



RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

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RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY		
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Summary/Description:		
<p>This document defines the standards of responsible and ethical conduct expected of all persons engaged in research at All Nations Christian College including those on courses validated by The Open University.</p> <p>This content has been drawn from:</p> <p>University of Oxford. 2022 'The University of Oxford's Code of practice and procedure on academic integrity in research'. Approved 9 June 2022. https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/academic-integrity-in-research#collapse1310981</p> <p>University of Greenwich Research Ethics Policy 2020, updated 13 August 2024 https://www.gre.ac.uk/docs/rep/gre/research-ethics-policy?SQ_VARIATION_138644=0</p>		

Revisions:

Sep 2022: review resulting in minor amendments not requiring approval (e.g. addition of page numbers, amendment of related policies section, amendments to nomenclature etc).

September 2024: review resulting in amendments to ethical approval process, including reference to practice-based research projects and those including the performing arts, and clarification of the role of the Research Ethics Committee.

ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

To cultivate biblically rooted, hope-filled and culturally relevant engagement with God's mission, by training and equipping disciples of Jesus Christ in partnership with the global church.

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

This policy must be read in conjunction with the College Academic Misconduct Policy.

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2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This Research Ethics Policy prescribes standards of responsible and ethical conduct expected of all persons engaged in research at All Nations Christian College and the consequences should non-compliance be suspected.
- 2.2. This policy has been written on the understanding that researchers recognise that academic integrity in research, as with any other academic undertaking, includes the requirement to avoid plagiarism, poor citation practice, collusion, cheating, contract cheating, or other similar offences which are explained in full in the College 'Academic Misconduct Policy'. This policy therefore, primarily focuses on the ethical issues raised by research topics which:
 - might be classified as 'sensitive',
 - involve human participation,
 - involve a potential or actual conflict of interest for the researcher,
 - and/or present any other ethical issue (See section 6 below).
- 2.3. It also sets out the procedures which should be followed to ensure due ethical consideration when any of those situations are relevant to the research being proposed.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1. All research undertaken under the auspices of the College must meet statutory requirements. Of particular relevance is the Equality Act (2010), as well as the Human Rights Act (1998), the Data Protection Act (1998) and UK GDPR, the Counter Terrorism Security Act (2015) and the requirement for Disclosure & Barring Service clearance for those working with children and provision within the existing legal framework for those working with vulnerable adults.

- 3.2.** Where applicable, researchers should comply with any research ethics guidelines set out by their professional associations, or funding bodies. This may include ethical review applications from those bodies and conformity with any other audited compliance regulations (e.g. NHS National Research Ethics Service review).
- 3.3.** This policy contains rules and regulations of the College which have been prepared in line with Open University regulations and, where appropriate, the requirement of the Office for Students' Regulatory Framework, and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

- 4.1. Research** can be defined as 'the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions'¹. It applies to both research conducted on behalf of the College, and personal research conducted using college resources. It also applies to students' examined work, i.e. the submission and assessment of a thesis, dissertation, essay, extended arts project or other coursework that is undertaken in formal examination conditions and is a requirement for, counts towards or constitutes the work for a degree or other academic award.
- 4.2. Researchers** are defined as all members of the College who are conducting research. This includes students, members of staff and volunteers, including those who are conducting research elsewhere, in the UK or overseas.
- 4.3. Visiting Researchers** are defined as those who are not members of the College but who are conducting research on College premises or using College facilities.
- 4.4. Misconduct in Research:**
- 4.4.1.** The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) defines Research Misconduct as 'behaviours that deliberately or recklessly fall short of the standards expected in the conduct of research, from the initial idea through to reporting outcomes.'² This is further defined in the 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity' published by Universities UK,³ which states that Research Misconduct may include:
- Fabrication – of results, outputs, documentation, consent, and other aspects of the research
 - Falsification – inappropriately manipulating aspects of the research
 - Plagiarism – using other people's work without appropriate acknowledgement
 - Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations – including duty of care, informed consent, misuse of personal data, breach of confidence, and any other applicable obligations.
 - Misrepresentation – of data, involvement, conflicts of interest, and any other aspect of the research
 - Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct
- The Concordat to support research integrity states that 'honest errors and differences in, for example, research methodology or interpretations do not constitute research misconduct.'⁴
- 4.5. Supervisors** are defined as those designated with the specific responsibility for supporting the researcher during the research process, as outlined in section 5.2 below.

¹ 'Research,' Oxford English Dictionary <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/research>

² <https://ukrio.org/research-integrity/what-is-research-misconduct/>

³ Universities UK. 2019. 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity', commitment 4.

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

4.6. Participants are defined as those who aid the researcher in obtaining their research data by, for example, completing questionnaires, allowing themselves to be observed, and/or be interviewed etc. See 6.2 below.

