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## RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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### Statement of Principles

1. The Research Ethics Policy forms a part of the School's over-arching Ethics Code<sup>1</sup>.
2. Researchers in the social sciences have responsibilities: to society at large; to those who fund their research; the institutions that employ them or at which they study; to their colleagues and the wider academic and research community; to the people who take part in their research; and for their own safety and wellbeing. Reconciling those responsibilities can be difficult and may entail ethical judgement. The intention informing this policy statement is that the School should provide a procedural framework to assist staff and students in exercising such judgement.
3. The policy relates to research - whether funded or unfunded - involving human participants<sup>2</sup>, or involving data relating to directly identifiable human subjects (whether living or recently deceased), conducted by researchers<sup>3</sup>. It does not relate to other ethical judgements. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'researcher' includes members of the School's academic, contract research staff, postgraduate research and Master's students, and undergraduate students. 'Research' is defined variously according to the Frascati definition or the HEFCE definition used for the Research Excellence Framework.
4. The policy has been adopted in support of the School's wider commitments to intellectual freedom and research excellence. Sound ethical standards are a pre-requisite for excellent research. Equally, disproportionate, over-burdensome and narrowly framed research ethics procedures can be an obstacle to excellent research, and thus themselves create an ethical challenge.
5. The procedures instituted in pursuit of this policy are intended:
  - to facilitate, not inhibit, research;
  - to promote a culture within the School whereby researchers conscientiously reflect on the ethical implications of their research;
  - to apply a principle of subsidiarity whereby responsibility for research ethics will be embraced by researchers, supervisors, departments or institutes at a level as close as appropriately possible to the actual conduct of the research.
6. The policy is subject to oversight by the Research Ethics Committee, which is accountable to the Research Committee, the Ethics Policy Committee, Academic Board and ultimately Council. It will be reviewed periodically. The policy is freely available to potential research funding agencies in the interests of transparency and to avoid possible pre-contractual misunderstandings. This document has been drawn up with regard to ethical guidelines relevant to research within the School. Any researcher considering research ethics should do so in conjunction with the resources and policies listed in Annex A.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/ethCod.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Should it arise, researchers conducting investigations involving sentient creatures other than humans should consider such elements of this policy as may apply, as well as any other relevant guidelines. See Annex A

<sup>3</sup> Research involving secondary analysis of established data sets from which it would not be possible to identify any living or recently deceased person need not be subject to the procedure, but wherever it is necessary for data to be effectively anonymised by LSE researchers, the procedure applies.

## Policy

### **Research ethics applications**

7. Where research involves human participants, or involves data relating to directly identifiable human subjects, researchers are required to complete a Research Ethics Review Checklist (see Annex B). The purpose of the Checklist is to require researchers to reflect on the potential ethical implications of their research and the risk of harm that might be caused to the participants.
8. Having completed the Checklist, if researchers (or in the case of student researchers, their supervisors) judge (i) that no significant ethical issues are raised by their research or (ii) that adequate safeguards in relation to such issues can and will be put in place, they may self-certify the project by signing Part II of the Review document and submitting this to the relevant Head of Department or Director of Research Centre, or their administrations, in a form allowing each to be retrieved for up to seven years or until the completion of the research, whichever is the later. Where self-certification is appropriate, departments, centres and institutes may - in consultation with the Research Ethics Committee - devise informal procedures (including alternative discipline-specific forms) in order to guide researchers in the framing of necessary ethical safeguards.
9. If your research may be subject to ethics review by an external body, please refer to section 15 below.
10. Where the researcher is unable to self-certify then the Questionnaire (part III of the Review document) should be completed. This may be because, in the judgment of the researcher (or the supervisor in the case of students), or in the judgement of the relevant Head of Department or Research Centre (or any departmental committee or subcommittee having responsibility for research ethics) or in the judgement of the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee (where it comes to his/her attention):
  - i) significant ethical issues are raised by the research and self-certification of the measures taken to address them would not be appropriate (which includes research characterised by one or more of the features set out in section 13 below - in summary, research involving deception and/or research involving risk of harm to participants); and/or
  - ii) the researcher wants to seek the advice of the Research Ethics Committee; and/or
  - iii) external obligations (for instance, funder requirements, data access requirements) require it; and/or
  - iv) the research will be undertaken by a student or member of staff who has not received appropriate training or expert advice on research ethics (see section 25, below).
11. Having completed the Questionnaire, the Review and any accompanying documents must be submitted for scrutiny by the Research Ethics Committee by email to [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk). Note that ethical approval will usually be required before the commencement of research covered by this policy, or else at a particular point in the development of the project, if required by the research funder<sup>4</sup>.
12. The Research Ethics Committee may undertake an expedited review (where the review is carried out by the Chair, who may consult one or more members of the Research Ethics Committee) where this is appropriate in the view of the Chair - generally where research involves no deception, where participants will have consented to participate and/or to the use of their data by the researcher(s), and where the potential of the research to cause a risk of harm to participants and others affected by it is not deemed significant. Decisions taken by expedited review will be reported to the Research Ethics Committee. Decisions to refuse an application

