# Code of Practice on Research Ethics

## 1. Introduction

SAE Institute is committed to operating in an ethical way in every area to ensure the highest possible standards of decision-making and accountability.

This Code of Practice on Research Ethics sets out the role, responsibilities, guiding principles and values of those conducting research as well as those supervising the research. Include responsibilities towards all participants and subjects of research (include humans, animals, the environment and cultural materials?)

## Definition of Research

For the purposes of this Code of Practice, research is defined as any form of systematic, critical and/or creative enquiry that aims to contribute to a body of knowledge. It includes scholarly activity which analyses, synthesises and provides interpretations of ideas and information with the aim of contributing to the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines.

## 2. When Is Ethics Approval Required?

Ethical approval is required for all research that involves human participants and or testing of any kind that may have an impact on animals, the environment and items of cultural value. This is sometimes applicable to the use of data derived from humans. Research, requiring ethical approval, must not begin without full prior approval.

The term 'research' should be interpreted in its broadest sense. It encompasses a range of data-collection methods. Examples include questionnaires, observations and interviews.

The requirement to obtain ethics approval may be further explored in research-based teaching as well as with the supervising lecturer.

## 3. Scholarship and Research Ethics Committee

### 3.1. Membership

- Regional Dean (Chair)
- Academic Manager (Deputy Chair)

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- Programme Leaders

## 3.2. Quorum

The quorum for any meeting of the SAE Scholarship and Research Ethics Committee should be four members. This must include the Chair or Deputy Chair.

## 3.3. Terms of Reference

- To oversee all undergraduate and postgraduate projects for SAE EU and any other regions where Middlesex University awards are taught.
- To approve all research projects as determined by the guidelines set out in this document.
- To make a determination on any serious breach of scholarly or ethical matters related to academic activity.

## 4. Guiding Principles and Values

SAE Institute recognises that it must earn and maintain a reputation for integrity that includes, but is not limited to, compliance with laws and regulations and its contractual obligations. In many areas of activity, there are no relevant laws or regulations. In these cases, as in all others, SAE Institute will operate within a framework established by the Seven Principles of Public Life[1]. Through the Scholarship and Research Ethics committee and regional programme committees and collaboration with MDX ULTs, SAE will endeavour to enhance interdisciplinary research and good research practice.

SAE Institute has an agreed set of core behavioural values that all staff should demonstrate in all they do, in alignment with the approved SAE Code of Conduct. SAE strongly supports and encourages in all research and academic practice honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect.

## 4.1. Honesty and Integrity

This is more than observing professional standards: it is about being open, truthful and demonstrating considered and sound judgment. In all our work we will act ethically and avoid conflicts of interest, or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves. To this end we will declare and resolve any interests and

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[1] These are: Integrity, objectivity, openness, selflessness, accountability, honesty, and leadership.

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relationships and be honest and offer constructive feedback.

## 4.2. Mutual Support

In all our working relationships we treat others with consideration, dignity and respect and build a strong ethos of sharing and consultation. For example, consult and involve others in decisions and try to understand each other's points of view particularly in collaborative and interdisciplinary work.

## 4.3. Strong Personal Commitment to Colleagues and Students

We aim to understand people's needs and to see things from our students', colleagues' and clients' perspectives. We seek and listen to others' feedback, show them that we care, and deliver what we say we will.

## 4.4. Taking Personal Responsibility

We demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility to students, colleagues and SAE Institute. We are flexible, where appropriate, and challenge ourselves to do better. All staff members are expected to act honestly, conscientiously, fairly, reasonably, and in good faith at all times, having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of SAE Institute, (its mission and core values) and the rights and interests of colleagues and students.

## 4.5. Responsibilities of Supervisors

Students undertaking research as part of their studies must be supervised by an academic member of staff, acting as the project supervisor. If a member of staff is also a student conducting research, then he/she must have an appropriate academic member of staff as his/her supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring compliance with the required ethics review and approval procedures.

## 4.6. Responsibilities of Researchers Following Review/Approval

Compliance with ethics requirements is expected and the responsibility of the researcher and supervisor where applicable. Following review/approval the researcher (staff or student supported by their supervisor) must

- Report (in writing) any adverse effects or potential risks (serious or non-serious) to participants, the researcher(s) or others and include details of mitigating actions or amendments to the study.

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- Seek research ethics re-approval for any proposed changes in previously approved research applications or apply for an extension to current ethics approval. The changes may not be implemented without prior review and approval, except where necessary e.g., to immediately avoid harm.