5. ETHICAL RESEARCH CODE OF PRACTICE

5.1. The College expects all researchers to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in the conduct of their research. In seeking to achieve such high standards, researchers have a responsibility to:

- 5.1.1.** always consider and manage the real, perceived or potential ethical implications of their research, following the procedures in this document or those of other relevant authorities. Researchers therefore have an obligation to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with the College's policies and procedures. (See [Summary of All Nations Policies](#) and [College Policies](#)) and in compliance with the law;
- 5.1.2.** demonstrate integrity and professionalism, fairness and equity, and intellectual honesty; they should therefore be honest in proposing, conducting and reporting research; maintaining independence and impartiality in obtaining and handling data, the accuracy and reliability of research data and results and acknowledge the contributions of others when publishing and disseminating results and neither engage in misconduct nor conceal it;
- 5.1.3.** acquaint themselves with guidance as to best research practice and standards of integrity. For example, they have an obligation to acquaint themselves with this and other relevant policies and procedures designed to ensure their research is ethically sound. They should also acquaint themselves with The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) document 'Code of Practice for Research: Promoting Good Practice and Preventing Misconduct' (2023);⁵
- 5.1.4.** comply with ethical and legal obligations as required by all relevant statutory and regulatory authorities, including seeking ethical review and approval for research projects as appropriate. They should ensure that any research undertaken complies with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the research. For example, they should follow the requirements and guidance of any professional bodies in their field of research and those of the body regulating their profession if they are a member of a regulated profession;
- 5.1.5.** as far as possible, ensure the health, safety and well-being of all those associated with the research. They have a responsibility therefore to seek to ensure the safety, dignity, wellbeing and rights of all those associated with the research, including the researcher and other participants, and to consider the risk of harm to the environment. This includes emotional and mental distress and possible damage to financial and social standing, as well as to physical harm;
- 5.1.6.** obtain informed consent by all participants. Sufficient information should be given to participants to ensure that they understand what the research involves, procedures to ensure confidentiality and understand that they can withdraw from participating in the research at any point;
- 5.1.7.** maintain confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and anonymity of respondents (unless explicit consent is given to the contrary);
- 5.1.8.** ensure that research conforms to Data Protection legislation and the College (or any other relevant authority) Data Protection Policy, concerning the storage, sharing and disposal of personal data obtained during research (see section 8);
- 5.1.9.** effectively and transparently manage any conflicts of interest, whether actual or potential, reporting these to the appropriate authority as necessary;

⁵ <https://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Code-of-Practice-for-Research.pdf>

- 5.1.10. recognise their accountability to the supervisor, participants and the College for the conduct of their research;
 - 5.1.11. report any well-founded allegations of misconduct in research, whether witnessed or suspected.
- 5.2. The College expects all **supervisors** to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in supporting others in their research. In seeking to achieve such high standards supervisors have a responsibility to:
- 5.2.1. assist the researcher to: manage the potential ethical implications of their research and to follow the procedures in this document or those of other relevant authorities;
 - 5.2.2. offer the researcher reasonable level of supervision, including advice on how to follow best research practice and maintain standards of integrity in all aspects of their research;
 - 5.2.3. consult other tutors, as appropriate;
 - 5.2.4. monitor the researcher's compliance with ethical and legal obligations as required by all relevant statutory and regulatory authorities and those of any relevant professional body;
 - 5.2.5. as far as possible, ensure the health, safety and well-being of the researcher and themselves (see 5.1.5 above)
 - 5.2.6. maintain the anonymity of information about research participants and other subjects of research e.g. organisations, divulged in the course of their supervision;
 - 5.2.7. ensure their own records on research supervision conform to Data Protection legislation and the College Data Protection Policy, concerning the storage, sharing and disposal of personal data obtained in carrying out their supervisory role;
 - 5.2.8. declare to the Vice-Principal (Academic) any personal conflicts of interest that may arise, in carrying out their supervisory role;
 - 5.2.9. be alert to, and if appropriate report, any allegations of misconduct in research, whether witnessed or suspected;
 - 5.2.10. be accountable to their programme leader and/or the Vice-Principal (Academic) in carrying out their supervisory role.
- 5.3. **The College** accepts that it has an obligation to ensure that all research carried out under the scope of this policy achieves the highest standards of ethics and integrity, wherever possible, and commits itself to ensuring:
- 5.3.1. there are sufficient learning resources (e.g. teaching, library and IT resources) to foster a positive research culture at the College;
 - 5.3.2. that student researchers are equipped with the research skills needed, including an understanding of: research ethics, health and safety and appropriate use of IT;
 - 5.3.3. that supervisors are equipped through training with the research supervision skills needed to support student researchers effectively;
 - 5.3.4. that students (and staff, when appropriate for their professional development) are suitably supervised by appropriately qualified and experienced people;
 - 5.3.5. that it has procedures in place to ensure best research practice and standards of integrity are upheld;
 - 5.3.6. that it has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all research undertaken under the auspices of the College meets statutory requirements. Of particular relevance for research is the Equality Act (2010), as well as the Human Rights Act (1998), the Data Protection Act (1998) and UK GDPR, the Counter Terrorism Security Act 2015 and the requirement for Disclosure & Barring Service clearance for those

working with children and provision within the existing legal framework for those working with vulnerable adults;

- 5.3.7. that policies and procedures are in place to ensure, as far as possible, the health, safety and well-being of the researchers and supervisors;
- 5.3.8. that it will investigate all accusations of academic misconduct fairly and in a timely manner in accordance with its Academic Misconduct Policy;
- 5.3.9. that it is accountable to the Academic Board, the Board of Trustees and other relevant regulatory bodies for the effective implementation of this policy.

5.4. Handling of Data: The College expects all those who handle data in the course of their research to adhere to the following code of practice:

- 5.4.1. The College, supervisors and researchers should collect data accurately, efficiently and according to the agreed design of the research project, and ensure that it is stored in a secure and accessible form, in compliance with all legal, ethical or research-funder requirements, especially data protection legislation.
- 5.4.2. The College, supervisors and researchers should maintain the confidentiality of those providing data where undertakings have been made to third parties e.g. human participants.
- 5.4.3. The College, supervisors and researchers should respect and protect the intellectual property rights of all third parties.
- 5.4.4. The authorship of all third-party data should be acknowledged and correctly cited in accordance with the All Nations Style & Citation Guide.
- 5.4.5. Researchers should follow College procedures on the accurate and efficient collection of sensitive and non-sensitive data, its storage in a secure and accessible form (see section 8). Research supervisors, the Learning Services Team (LST) and the College Librarian should be available to offer advice on data handling to students, staff and visitors respectively.
- 5.4.6. If research data is to be deleted or destroyed, either because its agreed period of retention has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, it should be done so in accordance with College procedures (see section 8) and/or any other legal, or research funder requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.