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the ESRC requires full ethical scrutiny and approval only after the confirmation of award. The European Commission requires ethical controls to be described in advance of application, and ethical approval after confirmation of award.

cannot be taken by expedited review but must be referred to the Research Ethics Committee for full review.

13. Applications relating to the following kinds of research should always be subject to full review by the Research Ethics Committee, and decisions on such applications should only be taken following discussion (which may take place electronically) amongst a quorum of REC members:
  - (i) Research involving deception of participants, or that is intentionally conducted without their full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out or when the data are gathered
  - (ii) Research which involves or may lead to the publication of confidential information
  - (iii) Research involving more than minimal risk of harm to participants, for instance arising from:
    - research involving vulnerable groups;
    - research involving sensitive topics<sup>5</sup>;
    - research involving groups where permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members;
    - research which would induce unacceptable psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain.

Where there is doubt, advice should be sought from the Research Governance Manager and/or the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee (via [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk)).

14. Substantial research projects and projects presenting significant ethical challenges will on occasions require Project Advisory Panels to be established to oversee the progress of the project and in such instances, it may be appropriate that a member of the Research Ethics Committee should sit on the Advisory Panel.
15. Duplication of ethics reviews will be avoided where possible, especially in regard to research that may fall under the rubric of other ethics review bodies (e.g. NHS Research Ethics Committees). In these cases the researcher should send their completed ethics review Checklist to the Research Governance Manager ([research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk)) for reference and submit their research for ethics approval to the appropriate body. The appropriate body will be determined by the issues raised by the research, the nature of the data to be obtained and the population of respondents to be included in the study. In general, research falling under the auspices of the NHS National Ethics Research Service (NRES) will be managed by NRES ethics committees. Once ethics approval has been granted a copy of the letter of approval and relevant documentation should be sent to [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk) for the records of the LSE Research Ethics Committee. Notwithstanding the principle of avoiding duplication, if deemed appropriate the School will consider the ethical implications of the research in its own right (regardless of whether approval has already been granted externally).

### ***Informed consent***

16. Where information is to be collected from human participants, other than in very particular circumstances informed consent will have to be obtained from those subjects for any use of their information, orally or in writing. Second, where the research exposes its subjects to a risk of harm, the researcher has an ethical duty to consider these risks, even where the subject has consented to participate in the study. It is particularly important to think through carefully the likely impact on vulnerable groups; for example children or people with learning disabilities, or students when they are participating in research as students. Some participants will have diminished capacity to give consent and are therefore less able to protect themselves and require specific consideration (see Annex A for links to further guidance regarding informed consent).
17. Research that does not entail the direct participation of living human persons may nonetheless indirectly but significantly affect living persons. Researchers may be assessing information

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<sup>5</sup> See excerpt from Dixon-Swift, V. et al. *Undertaking Sensitive Research in the Health and Social Sciences* - at [http://assets.cambridge.org/9780521718233/excerpt/9780521718233\\_excerpt.pdf](http://assets.cambridge.org/9780521718233/excerpt/9780521718233_excerpt.pdf)

about identifiable individuals, the publication or analysis of which may have ethical (and indeed legal) implications. For example, collection and use of archive, historical, legal, online or visual materials may raise ethical issues (e.g. for families and friends of people deceased), and research on provision of social or human services may impact provision for individuals and groups of service users who did not contribute or consent to, or were not consulted about the research. Researchers should so far as possible consider such implications.

