risk Assessment form to be submitted to Health and Safety; and Seek advice whether directly from the United Kingdom Foreign Office or via their website to ensure the safety of the destination being visited. Further reasonable steps must be made to inform the destination country of the intention to conduct research within their territory(ies). Steps to be taken must be outlined by the researcher in the relevant section of the ethics form.
52. University sponsored research carried out abroad must uphold the ethical standards outlined in this policy while also being conscious of local expectations, practices, and laws. Any research that would require ethical review when carried out in the UK should be subject to appropriate ethical review when carried out overseas. To decide whether this is the case, researchers who wish to rely on an overseas ethical review process should seek confirmation from the Solent research ethics committee to ensure that the overseas process is in line with this policy. Researchers should consult their departments in the first instance before applying for ethical approval.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/policy-governance-and-information/data-protection-policy.pdf>

## Funding

53. While the guiding principle of Solent's research funding stance is to generate funds to facilitate research, there are situations where it is not appropriate for Solent to accept money from a particular funder, either in general, or for a particular project where such funding might conflict, or be inconsistent, with the aims, objects or activities of Solent, as set out in our Solent Values statement or elsewhere.
54. In considering whether to accept funding, particular attention should be given to the question of whether doing so could conflict, or readily be perceived to conflict, with the independence or integrity of the researcher, of the researcher's research team or department, or Solent, or otherwise conflict with the aims, objects and values at Solent.

## Staff Development

55. The Research and Innovation Office is responsible for monitoring the work of the Standing/Specialist Panels, continuing the work of ethics training and awareness, in association with Heads of Department.
56. Research Ethics training *Research Ethics in Practice* is available for staff<sup>17</sup> and students<sup>18</sup> on SOL. Students should complete this training in advance of applying for ethics. Staff should complete before applying for ethics, or before they become responsible for supervising students, joining a panel, or becoming a deputy chair. Certificates on completion of the training should be sent to the ethics officer at [ethics@solent.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@solent.ac.uk).
57. Deputy chairs may ask for regular updates from the ethics officer to check uptake of the training modules within their team.

## Appeals

58. Should the Panel reject a proposal the researcher has the right to request that the decision is considered by an Ethics Appeals Panel.
59. This process is to be used sparingly and by discretion of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. To request an appeal, researchers must first contact the Ethics officer by emailing [ethics@solent.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@solent.ac.uk). Requests will then be referred to the REIC. The decision made by the REIC is final.

## Researcher, departmental and university responsibilities

60. In the first instance it will be the responsibility of the researcher to monitor the conduct of research that has received ethical approval (for students, in consultation with supervisors). The researcher, together with any Specialist Panel or Group where relevant, must ensure that there is an appropriate continuing review of the research,

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<sup>17</sup> Accessible via My Development > specialist training - General > Research Ethics: <https://learn.solent.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=31667&section=28#tabs-tree-start>

<sup>18</sup> Accessible via Dissertations and Major Projects > Research Ethics Training: <https://learn.solent.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=31634&section=3#tabs-tree-start>

taking into account any possible changes that may occur over the duration of the research project. It is the responsibility of the researcher to alert the Research Ethics Committee if any further ethical implications arise. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that data are securely held and preserved.

61. Departments are responsible for ensuring that students and staff complete an ethics review where required and obtain approval before commencing any data collection. Students should receive appropriate training including guidance on research design. Following ethics approval (whether of Low risk or Higher risk ethics applications approved by the Research Ethics Committee) Departments/ supervisors are responsible for maintaining supervision of student projects to ensure there is practical compliance with the ethics approval. Departments are asked to undertake two types of monitoring:
  - **Monitoring the status of student ethics submissions** - Departments (e.g., programme administrators or class teachers) should monitor the ethics submissions from students to ensure that where relevant:
    - Students have submitted their ethics review forms within the timeframe expected
    - Supervisors have reviewed and approved (or, where relevant, referred to the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee) the application within the timeframe expected
62. Departments must manage their ethics standing panels according to the needs of the department. There should be sufficient standing panel members that the number of ethics applications coming in can be actioned within the 14-day window.
63. The Research Ethics and Integrity Committee will periodically<sup>19</sup> conduct a selective audit of current research projects. Where significant concerns have been raised about the ethical conduct of a study, the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee can request a full and detailed account of the research for a further ethical review. Where the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee considers that a study is being conducted in a way which is not in accord with the conditions of its original approval it may consider withdrawal of its approval and require that the research be suspended or discontinued. It is the duty of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee to inform the appropriate funding body that ethical approval has been revoked.

## The Environment

64. All research and innovation should be conducted in a sustainable way with regard to the environment. Any research and innovation activity which may cause detriment to the environment, habitats or species must carry out an environmental impact assessment and a statement as to how any detrimental effects will be mitigated. Please see the Environmental Policy for more information about Southampton Solent's environmental commitments<sup>20</sup>.

## Misconduct

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<sup>19</sup> Twice per year, unless a case arises which requires urgent REIC review.

<sup>20</sup> <https://students.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/estates-and-facilities/solent-environmental-policy.pdf>

65. In the context of research and innovation, the University defines misconduct to include the following, whether deliberate, reckless or negligent:

- Failure to obtain appropriate ethical approval before the commencement of the project;
- Deception in relation to the proposal submitted; and
- Supervisor's negligence in providing appropriate ethical advice when fast tracking ethical approval for a student's project.