6. REASONS FOR SEEKING RESEARCH ETHICAL REVIEW/APPROVAL

The ethical review and approval process enables provision to be put in place to mitigate risks generated by undertaking research. Any research involving primary data requires ethical approval. Particular consideration should be given to:

6.1. Sensitive Research:

- 6.1.1. Sensitive research encompasses a wide variety of research topics, but there are three broad research areas which would usually cause the research to be classified as 'sensitive':
 - research into illegal activities, including the collection of source data, e.g. crime statistics;
 - research that requires access to web sites normally prohibited on College servers; including, but not limited to; pornography, or the sites of any of the organisations proscribed by the UK Government;
 - research into extremism and radicalisation.
- 6.1.2. Sensitive research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

- 6.1.3.** The College does not permit any illegal activities in the course of research. However, it recognises that there is a fine line between what might be deemed to be illegal and what is legal but potentially unsafe. Therefore, each research project which comes in this category will be carefully considered and its legality assessed before permission is given to proceed. Whilst the College endorses the principle of academic freedom and supports its researchers in undertaking ambitious, rigorous, and challenging research (see the College '**Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom Policy**'), it has a legal obligation to monitor all research and to report illegal activity where appropriate. Conversely, in order to protect researchers from misinterpretation of intent by authorities and subsequent investigations, any researcher engaged in sensitive research must follow the procedures in section 7 so that the College can consider putting specific protocols in place to mitigate risks to all involved in such research. It also enables the College to explain to outside authorities, if required, that researchers are engaged in authorised research work.
- 6.1.4.** Similarly, the College takes seriously its duty, under the Security and Counter Terrorism Act 2015 to duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism on its campus (see the College '**Safeguarding Policy**'), whether by oral, visual, written or other means. The Open University's policy on terrorism and extremism-related research points out that 'Researchers should be aware that extremist and terrorist-related websites may be under surveillance by law enforcement agencies. Visiting such (proscribed) websites and/or downloading security-sensitive materials, particularly if they are terrorism or extremism-related, may be illegal and viewed as a prosecutable offence if it is not for approved, academic research purposes.'⁶ Therefore, in order to protect researchers from misinterpretation of intent by authorities and subsequent investigations, the researcher must follow the procedures in section 7 so that the College can consider putting specific protocols in place to mitigate risks to all involved in such research. It also enables the College to explain to outside authorities, if required, that researchers are engaged in authorised research work.
- 6.1.5.** The Research Ethics Committee will review and approve all sensitive research undertaken in consultation with other members of the relevant programme team. Where sensitive research is approved, the Research Ethics Committee will advise and support the supervisor and student in managing all ethical considerations (see also 7.1.5)

6.2. Human participation:

6.2.1. Human participation is defined as:

- direct involvement through non-invasive procedures, such as interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observation;
- indirect involvement through access to personal information;
- and/or involvement requiring consent on behalf of others, such as by parents for a child participant under the age of 18 or by a carer for a vulnerable adult.

6.2.2. The process of applying for research ethical review/approval, as outlined in section 7, allows the researcher and the College to consider whether the research has the potential to harm the dignity, rights, safety and/or wellbeing of any of the human participants including themselves, or the environment.

6.2.3. Research involving human participants should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

6.2.4. Special attention must be given to the ethical issues associated with research involving children and vulnerable adults (e.g. elderly people, physically or mentally ill

⁶ Open University. 2024. 'Terrorism and extremism-related research policy'.

<https://research.open.ac.uk/environment/policies/terrorism-and-extremism/policy>, paragraph 4.

people, people with learning difficulties, people in care, bereaved people and people in prison)

- 6.2.5. There are additional ethical considerations for research involving performing arts, in respect of the potential impacts on performers, co-producers, and audience members, and these are discussed in section 7.3.
- 6.2.6. For research involving human participants, the researcher must provide adequate information for the participant to give voluntary informed consent. This must be documented using the Research Participant Information sheet and the Research Informed Consent form.

6.3. Conflict of Interest:

- 6.3.1. Conflict of interest is defined as research in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, a researcher's professional judgment in conducting or reporting research.
- 6.3.2. The College and researchers must comply with all legal and ethical requirements relevant to their study. They should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to research and where necessary take steps to declare and resolve them through the procedures in section 7 below.
- 6.3.3. Whilst studying at the College, students should not conduct any research for commercial gain.

7. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR RESEARCH ETHICAL REVIEW/APPROVAL

7.1. Procedure for BA, MA and En Route Assignments (excluding specific research papers and projects)

Some module assignments may require or permit primary research which falls within the scope of this policy. In these cases, ethical review and approval is required. Tutors should ensure that the relevant Programme Administrators have been informed, so that, if necessary, the appropriate preparations can be made on the VLE for submission of ethics forms. The procedure is as shown in Figure 1.