### ***Multi-funder and multi-performer projects***

18. Where there are a number of funders of a project the LSE Research Ethics Policy and any relevant funders' ethics policies must be drawn to the attention of all proposed funders prior to a submission for funding. An agreement is necessary with the other funders that the proposed study will comply with the relevant research ethics policies.
19. Where research involves more than one institution, each institution retains formal responsibility for overseeing the ethical review of research conducted under its auspices. Wherever possible the School should accept the decisions made by the Research Ethics Committee of the institution where the Principal Investigator is based.

### ***Research conducted outside the UK***

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

### ***Legal and data protection requirements***

21. Researchers must comply with legal requirements. In particular, they must ensure compliance with the UK Data Protection Act 1998 and, where appropriate, submit to a Disclosure and Barring Service check (see Annex A).
22. It remains the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that arrangements are in place to maintain the integrity and security of research data. Please refer to Annex A for guidance on LSE research data management. If further guidance is required regarding the security of data then the matter may be referred to the Research Ethics Committee.
23. Secondary use of datasets must be given careful consideration by the researcher and the Research Ethics Committee, especially where reliance is being placed on a presumed consent by subjects to the use of their information, or where there is a potential risk of disclosure of sensitive information. Researchers who collect primary data that are to be archived and may be used by others for secondary analysis should be mindful that the consent obtained from the persons providing such data and the safeguards applied to protect their identity should be sufficient for that secondary purpose.

### ***Health and Social Care research***

24. The Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (RGF) applies to any research, whether funded or unfunded, that relates to the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Health.<sup>6</sup> Under the RGF, the researcher carries defined responsibilities as does the School in its capacity as the employer of the investigator. In addition to the ethics procedures outlined here, documentation will be held on record

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<sup>6</sup> This is defined as: research concerned with the protection and promotion of public health, research undertaken in or by the Department of Health, its non-Departmental Public Bodies and the NHS, and research undertaken by or within social care agencies. It includes clinical and non-clinical research; research undertaken by NHS or social care staff using the resources of health and social care organisations; and any research undertaken by industry, charities, research councils and universities within the health and social care systems that might have an impact on the quality of those services. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-governance-framework-for-health-and-social-care-second-edition>

demonstrating compliance with the RGF. The Director of the Research Division will provide written confirmation of compliance on behalf of the School, as required by the RGF, seeking advice from the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee where necessary.

### **Training**

25. All students and staff undertaking research are required in the course of their studies or career to have undertaken appropriate training or to have had significant relevant experience before embarking on an evaluation of the ethical implications of their research or other aspects of this Policy. Students and staff must responsibly consider whether their training or experience sufficiently qualifies them to evaluate the ethical implications of their research. If not, they should in the first instance seek appropriate advice from within their department or centre and/or from colleagues within their discipline with specific expertise in relation to research ethics. Thereafter, in the event of any remaining uncertainty as to the propriety of their research, they are required to submit their research plans to the Research Ethics Committee.
26. This policy should be formally incorporated into any undergraduate/postgraduate training programme/documentation offered at departmental level. All degree programmes (undergraduate, Master's and research degrees) must incorporate at least one lecture, seminar or support session that covers research ethics. All students undertaking research for a dissertation or thesis should have access through their supervisor to appropriate advice and support in relation to research ethics. For further information on training please contact [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk).
27. All academic members of the Research Ethics Committee are required to have undertaken appropriate training and/or to have had significant relevant experience before taking up their responsibilities on the Committee.
28. Members of the Policy Team of the Research Division, the Director of the Research Division and the Deputy Director of the Research Division, or any other member of the School's administration, are required satisfactorily to have undertaken suitable training or to have had significant relevant experience before providing advice on the implementation of this Policy.