66. Any individual who believes that an act of misconduct relating to the ethical approval of research or innovation has occurred or is occurring should notify the Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, detailing the precise nature of the allegation and whom this concerns. The Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee will liaise with the Department concerned. Any misconduct will be examined in line with the Research Misconduct Policy<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/quality-management/academic-handbook/4t-staff-research-misconduct-procedures.pdf>

## Annex A

**A project** is defined as an activity that involves the collection of primary data, may be used interchangeably with study or research.

An investigator is defined as a student or staff member undertaking research or innovation activity.

**A principal investigator (PI)** is defined as a student or staff member taking responsibility for leading a research/innovation project.

**Human participants** are defined as including living human beings, and human data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements).

**Documentary material already in the public domain** include, for example, published biographies, newspaper accounts of an individual's activities, published minutes of a meeting, interviews broadcast on radio, television or online, diaries or letters in the public domain, and historical records authorised for public access by record offices.

**Academic audit** is a process 'to investigate the effectiveness of academic policies, procedures, or practice to protect University standards, or enhance the student learning experience, or improve the quality of course provision and/or operational effectiveness'.

**A gatekeeper** is a professional who runs an organisation through which participants are accessed, as well as a service provider, a caregiver, a relative or a guardian.

## Annex B

### Primary research and participant anonymity

This is an important update & clarification in relation to how we must ALL ensure the anonymity of our participants in any primary research we carry out whether we are a member of staff or a student. The responsibility for adhering to this ethical approach to carrying out research is primarily the researchers, however as supervisors we also have an important responsibility to be sure those whom we are supervising are acting appropriately in this regard.

Please read the following carefully and if you are in any doubt ask your departmental Ethics Deputy Chair or Deputy Head (Research)

Part of our approach to carrying out all primary research ethically is to ensure **the personal anonymity of all participants** regardless of; how we collect the data and how we use the data. Even if individual participants inform us that they do not require anonymity we need to ensure any submitted/ published work does maintain their anonymity. This applies to dissertations, FMP's, conference papers, journal articles, books, anything where primary research has been collected etc.

In practical terms this means students/researchers must make sure that:

Any reference to participants in the methods sections is produced in a manner that protects the identity of the participant (for example in a table of participants, using 'labels' such as 'Female 20-30' or 'Senior Manager') The specific job role should also be anonymised.

All references to participant names, including direct quotes used in findings/analysis must be changed in a manner that protects the identity of the participant (using 'labels' such as 'Participant 1' or 'Male participant C' etc)

All material in the appendices (ethics approval forms, consent forms, copies of completed surveys and transcripts of interviews/focus groups) are produced in a manner that protects the identity of the participant. This means the name of participants/job roles in the transcripts of interviews/focus groups are required to be changed using pseudonyms or labels such as participant 1, etc). This may mean having to blank out parts of documents included.

If you have any recorded materials of the primary research, for example you might, with permission, have recorded an interview that took place online. You can ask the participants to turn their camera off/ just use the transcription tool. You must ensure any such recordings are stored in a secure place and shared with nobody other than your supervisor, module leader or other applicable Solent University staff member, should they request to see it for legitimate reasons.

*This document was created by the Department of Business & Law in Spring 2024 and it was at the recommendation of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee in May 2024 that it is added to the Ethics Policy and Procedure as an Annex.*

## Solent Policies and referenced sources

### **Solent guidance:**

AI and Academic Integrity Policy

<https://students.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/solent-learning-and-teaching-institute/ai-and-academic-integrity-policy.pdf>

DBS guidance

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/people-and-development/guidelines-for-dbs-checks.pdf>

Environmental Policy

<https://students.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/estates-and-facilities/solent-environmental-policy.pdf>

GDPR Policy

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/our-organisation/gdpr-at-solent>

Intellectual Property Policy

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/research-innovation-and-enterprise/intellectual-property-rights-policy.pdf>

Open Access Policy

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/research-innovation-and-enterprise/open-access-policy.pdf>

Open research data policy

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/research-innovation-and-enterprise/open-research-data-policy.pdf>

Research misconduct policy

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/quality-management/academic-handbook/4t-staff-research-misconduct-procedures.pdf>

Safeguarding Policy

<https://students.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/student-services/safeguarding-policy.pdf>

Research Integrity page

<https://staff.solent.ac.uk/academic-toolkit/research-support/ethics-and-integrity>

### **External sources Referenced:**

Belmont Report

<https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html>

UKRI guidance on Vulnerable participants

<https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/research-with-potentially-vulnerable-people/>



## Review schedule and version history

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
Annually	December 2025	September 2025

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1.1	April 2023	Academic Board Summer 2023	Completed review of policy and procedure, merged the documents, and added annex/ notes and research data checklist
1.2	December 2024	Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) Jan 2025	Added sections on Social Media participant recruitment, AI, updated links, institution name, logo, font, amended mention of job titles (Associate Head to Deputy Head), added anonymity doc to annex. Data management quick checklist removed and will now be a standalone document.

### Contacts:

Position	Name	Email	Notes
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