- 7.1.1. When briefing students on the assignment, the module tutor or course leader should highlight the need to follow the correct research ethics procedures if primary research is involved.
- 7.1.2. In discussion with the tutor, the student should determine whether they will be employing primary research as part of the assignment, and should identify potential ethical considerations. The tutor should advise on whether the proposed approach is a valid one for this assignment.
- 7.1.3. If there are ethical considerations (as defined in section 6 of this policy), the student should complete a Research Ethics Approval Form and submit it to the tutor for review. If the tutor is satisfied that the Research Ethics Approval Form is complete, the student should submit it to the Research Ethics Committee for approval.
- 7.1.4. The Research Ethics Committee will either identify any further revisions that are required, or give approval. When approval is granted, the tutor, supported by the Research Ethics Committee, will advise on how to complete the Research Informed Consent form and the Research Participant Information Form.
- 7.1.5. If the proposed research is of a sensitive nature (as defined in section 6.1), the Programme Leader and Research Ethics Committee will advise on the creation of a risk management plan and ongoing monitoring of research.
- 7.1.6. The tutor will continue to support the student(s) as necessary throughout the research process, in conjunction with the Research Ethics Committee.

- 7.1.7. When submitting the assignment for marking, the student must also submit the signed Research Ethics Approval form.
- 7.1.8. Research documentation including consent forms and research data should be stored safely by the student and destroyed in accordance with the instructions in section 8.7.
- 7.1.9. All sample papers sent to the external examiners for external scrutiny must be accompanied by the signed Research Ethics Approval Form.

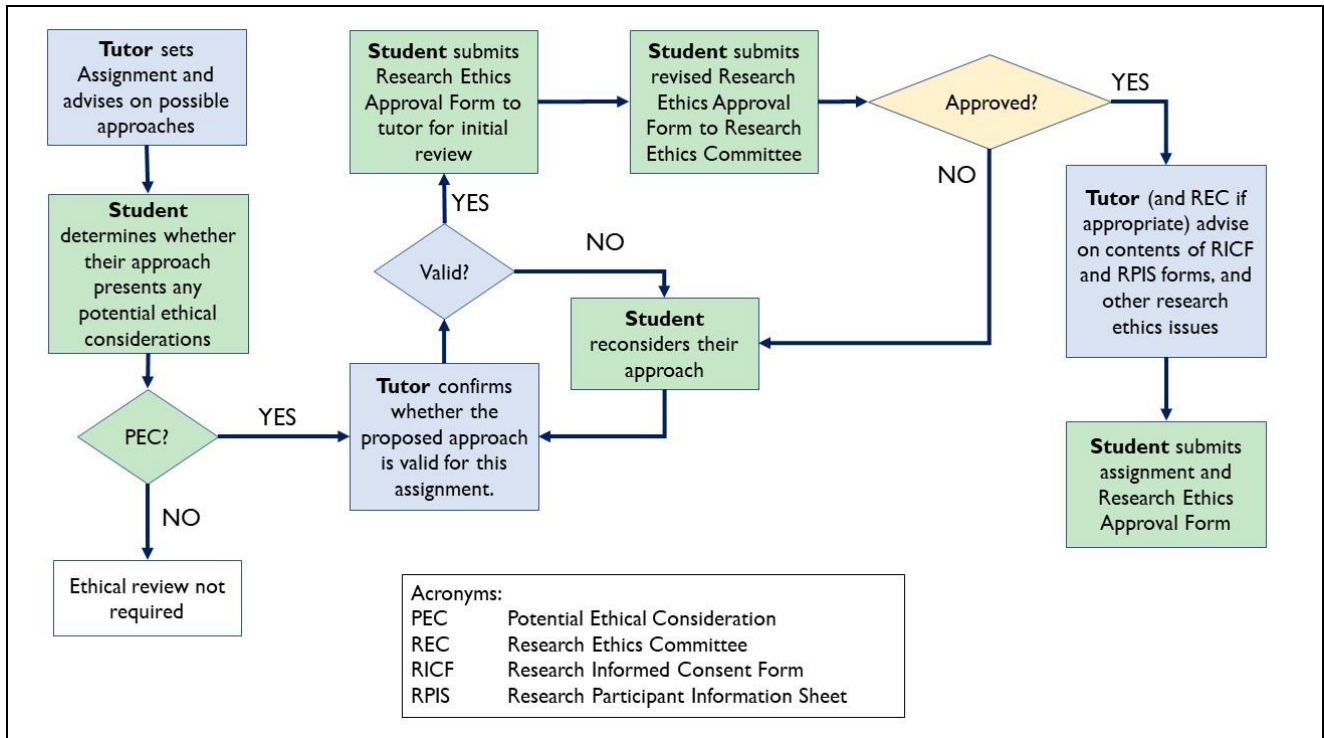


Figure 1: Procedure for Research Ethical Review and Approval of Student Assignments

7.2. Procedure for BA and En Route Research Papers and Projects

- 7.2.1. All BA students are required to engage in undergraduate level research as part of their studies and to follow the policy and procedures outlined in this document when working on them. Information regarding all the processes and procedures involved can be found in the UG Handbook and this policy and procedure and there is teaching about research ethics as part of study skills sessions. Students are expected to read, engage with and follow the guidance provided as part of the research process.
- 7.2.2. The procedure for ethical review and approval of research papers and projects is as shown in Figure 2.
- 7.2.3. It is the student’s responsibility to identify any potential ethical issues or considerations when selecting a research topic and, during this process, they must consider how to mitigate and manage potential risks involved. The Research Proposal form contains a prompt to begin this process from the start of their project.
- 7.2.4. Students are responsible for the contents of their research and for ensuring that their research findings are presented in the format required by the College.
- 7.2.5. A Research Ethics Approval Form must be completed for all BA research papers and projects, as well as other assignments which involve human participants.