### **Procedures**

29. Applications should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee via the Research Governance Manager in the Research Division ([research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk)). Researchers should incorporate an appropriate lead-time into planning of their research, following consultation with the Research Division. The Chair (in the case of expedited review) or the Committee (in the case of full review) will reach a decision on the application as promptly as reasonably possible, having regard to the circumstances and the urgency with which approval may be required.
30. Where a case is submitted for full review, the Research Ethics Committee will make decisions using a majority voting procedure. Where the Committee decline to approve an application, the Chair will consult with the applicant with a view to devising a solution that is acceptable to the Committee. The Committee may at its discretion request advice and guidance from School colleagues with particular expertise, and in addition may call upon outside experts to assist with advice and review as required. Decisions made by the Research Ethics Committee for each proposal will be minuted and provided to the relevant researcher(s). The decision will be kept on file for a period of at least seven years or for the duration of the project (whichever is longer).
31. Where the Committee declines to accept a proposal, the researcher has the right to request that the decision is considered by the Ethics Appeals Panel.
32. Appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of the Ethics Appeals Panel providing all the documentation considered by the Research Ethics Committee and a covering letter setting out sufficient information to allow the grounds for appeal to be understood and demonstrating clearly the basis of the appeal.

33. The Ethics Appeals Panel will consist of the following:
  - (i) Pro-Director for Research as Chair (the Pro-Director has the right to appoint another senior member of academic staff in his or her absence)
  - (ii) A senior academic appointed by the Chair
  - (iii) The Director of the Research Division (who also acts as the Secretary of the Panel)
  - (iv) If additional expertise is required, the Chair may invite up to two further members of academic staff with relevant expertise but who have not been involved in the initial decision to join the panel.
34. All members of the Panel must be fully apprised of and familiar with the School's Research Ethics Policy.
35. Unless the Panel decides to uphold the appeal, hearings must provide the researcher with the opportunity of presenting his/her case in person. Following the withdrawal of the researcher, the Panel will determine its decision and provide clear justification for its decision, whether the appeal has been successful or unsuccessful.
36. Any complaints against the Research Ethics Committee received from external organizations will be considered by the Pro-Director for Research in the first instance and referred to the Ethics Appeals Panel if considered necessary. For external complaints the same procedures detailed above will be implemented.

#### **Institutional monitoring**

37. In the first instance it will be the responsibility of the researcher to monitor the conduct of research that has received ethical approval (for students, in consultation with supervisors). The researcher, together with any Project Advisory Panel or Group where relevant, must ensure that there is an appropriate continuing review of the research, taking into account any possible changes that may occur over the duration of the research project. It is the responsibility of the researcher to alert the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee if any further ethical implications arise. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that data are securely held and preserved.
38. The Research Ethics Committee may periodically conduct a selective audit of current research projects.
39. Where significant concerns have been raised about the ethical conduct of a study, the Research Ethics Committee can request a full and detailed account of the research for a further ethical review.
40. Where the Research Ethics Committee considers that a study is being conducted in a way which is not in accord with the conditions of its original approval it may consider withdrawal of its approval and require that the research be suspended or discontinued. It is the duty of the Research Ethics Committee to inform the appropriate funding body that ethical approval has been revoked.

#### **Failure to comply with this Policy**

41. Failure to undertake a review of the ethical implications of research or to comply with any other aspect of this Policy or failure to apply reasonable care in assessing the likely ethical implications of a research project, may constitute research misconduct under the School's research misconduct policy and procedures (see Annex A).



