

Research Ethics Policy 2025-28

LCCA Governance



London
College of
Contemporary
Arts

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Purpose

- 1.1 LCCA is committed to conducting research, including research activities within teaching (e.g. Dissertation projects), to the highest ethical standards. This policy details the principles that underpin the promotion and maintenance of an ethical culture throughout the college
- 1.2 The policy emphasises the values of respect, integrity and the promotion of an ethical culture for research driven by passion, collaboration, openness and curiosity. It also integrates the core elements of the concordat to support research integrity, honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, and care and respect
- 1.3 This Policy complements the ethical approval process which are in place at LCCA, and those of UCA and external professional bodies, to which links are provided where relevant

Scope

- 2.1 This Policy sets out the ethical framework within which the College will conduct its affairs and with which all staff, students and associates of the College will be expected to comply.
- 2.2 The college has in place robust mechanisms for ensuring accountability of its processes and decisions and for the management of risks. LCCA expects its members to abide by UCA's five commitments for research integrity:

1. Maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
2. Ensure that all our research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
3. Support a research environment that has a culture of integrity and is based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers.
4. Use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct if they arise.
5. Work together to strengthen the integrity of research, reviewing progress openly and at regular intervals.

Definition

- 3.1 Ethics: The analysis and application of ethical concepts (i.e. what is valued in society in terms of behaviour and conduct) that describe and prescribe 'right' conduct and 'good' character of individuals within specific contexts. It also encompasses the ethical culture of organisations and consideration of the factors that enable or diminish human, animal and environmental flourishing.
- 3.2 In all the College's activities it is important to develop and promote a set of core values relevant to its mission statement to provide high quality learning opportunities for students.
- 3.3 The College recognises its obligations to all those with whom it has dealings – students, employees, employers, suppliers, other educational institutions, the wider community and, to the public generally.
- 3.4 The reputation of the College and UCA, including the trust and confidence of those with whom it deals is one of its most vital assets, the protection of which is of fundamental importance. In its dealings with individuals, the College will adhere to the principles of natural justice and the civil and human rights of individuals.
- 3.5 The College will seek to encourage a culture of openness aimed at ensuring that matters connected with the operation of the College can be discussed frankly with staff and students. It will adopt and maintain procedures on whistleblowing which will enable concerns to be raised on a confidential basis, where that is appropriate, both inside and, if necessary, outside the organisation.

- 3.6 The College is committed to securing equality of opportunity for staff and students alike, to discharging its legal duties under relevant discrimination legislation and to safeguarding staff and students within the College's environment.

Policy Principles

4.1 Respect for people

All members of the college community must demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the rights, interests and well-being of students, colleagues and research participants both within and outside the college. This involves upholding the principles, processes and behaviours described in the UCA Ethics Guide and may also involve raising and escalating concerns about unethical practices, research misconduct or academic misconduct in accord with college's procedures.

4.2 Respect for external environment in research and education

All proposed research should also minimize the risk of damage/impact to the environment and impact on culture and cultural heritage. This includes living habitats, local environments and preserving sites and environments pertaining to cultural heritage.

4.3 Promotion and maintenance of the ethical culture of the college

All members of the college have an obligation to adopt an ethical approach when undertaking research and teaching-related research. This involves acting, always, in a manner that demonstrates honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, social justice and respectfulness for individuals, the environment and artefacts used in education and research.

General Standards of Ethical Behaviour

- 5.1 Ethical behaviour is characterized by honesty, fairness, and equity in interpersonal, professional and academic relationships and in research and scholarly activities. Ethical behaviour respects the dignity, diversity and rights of individuals and groups of people.
- 5.2 High ethical standards require constant attention and reinforcement so irrespective of the situation, our behaviour must at all times reflect accepted standards of ethical behaviour so that we will:
- Act in accordance with the law.
 - Be open, truthful and honest.

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- Have regard to ethical principles in all our decision-making.
- Declare conflicts of interest and manage them appropriately.
- Maintain strict confidentiality, as appropriate, with regard to personal data and any information which is sensitive.
- Maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and independence.
- Be able to justify your conduct publicly if necessary.

5.3 LCCA encourages, supports, and enables students to develop as honest, independent and active learners, who can also provide leadership, support and mentoring to others. We empower students to take responsibility for their personal and professional development and enhance their leadership and employability skills, enabling them to become sought after nationally and internationally, whether for further study or employment. Widening Participation forms one of the central themes of our college in which we aim to raise awareness of, and aspirations to, higher education both in general and at LCCA.

Learning, Teaching and Student Experience

6.1 We are committed to maintaining a high standard of learning and teaching, professional practice and academic integrity amongst staff and students. We promote an inclusive learning environment based on mutual respect for diversity of opinion and individual expression and creativity.

To this end:

- We are committed to the maintenance of excellence and quality in all our programmes, ensuring the best possible student experience with fair and transparent assessment and progression procedures.
- All our students have access to high quality guidance and support arrangements.
- We uphold the academic freedom of our staff and students to express within the law diverse or controversial opinions without fear of disadvantage.
- Ensure that all primary research requires ethical sign off to ensure that we meet legal, and regulatory frameworks and ensure participant safety.

Responsibility for this policy

- 7.1 The College's Academic Board has an over-arching responsibility to keep this policy under review and will establish Research Ethics Committees to assist in the operation of the policy and to provide guidance on ethical issues.

This policy and the effectiveness of these procedures will be reviewed on regular basis and updated if necessary.

Annex A: Ethical Principles in Practice

1. Studies and research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency.
2. Participants must be fully informed about the research or study they are invited to participate in and their consent to take part must be made voluntarily, freely and without any coercion. Consents should be recorded, ideally in writing.
3. Risks should be managed so that harm and/or damage arising from the research is avoided or minimised wherever possible and measures should be taken to ensure that the benefits of research/study should outweigh any potential harm or damage caused.
4. The independence of the research/study must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.
5. The same high ethical standards shall apply wherever in the world the study/research is undertaken.

LCCA meets these principles by communicating its standards and policies to staff through education and training, publication of this and related policies, and through this Ethics Policy and the process for the ethical review of research and studies.

When dealing with a situation with ethical implications, you should consider the following questions and guidance:

- Have you considered all those who might be affected by your decision and those who might criticise your decision and the foreseeable reasons they would give for you not taking the decision?
- As well as the risk of harm, have you considered positive obligations – formal or informal – that you owe to those affected by your decision?
- Have you considered what could go wrong as a result of your decision for you, your colleagues (staff and students), the wider University or other stakeholders?
- What options have you considered for responding to the situation?
- Think carefully about the factual basis for your decision. Is your understanding of the facts robust and fair?
- How would you justify your behaviour to your manager or a colleague or friend if asked?
- How would you defend your actions if publicised in the media?
- Are you confident that your decision is the best one in the circumstances?

Another perspective can often help to determine the way forward. So, if you are concerned, postpone any action until you have obtained further advice. Talk to a colleague or your Line Manager and discuss the situation. Try to discuss how detractors might see your decision and the possibility of other alternative actions other than those you have thought of, so that this discussion is of maximum use to good decision making.

Is it your decision to make?

It is not feasible for an individual to be an expert in every single field of activity. Please check to see if there is a specific policy or guidance that relates to your enquiry. Where a policy does exist, please direct the enquiry to the appropriate contact specified in the policy document to take forward.

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