- 7.2.6.** En Route students only need to complete a Research Ethics Approval Form if the course leader agrees that there are potential ethical considerations to be addressed. This issue should be covered in the discussion with the course leader about the proposed research topic.
- 7.2.7.** On receipt of the proposal form, the relevant programme team and the Ethical Approval Committee will consider the potential ethical issues related to the proposed research as part of the approval process. The Ethical Approval Committee will share the monitoring of sensitive research with the supervisor.
- 7.2.8.** All students undertaking research projects will be assigned a research supervisor. In the case of En Route students, this will be the course leader; Level 5 students working on a research paper will be supervised by a tutor with subject expertise; and Level 6 students will be assigned a supervisor by the programme team.
- 7.2.9.** Part of the supervisor's role is to assess and advise the student on their approach to ethics and risk management. In the initial meeting between the student and the supervisor, the supervisor will advise on any necessary changes to the Research proposal, and satisfy themselves that
- a) the student has considered all potential ethical risks involved (see section 6),
 - b) the student's plan to mitigate any such risks is satisfactory and
 - c) the student is aware of how to use the Research Participant Information Sheet and Research Informed Consent forms for research involving human participants (if appropriate).
- 7.2.10.** When any necessary revisions to the Research Proposal and Research Ethics Approval Form have been made, the supervisor will forward them to the Research Ethics Committee for final approval, or for further amendment. Research should not commence until after approval has been granted.
- 7.2.11.** Following these internal processes, the research proposal and Research Ethics Approval Form must be approved by the external examiners.
- 7.2.12.** If students wish to make any changes to the title or topic of an already approved research proposal, they must complete and submit the 'Change of Research Title/Topic Application Form' to the Undergraduate Programme Leader, signed by them and their supervisor. For Level 6 students, this should be done by the end of week 7, term 2. For level 5 students this is agreed on an individual basis. Potential ethical implications must be considered as part of this process, and if necessary, a revised Research Ethics Approval Form must be passed to the Research Ethics Committee for approval.
- 7.2.13.** Level 6 students can expect to have at least 3 hours supervisory time with their supervisor during the course of their research to discuss any issues, to check their research is being conducted safely and to assess their progress and performance. Ethical issues should be discussed in these meetings as the research progresses, and the Research Ethics Committee are also available to advise on any issues which the supervisor does not feel able to resolve.
- 7.2.14.** The research supervisor will continue to support the student(s) as necessary throughout the research process, and this will include monitoring the researcher's approach to risk management and research ethics. The Research Ethics Committee and the ILS Team are available as an extra source of advice.
- 7.2.15.** If the research methods change during the course of the project, it is the responsibility of the student to submit a revised or additional Research Ethics Approval Form and/or

Research Participant Information Sheet/ Research Informed Consent Form, if relevant.

- 7.2.16.** When submitting the research paper for marking, the signed, completed Research Ethics Approval form must be submitted separately on the VLE, at the same time as the completed assignment.

7.3. Procedure for BA Level 6 Extended Arts Projects

- 7.3.1.** Students conducting an Extended Arts Project for their Research in Mission project may need to consider additional ethical issues, depending on the nature of the project.
- 7.3.2.** Any research which is conducted during the course of the project, helping to shape the final art piece, is subject to the research ethics policy and procedures outlined in this document. This may include research involving people (interviews, observations, etc), sensitive research, or research involving a conflict of interest. These elements of the project must follow the processes defined in section 7.2, above, which are designed to ensure that research is conducted ethically.
- 7.3.3.** In most cases, the final art piece will itself also involve people. This may apply to workshops, performances, films, interactive experiences, exhibitions, concerts, and a range of other art forms. Because of the nature of the Extended Arts Project, these fulfil two separate roles in the module:
- As elements of the research, generating feedback which will be discussed in the final report.
 - As outputs of the research, equivalent to the final dissertation.
- 7.3.4.** In these cases, the researcher must also apply for ethical approval in relation to the potential ethical considerations presented by the project. This is likely to include the impact on performers, workshop participants, co-producers (e.g. camera operators, musicians, etc) and the audience. The researcher should discuss these issues and describe the measures proposed to address them, using the supplementary form 'Research Ethics Approval for Arts Projects' in addition to the standard Research Ethics Approval form.
- 7.3.5.** As with the requirements for written dissertations, this is subject to the approval of the Research Ethics Committee and the External Examiners. Research may not begin until this approval has been granted.

7.4. Procedure for MA Dissertation and Practice-based Research Project/Dissertation

- 7.4.1.** All MA students are required to engage in postgraduate level research as part of their studies and to follow the policy and procedures outlined in this document when working on MA dissertations and Practice-based Research Project/Dissertations. Information regarding all the processes and procedures involved in the MA Dissertation module is found in the postgraduate Dissertation Module Handbook and there is teaching about research ethics as part of the Module. Students are expected to read, engage with and follow the guidance provided as part of the dissertation/Practice-based Research Project/Dissertation process.
- 7.4.2.** Students are responsible for the contents of their research and for ensuring that their research findings are presented in the format required by the College.