## **Annex A: Useful External and School Resources**

### **1. External Resources**

**Department of Health Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (RGF).** The Framework applies to any research, whether funded or unfunded, that relates to the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Health. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-governance-framework-for-health-and-social-care-second-edition>

**ESRC Framework for Research Ethics.** The ESRC requires that the research it supports is designed and conducted in such a way that it meets certain ethical principles; that it is subject to proper professional and institutional oversight in terms of research governance.  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research-ethics.aspx>

**ESRC Postgraduate Training Guidelines.** Available through the ESRC's Training and Development Board. Training guidance may be available for a student's own subject area and visiting the websites of the relevant associations and learned societies is encouraged.  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx>

**European Commission: How to complete your ethics Self-Assessment**

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/ethics/h2020\\_hi\\_ethics-self-assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf)

**European Science Foundation European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.** The code addresses the proper conduct and principled practice of systematic research in the natural and social sciences and the humanities in Europe.

<http://www.esf.org/media-centre/ext-single-news/article/the-european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity-endorsed-by-european-science-foundations-gove.html>

Information Commissioner's Office produces a code of practice for **Anonymisation: managing data protection risk**. This includes methods for anonymising data.

[http://ico.org.uk/for\\_organisations/data\\_protection/topic\\_guides/anonymisation](http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/topic_guides/anonymisation)

Nuffield Council on Bioethics: The ethics of **research involving animals**. See:

<http://nuffieldbioethics.org/project/animal-research/>

**RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct.** The policy aims to help researchers and research organisations to manage their research, and provides guidance of the reporting and investigation of unacceptable research misconduct.

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/grc/>

**The Research Ethics Guidebook.** An online guide for social science researchers

<http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/>

**UKRIO Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct.**

An essential reference tool to support researchers in the conduct of their research.

<http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/>

**Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checking guidance.** See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-checking-service-guidance--2>

**Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity.** The Concordat sets out five commitments that will provide assurances to government, the wider public and the international community that research in the UK continues to be underpinned by sound standards of rigour and integrity.

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx>

## 2. Relevant Statutes

The Research Ethics Policy has been drawn up with due regard to relevant statutes, including:

**The Data Protection Act (1998)** <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

For the School's guidance on handling the Data Protection aspects of research data, see <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/legalAndCompliance/dataProtection/researchData.aspx>.

Further advice specifically written for researchers is available from JISC Legal, see: <http://jiscleg.al/DPRResearchQandA>.

The Information Commissioner's Office has a code of practice on writing privacy notices (data collection notices), which is available here:

[http://ico.org.uk/for\\_organisations/data\\_protection/topic\\_guides/~media/documents/library/Data\\_Protection/Detailed\\_specialist\\_guides/PRIVACY\\_NOTICES\\_COP\\_FINAL.ashx](http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/topic_guides/~media/documents/library/Data_Protection/Detailed_specialist_guides/PRIVACY_NOTICES_COP_FINAL.ashx)

If you are engaged in social research with or for a commercial client, you will find this guide helpful: <http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRS-SRA-DP-Guidelines-updated-April-2013.pdf>.

**The Mental Capacity Act (2005)** <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>

## 3. LSE Resources

The Research Ethics Policy should be read in conjunction with other School regulations, policies and procedures, including:

**Data Storage and Management:** For details of the School's Records Management Policy see: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/legalAndCompliance/recordsManagement/Home.aspx>

For information on research data management see the Library guidance at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/usingTheLibrary/academicSupport/ManagingResearchData.aspx>

**Ethics Code:** The LSE Ethics Code is a set of six core principles, including Responsibility and Accountability and Integrity (including declaring conflicts of interest). See: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/ethCod.pdf>

**Freedom of Information (Fol) obligations.** The LSE is obliged to meet the requirements of the Fol Act 2000. The School should maintain a list of the information it makes available as a matter of routine. Any person making a request for information is entitled to be informed in writing whether the School holds the information specified in the request, and if that is the case, to have that information communicated to them.

