Undergraduate Student Research Ethics & Intellectual Property
Policy and Procedures

(2025/27)

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If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact HE Quality Officer

hequality@tameside.ac.uk [0161 908 6763]

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1.   Tameside College is committed to providing our students with a wide variety of learning opportunities. On occasion this may include supporting engagement including the inclusion of research activity involving humans or animals. This policy sets out the principles and procedure a student must follow to undertake such research.

1.2.   Research ethics are a set of moral principles underpinning the planning and conduct of research, and collection and storage of data.

2. Scope

2.1.   The College does not require staff to undertake personal research as part of their conditions of service, nor does it routinely provide physical resources for staff personal research.

2.2.   Whilst teaching staff may be supported to undertake a higher degree as part of their staff development, any research-based elements of their study would be supervised and approved under the auspices of the awarding body for the higher degree. Therefore, research ethics considerations for staff research will be the responsibility of the supervising institution.

2.3.   This policy applies only for research undertaken in undergraduate programmes, typically at level 5 or 6, where students might undertake individual or group research within a taught module, under the supervision of College teaching staff.

2.4.   This procedure below will help staff and students to identify and address ethical issues.

2.5.   All staff and students should read through the policy, follow the procedure, and contact the Head of Higher Education (HE) for further information if required.

3. Purpose

3.1.   While undertaking research staff and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct in line with the College Values and Behaviours and the HE Acceptable Behaviour Policy.

3.2.   The College requires that those supervising or conducting research during their academic duties or studies adhere to the following principles:

- demonstrate integrity, professionalism, honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication.

- observe fairness and equity.

- avoid, or declare and manage, actual or potential conflicts of interest.

- show care and respect for all participants, subjects, users and beneficiaries of research including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects.

- observe all legal, regulatory and ethical requirements laid down by the University or other statutory bodies.

- appropriate briefing and training on research ethics will be provided by supervisors for their researchers.

4. Policy principles

4.1. Need for Prior ethics review

4.1.1. Students and their teacher acting as research supervisor will conduct a risk assessment of the planned research to determine:

a) whether there are any ethical issues. If so,

b) the potential for risks to the college, the research, or the health, safety and wellbeing of researchers and research participants; and

c) what legal or regulatory requirements govern the research.

4.2. What requires ethics review:

4.2.1. At undergraduate level, ethics review and approval will be required if the proposed research includes engagement with human or animal participants.

4.2.2. Approval will not generally be required in other cases[1], but the risk assessment must always take place to confirm this.

4.2.3. The College requires that research projects conducted by staff and students within the institution and in wider community align with the wider principles in line with the Equality Act 2010.

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[1] Examples include: Applied Science practical work; creative practice; exhibition or Performance with no audience; library/ desk based research; programming; review of data held publicly (excluding collecting data from social media when ethics application is required); and review of published literature.

5. Procedure

5.1 Process for gaining ethics approval

5.1.1 If the risk assessment identifies the need for ethics approval, the student must complete the Undergraduate Research Project Ethics Proposal Form (Appendix 1), briefly describing (c.600 words) what form the research will take, identifying the various risk factors, and explaining what form the mitigation will take.

5.1.2 The completed form must be considered and approved by the supervisor **before** any primary research commences. The form and formal approval must be kept on record for five years following the student graduation (in   accordance with the Office for Students (OfS) requirement for the retention of student work). The supervisor will inform the student if the proposal has been approved or referred for further consideration, by college email, within 5 working term time days of submission.

5.1.3 If the research supervisor has concerns and feels unable to approve the   proposal, the proposal will be referred to your course lead or Head of Department for consideration. The course lead or Head of   Department will make a final decision if the proposal is in line with the College Values and behaviours and is therefore allowed to continue.

5.1.The Head of Department will inform the student of the final decision (by college email) within 10 working, term time days, of receipt of the form. The student will be advised why the proposal was not successful and will be directed to consult their supervisor to revise or recreate their proposal.

5.2 Misconduct in research

5.2.1. Students must not engage in any activity that can be classified as misconduct in research.

5.2.2 The College defines misconduct in research as including, but not limited to:

   a) Fabrication;

   b) Falsification;

   c) Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement;

   d) Plagiarism; and

e) Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for:

f) avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to humans or the environment; and

g) the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

5.2.2. Allegations of misconduct will be investigated and addressed using the College's procedures for [HE Academic Misconduct](#).

5.3. Intellectual Property

5.3.1. Intellectual property concerns creations of the mind and in the context of research may include, an invention, a design, research data and other findings of research, ideas, processes, software, hardware, apparatus and equipment, substances and materials as well as artistic and literary works (including academic and scientific publications).

5.3.2. Intellectual property created by its researchers and is automatically owned by the College unless previously agreed otherwise, for example, in a research or funding agreement with the student's employer. As such, the College and its researchers will ensure that any agreements relating to research include a provision for ownership and use of intellectual property.

5.3.3. There are situations where the College routinely waives its rights to intellectual property created by its students, such as copyright in books, publications, articles or other scholarly works produced by the student.

5.3.4. The College upholds the general presumption that any intellectual property discovered or developed using public or charitable funds should be used in line with the funder's terms, for example, disseminated in order to have a beneficial effect on society. The College and its researchers will comply with any additional conditions relating to intellectual property required by student employers or funding bodies.