- 7.4.3.** Having initially read the research ethics materials and attended taught sessions on research ethics, students should discuss with their supervisor or Research in Mission (M30) tutors (and relevant experts, where appropriate) any potential ethical issues raised by their proposed research and complete a Research Ethics Approval form. This will be reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee, and amendments may be required before approval. Research may not commence until the Research Ethics Approval form is signed off by the Research Ethics Committee.
- 7.4.4.** The research supervisor will support the student in exploring the ethical issues, both initially and as the research progresses. The supervisor will also advise on the use of the Research Informed Consent form and the Research Participant Information sheet, as appropriate.
- 7.4.5.** The research supervisor will continue to support the student(s) as necessary throughout the research process; this will include monitoring the researcher's approach to risk management, ensuring that adequate discussion of ethical issues is included in the dissertation, and that commitments made at the approval stage are followed through as the research progresses. The LST and the Research Ethics Committee are available as an extra source of advice. However, the onus is upon the student to ensure that their research is carried out in accordance with ethical requirements and the terms of this policy.
- 7.4.6.** If the research methods change during the course of the research, it is the responsibility of the student to submit a revised or additional Research Ethics Approval form and/or RPIS/RICF, if relevant.
- 7.4.7.** When submitting the dissertation for marking, the signed, completed Research Ethics Approval form must be included as an Appendix, along with a blank copy of the Research Informed Consent form and the Research Participant Information sheet.

7.5. Procedure for Staff

- 7.5.1.** When using College facilities and/or resources to carry out research on behalf of another institution or body, the College expects all staff members to have gone through a process of Research Ethical Review with that institution or body. Permission to use the College facilities and/or resources for such a purpose is given on this basis and a copy of any Ethical approval form should be given to the Vice-Principal (Academic).
- 7.5.2.** In the case of research for professional development, staff members should follow the principles and procedures of this document by obtaining ethical approval from their line manager in consultation with the Vice-Principal (Academic).
- 7.5.3.** In the case of research for personal enrichment, staff members should be aware at all times of any potential ethical implications of their research and arrange appropriate supervision where necessary (see section 5 particularly above). They may ask the Research Ethics Committee for advice but they are not obligated to put supervision in place, this must be arranged by the staff member for themselves.
- 7.5.4.** Staff must consult the REC and the Vice-Principal (Academic), in all cases, if they are researching a sensitive issue that has the potential to be viewed as criminal. The Vice-Principal (Academic) will approve a suitable management and monitoring plan to ensure the protection of the researcher and the College.

7.6. Procedure for Visitors

7.6.1. In the case of research for personal enrichment, visitors should be aware at all times of any potential ethical implications of their research and arrange appropriate supervision where necessary (see section 5 above).

7.6.2. Visitors must consult the College Librarian if they are researching a sensitive issue that has the potential to be viewed as criminal. The Librarian will consult with the ILS Manager to ensure a suitable management and monitoring plan has been put in place to ensure the protection of the researcher and the College.

8. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING DATA

8.1. Start of Process: Researchers should first consider how data will be gathered, analysed and managed and how and in what form relevant data will eventually be made available to others. Their research supervisor and the ILS Manager can offer advice on this.

8.2. Accuracy: Researchers have the responsibility of evaluating their data for accuracy and not to knowingly use sources that are inaccurate or false.

8.3. Consent: Researchers must ensure that all human participants understand the nature of the research and how their data will be used, and are willing to participate on that basis. The researcher should provide any human participants with a Research Participant Information sheet, ensuring that they have time to read and understand it. When the research commences, participants should be asked to sign the Research Informed Consent Form to indicate consent. This form also documents some of their key rights as participants. Normally, no participant should be included in the research unless they have their given consent in this way. However there may be some circumstances (e.g. working with people from predominantly oral cultures) where it is more appropriate to ask for verbal consent. In this case, the researcher should document this on the Informed Consent form, stating the reasons for this change in procedure. Informed consent forms should be kept securely for the required time, and then disposed of as described below.

8.4. Individual Rights: Research data is considered as 'personal data' if it is still possible for the individual to be identified (e.g. before they have been fully anonymised). Individuals have the legal right to see any personal data about themselves, and therefore could request to see research data including interview transcripts, research journal entries, etc. If this request is made, the researcher should ensure that they do not reveal any personal data about other participants. If participants do not wish to be anonymised in the final dissertation, they should be asked to state this explicitly on the informed consent form.

8.5. Research data and Security: Any data, files or other digital or electronic items including audio or video material used or produced in the course of gathering research material must be stored appropriately. Researchers must keep all data, including consent forms, transcripts, notes, recordings, etc, as securely as possible (e.g. in lockable filing cabinets or in rooms that can be locked when unoccupied). Research data should not be left unattended in areas accessible to the members of the public, or displayed on screens visible to passers-by. Researchers should also consider the security of data held on physical storage devices (memory sticks, laptops, hard drives, etc) when travelling, particularly in contexts where the disclosure of the data could cause harm to participants. Any data held in the cloud must be secured appropriately, and researchers should not use insecure means of transmission such as email for sending research data.

The Terrorism Act 2006 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 outlaw the dissemination of terrorist publications if the individual concerned has the intention to encourage or induce others. Dissemination should be avoided wherever possible. Physical materials such as manuals, reports or other hard copy documents should be scanned and

uploaded to a secure area, and the original hard copy then destroyed. If this is not possible then the material should be kept in a locked filing cabinet or similar.

