A Policy for Research Ethics

This policy is to be followed by all members of the staff and student body at Harper Adams University when engaging in research. The Research Office will make staff and Postgraduate Research students aware of these guidelines. Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students will be made aware of them by their dissertation tutor in advance of any research being undertaken.

These guidelines will also be available on the L: drive and the Research Office Portal site.

All final year Investigational Project, masters and postgraduate research students are expected to submit a Research Ethics application through the online Research Ethics portal prior to starting any research. They must provide evidence to their supervisor (to the Research Office if postgraduate research students) that their Research Ethics application has been approved before they begin any research work.

1. Aim and Objectives

Aim

To establish and promote good ethical practice in the conduct of academic research.

Objectives

To encourage researchers to adhere to best practice relating to the ethical development, implementation and dissemination of research.

To protect the integrity and reputation of Harper Adams University.

To protect the rights of participants.

To protect the rights of fellow researchers.

To promote sustainable agriculture, enhance biodiversity and optimise energy use in an environment of finite natural resources.

2. Rigour, respect and responsibility: a universal ethical code for scientists

This is a public statement of the values and responsibilities of scientists, defined by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy as including anyone whose work uses scientific methods, including social, natural, medical and veterinary sciences, engineering and mathematics. It aims to foster ethical research, to encourage active reflection among scientists on the wider implications and impacts of their work, and to support constructive communication between scientists and the public on complex and challenging issues.

The University community is encouraged to adopt and promote this code. It captures a small number of broad principles that are shared across all disciplines.

2.3 Responsible communication: list ening and informing

Seek to discuss the issues that science raises for society. Listen to the aspirations and concerns of others.

Do not knowingly mislead, or allow others to be misled, about scientific matters. Present and review scientific evidence, theory or interpretation honestly and accurately.

(Taken from the BEIS Universal ethical code for scientists, September 2007; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-ethical-code-for-scientists)

All staff and students are encouraged to reflect on and debate how this code may relate to their own work. For example, acting with rigour, honesty and integrity may include: not committing plagiarism or condoning acts of plagiarism by others; ensuring that work is peer reviewed before it is disseminated; reviewing the work of others fairly; ensuring that primary data that may be needed to allow others to audit, repeat,

to be committed to the principles within this code. Signatories include BBSRC, NERC, Defra, FERA, FSA, APHA, Forestry Commission, Natural England, and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. The Joint Code of Practice can be accessed at https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/policies-standards/joint-code-of-practice-for-research.

Where research is to be conducted outside the UK, the researcher must establish whether local ethical review is required by the host country, and if not, how the principles of the Research Ethics Policy can be followed in developing and undertaking the research. The ethical standards that the University expects for UK research apply equally to work undertaken outside the UK.

3. Specific Guidelines for Research Ethics

3.1 Respect for the Person

- a. Respect must be shown for those participating in the research process whether actively or passively. Participants include (i) subjects of observation, inquiry, test or experiment; (ii) collaborators; (iii) those assisting with the research process; (iv) those with responsibility over the space in which the research is conducted or over the participants of the research and (v) those who form part of the immediate context in which the research is being undertaken.
- b. The University commitment to Equal Opportunities must be reflected in a non-discriminatory approach to participants in the research process. Respect for the person does not depend on gender, age, race, religion, sexuality or any other distinguishing feature.
- c. Researchers must seriously and comprehensively consider the question of informed consent in the research process. The working principle should be that participants in research should give their informed consent to the research process.
- d. Particular concern and consideration must be taken with the issue of informed consent where the research involves minors. Researchers should consider, with appropriate consultation, to what extent children are able to give their consent in the particular circumstances of the research.
- e. Consent should be obtained from the institution (c

- j. Respect for participants includes respect for privacy. Results should normally be reported in such a way that the identity of individuals cannot be determined. Particular concern must be taken where the data collected might be construed to be of a personal nature. If such data is to be collected, this should be communicated to the participant concerned before the research commences.
- k. Researchers should be clear about the type of data to be collected and the method of collection, and this must be a key consideration when obtaining informed consent. This is particularly the case when the method of data collection involves covert observation of human interaction. The researcher should take care to ensure that participants are as far as possible aware of the period during which their actions or words contribute towards the research findings. Particular care should be taken over the use of data obtained from what might normally be construed as private conversations or actions.
- I. Respect for participants includes respect for the working conditions and roles of contract staff. These should be clear and fair.
- m. Researchers must be aware of any potential conflicts of interest in their work arising from their position within the research context. In particular, researchers in a position of authority arising from or separate from the research process should be aware of placing other participants in a situation where they feel obliged to participate in the research or to produce particular results.

3.2 Respect for the Integrity of Knowledge

a. Researchers must not falsify or distort research findings, nor plagiarise the work of others. Particular care should be taken to ensure full and appropriate citation of the work of others.

3.4 Respect for the Environment

- a. Researchers should identify and follow established codes of best environmental practice.
- b. Wherever possible and practicable, researchers should minimise the use and waste of energy, reducing emissions and recycling materials.

4.8 Acknowledging the role of collaborations and other participants

In all respects of research, the contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research must be properly acknowledged. This applies to any circumstances in which statements about the research are made, including provision of information about the nature and process of the research, and in publishing the outcome. Failure to acknowledge the contributions of others is regarded as unprofessional conduct. Similarly, collaborators and other contributors carry their share of the responsibility for the research and its outcome.

4.9 The needs of new Researchers

Researchers who are new to the scientific community may face particular difficulties. Responsibility for ensuring that students and other new researchers understand good research practice lies with all members of the community, but particularly with senior researchers. Harper Adams has in place systems, which allow students, and new researchers to adopt best practice as quickly as possible, for example, formal training or mentoring schemes. More information on these systems can be obtained from the Research Coordinator or the Deputy Vice Chancellor. For research students, Directors of Study should oversee any research student training and development.

5. Legal and data protection requirements

Researchers must comply with legal requirements. In particular, they must ensure compliance with Data Protection Law. This consists of all EU Data Protection Directives, including GDPR, and all UK legislation (including the Data Protection Act 1998).

Appendix 1

Harper Adams University Board of Governors has established a Body of the Board of Governors known as the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body. The Body and its Chairman shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The holder of the University's Home Office Certificate will be the Chairman of the Body. The other members will be:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor
At least 2 Project Licence Holders
At least 1 Personal Licence Holder
Named Information Officer
Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer
Named Training and Competency Officer
Named Veterinary Surgeon

At least 2 Members not involved in animal work, at least one of whom shall be a lay member appointed by the Board of Governors

- 1. Body Authority
- 1.1 The Body is authorised by the Board of Governors to ensure that:
 - all animal use under the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 is carefully considered and justified;
 - b. proper account is taken in accordance with the ASPA Schedule 3 part 2 para 6 (3) of all aspects of welfare, or animals in relation to their acquisition, accommodation, care and use;
 - c. application informed of relevant technical and scientific developments;
 - d. consider reports to ensure that the Body can be confident that the University is meeting all of its obligations as spe

opportunities to minimise the use of animals