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/legalAndCompliance/FOL/Home.aspx>

**Information Security Policy.** The LSE Information Security policy can be found at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/infSecPol.pdf>

**Informed consent:** Further guidance may be found at: [http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/researchAndDevelopment/ethicsGuidanceAndForms/research\\_ethics\\_informed\\_consent.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/researchAndDevelopment/ethicsGuidanceAndForms/research_ethics_informed_consent.pdf) The UK Data Archive provides detailed guidance concerning informed consent, see: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/consent>

**Procedures for the Ethical Screening of Grants and Donations.** <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/proEthScr.pdf>

**Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures** <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/researchAndDevelopment/researchDivision/Documents/Word/researchMisconduct.doc>



See Word version at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/researchAndDevelopment/researchDivision/policyAndEthics/ethicsAnnexB2014.docx>

## Annex B: Research Ethics Review

This form should be completed for every research project that involves human participants or the use of information relating to directly identifiable individuals.

### PART I - CHECKLIST

The Checklist is designed to identify the nature of any ethical issues raised by the research.

This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

#### 1. Name of Researcher

	Status (mark with an 'X' as appropriate)	Undergraduate student		Masters student	
		Research degree student		Staff	
	Email		Telephone number		
	Department				

#### 2. Student Details if applicable

	Degree programme:			
	Supervisor's name:		Supervisor's email:	
	Supervisor's department:			

#### 3. Title of the proposal and brief abstract

(150-200 words – your abstract should outline in non-technical language the purpose of the research and the methods that will be used.)

#### 4. Funding

Is it proposed that the research will be funded? If so by whom?

	Please mark an X in the appropriate right-hand column/box	Yes	No	Not certain
<b>5. Research that <i>may</i> need to be reviewed by an external Ethics Committee</b>				
i	Will the study require Health Research Authority approval? ( <a href="#">See Note 1</a> )			
ii	Does the study involve participants lacking capacity to give informed consent? ( <a href="#">See Note 2</a> )			
iii	Is there any other reason why the study may need to be reviewed by another external Ethics Committee?			
If you have answered Yes to any of the questions in section 5, go to <a href="#">Part II, C</a> (there is no need to complete the rest of the Checklist)				

	<i>Please mark an X in the appropriate right-hand column/box</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not certain</b>
<b>6. Consent</b>				
i	Does the study involve participants who are potentially or in any way vulnerable or who may have any difficulty giving meaningful consent to their participation or the use of their information? ( <a href="#">See Note 3</a> )			
ii	Are participants to be enlisted in the study without their knowledge and consent? (e.g. via covert observation of people in public places)			
iii	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited?			
<b>7. Research Design / Methodology</b>				
i	Does the research methodology involve the use of deception? ( <a href="#">See Note 4</a> )			
ii	Are there any significant concerns regarding the design of the research project? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where research intrudes into the private sphere or delves into some deeply personal experience;</li> <li>• where the study is concerned with deviance or social control;</li> <li>• where the study impinges on the vested interests of powerful persons or the exercise of coercion or domination; or</li> <li>• where the research deals with things that are sacred to those being studied that they do not wish profaned.</li> </ul>			
iii	If the proposed research relates to the provision of social or human services is it feasible and/or appropriate that service users or service user representatives should be in some way involved in or consulted upon the development of the project?			
<b>8. Financial Incentives</b>				
i	Are there payments to researchers/participants that may have an impact on the objectivity of the research?			
ii	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?			
<b>9. Research Subjects</b>				
i	Could the study induce unacceptable psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life? Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?			
ii	Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? For example (but not limited to): sexual activity, illegal behaviour, experience of violence or abuse, drug use, etc.). (Please refer to the Research Ethics Policy, § 13).			
iii	Are drugs, placebos or other substances to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?			
<b>10. Confidentiality</b>				
i	Will research involve the sharing of data or confidential information beyond the initial consent given?			
ii	Will the research involve respondents to the internet, e.g. social media, or other visual/vocal methods			
iii	Will the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?			
<b>11. Legal requirements</b>				

	<i>Please mark an X in the appropriate right-hand column/box</i>	Yes	No	Not certain
	The Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to any data-processing activities entailed by this research. Is there any cause for uncertainty as to whether the research will fully comply with the requirements of the Act? ( <a href="#">See Note 5</a> )			
<b>12. Dissemination</b>				
	Are there any particular groups who are likely to be harmed by dissemination of the results of this project?			
<b>13. Risk to researchers</b>				
	Do you have any doubts or concerns regarding your (or your colleagues) physical or psychological wellbeing during the research period?			