- 8.6. Review:** Researchers should only create and retain personal data where absolutely necessary. They should set up a review process to ensure that they securely dispose of or delete research data after the intervals specified in section 8.7.
- 8.7. Retention:** Subject to any legal, ethical or other requirements, data should be kept intact for any legally specified period and otherwise for the following length of time from the end of the project: 1 year for En Route and levels 4 and 5; 2 years for level 6; 3 years for MA students.
- 8.8. Disposal of records:** When discarding paper records that contain personal data, they should be treated confidentially (i.e. shred such files rather than disposing of them as waste paper). Equivalent electronic records, including backup copies, should be deleted. Computers should not be given away or sold unless all sensitive research data has been removed or deleted.
- 8.9. Third Parties:** Personal data should never be revealed to third parties without the consent of the individual concerned or other reasonable justification. This includes parents, guardians, relatives and friends of the data subject who have no right to access information without the data subject's consent. Personal data can only be legitimately disclosed to third parties for purposes connected with a student's studies and to meet statutory or legal requirements, but only where the College is satisfied regarding the enquirers' identity and the legitimacy of the request. Researchers should also maintain confidentiality where undertakings have been made to other third parties, organisations or to protect intellectual property rights.
- 8.10. Worldwide Transfer:** Researchers must always obtain specific consent from the individuals concerned before placing identifiable personal data about them on the Internet.

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 9.1.** The College recognises the rights of its students to ownership of copyright and other intellectual property rights in books, articles, art works, musical compositions, and other publications derived from work undertaken during their studies. However, if a student is commissioned and/or paid for the creation/design of such a publication on behalf of the College, the intellectual property would be agreed by prior arrangement.
- 9.2.** The College expects to be able to use and reproduce such materials within the College for educational and research purposes, including hosting in an online repository. Prior permission from the student would be sought and the work would be either attributed or not attributed to them according to their wishes.
- 9.3.** BA and MA dissertations are normally held online in the All Nations library, and available to readers on request. However, the author has the right to ask the college not to make their dissertation available at all, or to substitute a version written under a pseudonym.
- 9.4.** If any reference is made to All Nations Christian College in published material by a student, the College expects to be informed in advance to ensure that the reputation of the College is protected.
- 9.5.** Research undertaken by external Library users belongs to the author.
- 9.6.** For full details of research undertaken by staff, please see the College Intellectual Property Policy in the Staff Handbook.

10. MISCONDUCT IN RESEARCH

- 10.1.** Failure to comply with the Ethical Research Code of Practice (section 5) may give rise to an allegation of Misconduct in Research.
- 10.2.** Suspicions reported in confidence and in good faith will not lead to disciplinary proceedings against the person making the complaint. In the event, however, of a frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious allegation the complainant may be liable for disciplinary investigation and action.
- 10.3.** Prior to making any formal allegation, sources of advice and support for:

Students, include:

- Head of Learning Services
- Research Supervisors
- Personal Tutors
- Module Tutors
- Programme Leaders
- Vice-Principal (Academic)

Members of staff, include:

- Line –manager
- Vice-Principal (Academic)

Visitors, include:

- Research supervisors
- Researchers' own research support network
- Head of Learning Services
- The College Librarian

- 10.4.** Depending on the party being accused of Misconduct in Research, the following procedures will be followed:
- The College Academic Misconduct policy and procedure will be used for students of the College.
 - the Staff Disciplinary procedure will be used for staff members
 - In the case of Visitors, the Vice-Principal (Academic) or his representative will contact the visitor's supervisor and/or the university which will be validating their research, so that they can initiate their own investigation. The College will facilitate but not usually lead such an investigation unless mutually agreed by all parties, in which case the procedure to be used will be agreed at that time.
- 10.5.** When an investigation has taken place using a College procedure, the basis for reaching a conclusion that an individual is responsible for Misconduct in Research relies on a judgement that there was an intention to commit the Misconduct in Research and/or recklessness in the conduct of any aspect of a research project.

11. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- 11.1.** Should a student who has been investigated by the College for an accusation of academic misconduct feel the outcome of the investigation was unreasonable, they may appeal using the College Academic Appeals Policy.
- 11.2.** All other persons covered by this Code, should discuss the matter initially with the member of College personnel who has been dealing with the accusation. Should they feel the matter still

to be unsatisfactory, may take more formal action by making a formal complaint by using the 'Complaints Policy' which is available from the College Administrator at info@allnations.ac.uk

12. SANCTIONS

12.1. If proven, Misconduct in Research will usually be a ground for disciplinary action. Sanctions will be outlined in the procedure used for the investigation.

12.2. Any investigation panel may also determine:

12.2.1. To notify others who have a legitimate interest in the outcome of the procedure. Such notification could include:

- Notifying other third parties who are deemed to have a legitimate interest in the outcome of the proceedings, including, for example the co-authors of the Respondent in a manuscript subject to an allegation of Misconduct in Research.
- Notifying the publisher of a manuscript that was subject to an allegation of Misconduct in Research in order that this can be retracted or corrected.
- Notifying any funding body which has supported the research in question.
- Notifying the College Prevent Lead of any concerns in relation to vulnerable adults being drawn into reportable activity according to the Security and Counter Terrorism Act 2015. The Prevent Lead will follow College procedures as outlined in the College Safeguarding Policy and, where appropriate, the police and/or other authorities will also be informed.
- Notifying any regulatory or other agencies as required by law.
- Notifying any other organisation involved in the research (including other employing organisations).

12.2.2. to curtail or refuse the individual's continued use of the College's premises and facilities.

12.2.3. to pursue, if applicable, the recovery of any costs for damage etc incurred to College property.

12.2.4. to consider whether to recommend that the College reviews training and/or supervisory procedures for research.

13. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

13.1. The **Board of Trustees** have legal oversight and responsibility for all College policies, but have delegated to the Academic Board the authority to ensure fit-for-purpose policies and procedures related to academic provision are in place. The **Board of Trustees** are responsible for ensuring:

- Academic provision at the College is adequately resourced.
- They receive details from the **Vice-Principal (Academic)** of any serious incident or one which could be of reputational risk to the College which should be reported to either the Open University, the Office for Students and/or the Charity Commission.

13.2. The **Academic Board**, who is also authorized by the Open University through its accreditation process, acts on behalf of the **Board of Trustees** on all academic matters. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the academic activities of the College support its mission statement and values.
- Ensuring that a fit-for-purpose research ethics policy is approved by them and complies with all relevant legislation and regulations (e.g. the regulations of The Open University).
- Overseeing the effective implementation of this policy and ensuring it is satisfactorily managed.
- Ensuring that the principles of this policy are:
 - Considered when managing and planning academic matters in line with the strategic direction of the College.
 - Reviewed by exploring what can be learned from appeals/complaints when they occur.
 - Reviewed in consultation with academic staff, students and The Open University, as a means of constantly seeking to improve the College's academic provision.
- Ensuring they receive details from the **Vice-Principal (Academic)** of reported incidents and outcomes of cases (particularly where a significant impact on someone has occurred or lessons need to be learned), or details of a serious incident or one which could be of reputational risk to the College.

13.3. The **Head of Learning Services** and the **Quality Assurance Committee** are jointly responsible for the annual monitoring and review of this policy and recommending approval to the Academic Board for all changes.

13.4. The **Vice-Principal (Academic), Programme Leaders, Module Tutors and Research Supervisors** are responsible for:

- Overseeing the monitoring of ethical research which takes place at the College.
- Ensuring that researchers and supervisors comply with this policy.

13.5. The **Vice-Principal (Academic) and the Head of Learning Services** are responsible for ensuring that:

- researchers, module tutors and research supervisors comply with this policy.
- sensitive research is being monitored carefully and, as far as possible, all risks are mitigated.

13.6. The **Vice-Principal (Academic)** is responsible for providing leadership for all academic provision of the College and for leading the college's research ethics' policy and practice by:

- Monitoring the approval of ethical research and the complaints and appeals process.
- Ensuring that decision making complies with College and Open University regulations and is applied consistently across academic provision.
- Reporting to the **Academic Board** and **Senior Leadership Team** incidents and outcomes of cases (particularly where a significant impact on someone has occurred or lessons need to be learned), or details of a serious incident or one which could be of reputational risk to the College.
- Ensuring the College and its staff comply with any appeals process undertaken by an outside agency (e.g. The OU or the OIA).

13.7. The **Programme Leaders** are responsible for managing the approval process for ethical research and any complaints and appeals arising from it.

13.8. The **Research Ethics Committee** is responsible for advising on ethical issues, approving research ethics forms, reviewing documentation relevant to research ethics at All Nations, and providing additional training to staff and students if required. It meets once per term, in week 4, for routine review of research ethics approval forms, and additionally later in the term if required. Where possible, researchers should endeavour to submit forms to the week 4 meeting, and module tutors should ensure that students are aware of this deadline from the beginning of the module.

13.9. Specific Roles and Responsibilities for **researchers** (e.g. staff, visitors or students), **research participants, supervisors** and **external examiners** are set out in Sections 5 and 7 of this policy.

13.10. The **Student Academic Representatives** are responsible for:

- Raising academic issues on behalf of their cohort with the **Vice-Principal (Academic)**.
- Reporting back to their cohort on the resolution of issues raised by the students or one of the academic committees.

13.11. All academic staff and students are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with this policy on appointment/at induction/orientation.
- Taking a pro-active role in improving the College's research ethics policy and practice.
- Promoting and implementing/complying with this policy.
- If **involved in an academic appeal** in any capacity:
 - ensuring they present their case with integrity and in a timely fashion and/or
 - ensuring they comply with any investigation and the procedures in this policy.

13.12. The **Recruitment and Training Administrators** are responsible for:

- Ensuring a completed research ethics form is submitted with all assignments which involve research.
- Ensuring External Examiners are provided with completed research ethics forms when submitting to them assignments which require them.
- Processing any complaint or appeal related to research ethics in accordance with the relevant policy.

14. POLICY COMMUNICATION

14.1. This document, and all other policy and procedure documents mentioned in this policy, can be found in the student area on the College VLE and on the College website [here](#).

14.2. The College General Administrator will make every effort to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format. Such requests should be sent to info@allnations.ac.uk

14.3. This policy will be included in staff and student induction.

15. RELATED DOCUMENTS

The following College documents are related to this policy:

- All Nations Christian College [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Acceptable use of ICT Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Complaints Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Data Protection Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Safeguarding Policy](#)

16. APPENDIX: Research Forms

Appendix

RESEARCH FORMS

When undertaking any research project ALL students must complete:

- the correct proposal form(s) for their level,
- the Research Ethics Approval Form
- Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form (if using human participants)
- The Supervision Record should be submitted with their final paper.

In the relevant Undergraduate and/or Postgraduate handbooks you will find:

1. Level 5 and 6 Proposal Submission Form
2. Postgraduate Preliminary Proposal Form
3. Postgraduate Final Dissertation Proposal Form
4. Application for Change of Research Title/Topic (All Levels)
5. Research Ethics Approval Form (All Levels)
- 5a. Research Ethics Approval for Arts Projects (All Levels)
6. Participant Information Sheet/Privacy Notice (All Levels)
7. Informed Consent Form (All Levels)
8. Supervision Record (All Levels)