5.4 Methods of Appeal

5.4.1 If you wish to appeal the decision given you may do so within 10 days of the decision following the [HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.](#)

6.   Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

6.1.   At the core of our institution's policy and procedures is a steadfast commitment to fostering equality, diversity, and inclusion in full accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#). We are dedicated to eliminating discrimination, advancing equal opportunities, and fostering an inclusive environment for all members of our college community. This commitment extends to every aspect of our processes, ensuring that it adheres to the legal obligations outlined in the [Equality Act 2010](#).

6.2.   This policy and procedure are inclusive of all Tameside College students, regardless of age, civil status, dependency or caring status, care experience, disability, family status, gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnerships, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, socio-economic background, sex, sexual orientation, or trades union membership status.

7.   Data Protection, Confidentiality, and Information provided

7.1.   We are committed to ensuring that we comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 during this process. Confidentiality of the process is linked to our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

7.2.   Accurate and comprehensive record-keeping procedures have been established to document all aspects of the above procedures. This includes the submission of documents, communication between parties, decisions, and any supporting documentation. Records will be securely maintained by the HE Quality Officer and be stored on secure servers with restricted access, and physical records will be stored in a secure location. At the end of the designated retention period, records will be disposed of securely and in accordance with our Data Retention Policy. Access to these records will be restricted to authorised personnel involved in the administration of the process.

7.3.   All research undertaken is managed and stored in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy](#).

8.   Review and Monitoring

8.1.   We are committed to ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of our policies. Therefore, a systematic and annual review process has been established to assess the policy's performance. The frequency of these reviews, conducted by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will be determined to align with the college's needs, OfS and other external bodies best practices. These reviews will take into account feedback from stakeholders, changes in legal requirements, and emerging trends in academic administration.

8.2.   Stakeholder feedback is integral to the continuous improvement of our policies and procedures. A structured feedback mechanism will be in place to gather insights from students, staff, university partners and administrators involved in the processes. Feedback surveys, focus group discussions, and other methods will be utilised to collect input. The results of these feedback mechanisms will be analysed to identify areas of strength and improvement, guiding adjustments to the policy and its procedures.

8.3.   To enhance transparency and accountability, we will implement a robust data analysis and reporting system related to our policies. The HE Quality team will compile and analyse anonymised data regarding the frequency, types, and outcomes of our procedures (no personal data will be used for these reports). Regular reports will be generated and shared with the SLT and other relevant committees, providing insights into trends, areas of concern, and the overall effectiveness of the procedures. This data-driven approach will inform future policy revisions and interventions to better support students and maintain fairness in decision-making.

8.4.   Based on the outcomes of reviews, stakeholder feedback, and data analysis, the institution reserves the right to revise this policy. Proposed revisions will undergo a thorough consultation process involving representatives from teaching staff, administration, and student bodies to ensure broad input. The revised policy will be disseminated widely to the academic community, and any significant changes will be communicated well in advance. This iterative process of review, feedback, and

revision aims to create a dynamic and responsive policy that aligns with the evolving needs of the college and its students.

8.5.   This policy and procedure are available on our website under the Policy and Procedures page and is reference in our HE Terms and Conditions and Student Handbook.

Glossary

Undergraduate programmes – courses where students are studying for their first degree.

Ethical issues- when a decision or activity conflicts with the Colleges' or society's ethical standards.

Research participants- an individual that participates in research. Information (or 'data') is collected from or about the individual to help answer the question under study

Risk assessment- an examination of a process identifying any hazards that may exist, how they may cause harm and what must be done to minimise risks.

Related documents

College Values and Behaviours

HE Acceptable Behaviour Policy and Procedure

HE Academic Misconduct policy

HE Academic Appeals policy and procedure.

Safeguarding Policy

Data Protection Policy.

Ethical Consideration and Mitigating Proposals

Please complete all sections. If a section is not applicable, write N/A.

Name of student	
Proposed research title	
Background to proposed project.	Briefly explain: 1. Background to the research enquiry 2. Study design (ie what do you propose to do) 3. Participants – who (inclusion and exclusion criteria), how many, how potential participants are identified and recruited 4. Potentially vulnerable groups 5. Methods of data collection 6. Methods of data analysis

Statement of potential ethical issues and how they will be addressed and managed responsibly. This section should be completed so that a dispassionate party can judge whether consideration of ethical	1. **To what extent is participation in your research "voluntary"? Explain, and discuss mitigation.** 2. **Do you have informed consent from participants? Are the participants capable of giving consent? Are any of the participants under the age of 18? Is there any deception or coercion? Explain, and discuss mitigation.** 3. **Is there any risk of your participants being harmed psychologically (including taking offence or being embarrassed) or physically? What is the risk of any harm becoming dangerous/permanent?**

issues has been undertaken reasonably thoroughly.	**How have the likelihood and the harm been minimised? Will the College face potential embarrassment/complaint? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**
	4. **Can participants withdraw their consent at any stage? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**
	5. **Will you need to debrief participants? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**
	6. **How is the anonymity of the participants maintained? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**
	7. **How will you maintain confidentiality? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**
	8. **How will information/data be stored during, and will it be destroyed after, the project is completed? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**
	9. **Are there any personal risks (to you) in the undertaking of this project? Explain, and discuss mitigation.**

	10. Are there any regulatory or legal requirements to address? Explain, and discuss mitigation.