## 5. Process for Ensuring Consideration of Ethical Issues in Research

### 5.1. Basic Principles

The Association of Research Ethics Committees set out the basic principles of ethical research[2], which are as follows:

- **Autonomy**. The participant must normally be as aware as possible of what the research is for and be free to take part in it without coercion or penalty for not taking part, and also free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without a threat of any adverse effect.
- **Beneficence**. The research must be worthwhile in itself and have beneficial effects that outweigh any risks; it follows that the methodology must be sound so that best results will be yielded.
- **Non-maleficence**. Any possible harm must be avoided or at least mitigated by robust precautions.
- **Confidentiality**. Personal data must remain unknown to all but the research team (unless the participant agrees otherwise or in cases where there is an overriding public interest, or where participants wish their voices to be heard and identified).
- **Integrity**. The researcher must be open about any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and conduct their research in a way that meets recognised standards of research integrity.

Research ethics review processes provide additional safeguards for staff, students and participants, and can positively contribute to further understanding of ethical issues, research methods and processes for students and staff. It should also be noted that research conducted without appropriate research ethics review and in some cases, approval, may not be covered by the SAE Institute's insurance. This means that should a

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participant make a claim in relation to the research, the staff or student could be personally liable.

## 6. Ethical Approval Process

1) Prior to submitting a request, students must read the Code of Practice on Research Ethics.
2) Under the guidance of the allocated supervisor, students shall complete the Ethical Approval Form (Appendix A) and submit it together with the Project Proposal.
3) The form shall be signed by both the student and the supervisor.
4) The Campus Academic Coordinator shall review the Ethical Approval Forms, paying particular attention to any potential areas of concerns (usually indicated by a 'tick' in a white box of the Ethical Approval Form).
5) Where the form indicates potential areas of concerns (i.e. where ethical questions have been raised), the Campus Academic Coordinator shall refer the matter to the SAE EU Scholarship and Research Ethics Committee.
6) The relevant coursework shall include a written statement on how and what ethical procedures were carried out.

## 7. Research Ethics Review/Approval Appeals

If staff or students are dissatisfied with the decision made by the SAE EU Scholarship and Research Ethics Committee he/she should discuss this with the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee. If the matter is not resolved an appeal against the decision of the SAE EU Scholarship and Research Ethics Committee may be made to the Academic Advisory Committee.

## 8. Associated documents
● The concordat to support research integrity
http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf

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**Code of Research Ethics: Appendix A: Ethical Approval Form**

All students planning to undertake research-based projects are required to complete parts 1 and 2 of this ethics approval form, and submit it along with their Project Proposal.

Students should note the following:
- It is essential that students have an understanding of ethical considerations central to planning and conducting research. Please refer to Code of Practice on Research Ethics further information.
- Approval to carry out research does not exempt students from ethics committee approval from institutions within which you may be planning to conduct the research, e.g. hospitals, local education authorities, prisons services, etc.

## Part 1: Questionnaire

Please answer each of these questions by clicking in the Yes or No column

| | Question | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Has the project proposal, including ethical considerations, been completed and submitted to your supervisor? | | |
| 2 | Will the project involve an intervention or change to an existing situation that may affect people and/or an evaluation of outcomes of an intervention? | | |
| | If yes, have participants been given information about the aims, procedure and possible risks involved, in easily understood language? (Attach a copy of any information sheet you may have provided, or intend to provide) | | |
| 3 | Will any person's position, treatment or care be in any way prejudiced if they choose not to participate in the project? | | |
| 4 | Can participants freely withdraw from the project at any stage without risk or prejudice? | | |
| 5 | Will the project involve working with or studying who are/have <ul><li>minors (i.e. persons under 16 years of age),</li><li>people with special educational needs,</li><li>physical/mental illness,</li><li>vulnerable in other ways,</li><li>members of a racial or ethnic minority,</li><li>not proficient in English,</li><li>in a client or professional relationship with the researcher?</li></ul> | | |
| | If yes, will signed parental consent or *in loco parentis* be obtained? | | |
| 6 | Are there any questions or procedures likely to be considered in any way offensive or inappropriate? | | |
| 7 | Have all necessary steps been taken to protect the privacy of participants and the need for anonymity? | | |
| | Is there provision for the safekeeping of written data and video/ audio recordings of participants? | | |

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| 8 | If applicable, is there provision for debriefing participants after the intervention or project? | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | If any specialised instruments, for example psychometric instruments are to be employed, will their use be controlled and supervised by a qualified practitioner e.g. a psychologist? | | |
| 10 | Will you need to put your proposal through an ethics committee related to your professional work? | | |

If you ticked any of the white boxes on Part 1 of the ethics approval form, please type in any further information alongside the relevant question number below.

| 1 | |
|---|---|
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |

**Part 2: Ethics Approval Form, Signatories Sheet**

Student's name _____

Qualification sought _____

Project title _____

Name of supervisor _____

*I confirm that the information provided on the ethical approval form is correct:*

Signature of student _____

*Given the information provided, I support the approval of this proposal on ethical grounds:*

Signature of supervisor _____

*Given the information provided, I approve of this proposal on ethical grounds:*

Signature _____ Date: _____

(Chair of Scholarship and Research Ethics Committee)

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