## PART II: SELF CERTIFICATION AND/OR NEXT STEPS

**A** If, after careful consideration, you have answered **No** to all the questions (whether you are a member of the academic staff or a student), you do not need to complete the questionnaire in Part III, unless you are subject to some external requirement that requires you to seek formal approval from the School's Research Ethics Committee. You should tick Box **A** in the **Self-Certification Section** below, sign as appropriate and submit the form to your Head of Department, Research Centre Director, or their administrations as appropriate. Occasional audits of such forms may be undertaken by the School.

**B** If you have answered **Yes** or **Not certain** to any of the questions in sections 6-13 of the checklist you will need to consider more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. Answering the relevant questions in the Questionnaire in Part III below may assist you. Alternatively, your own department or institute may have alternative forms or procedures to assist you. If having done so you are wholly assured that adequate safeguards in relation to the ethical issues raised can and will be put in place, you may tick **Box B** in the Self-certification Section below, sign as appropriate and submit the form to your Head of Department, Research Centre Director, or their administrations as appropriate. Occasional audits of such forms may be undertaken by the School.

**C** If you have answered Yes in section 5 that your research will be subject to an external ethics committee, please tick **Box C** below and send the completed Checklist (questions 1-5) to [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk). You should submit your research for ethics approval to the appropriate body. Once approval is granted please send a copy of the letter of approval to [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk).

Students who self-certify their research proposals should do so in consultation with their supervisors.

If you are unable to self-certify your proposed research you should in any event complete the questionnaire in Part III below and complete the **Refer to Research Ethics Committee Section** at the end of the form.

## SELF-CERTIFICATION

**Select A, B or C (delete as appropriate):**

I have read and understood the LSE Research Ethics Policy and the questions contained in the Checklist above and confirm:

**A** that no significant ethical issues are raised by the research, or

**B** that adequate safeguards in relation to such issues can and will be put in place, or

**C** that the research will be subject to an external ethics review

**Please sign the relevant section below**

<b>Academic Research Staff</b>			
Summary of any ethical issues identified and safeguards to be taken (expand box as necessary):			
I hereby confirm that I have undertaken training and/or have had significant experience in research ethics in the course of my career and/or have sought and obtained expert advice in connection with the ethical aspects of the proposed research:			
Researcher signature:		Date:	

<b>Undergraduate/Taught Postgraduate Student/PhD Student</b>			
Summary of any ethical issues identified and safeguards to be taken (expand box as necessary):			
I hereby confirm that I have undertaken training in research ethics in the course of my studies and/or that I have consulted and been advised by my supervisor or other expert with regard the ethical implications of my proposed research.			
Student's signature:		Date:	
Supervisor's signature:		Date:	
By signing here the supervisor confirms that the student has been advised in relation to any ethical issues raised by her/his research; these have to the best of the supervisor's understanding been adequately addressed in the research design; and the student has been made aware of her/his responsibilities for the ethical conduct of her/his research.			

## Part III - QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire enables you to explain how the ethical issues relating to your research will be addressed. If you are intending to submit your proposal to the Research Ethics Committee it needs to be completed in full.

### 1. Research aims

*Please provide brief (no more than 500 words) details in non-technical language of the research aims, the scientific background of the research and the methods that will be used. This summary should contain sufficient information to acquaint the Committee with the principal features of the proposal. A copy of the full proposal should nonetheless be attached to this document in case it is required for further information.*

### 2. Informed consent

i	Will potential participants be asked to give informed consent in writing and will they be asked to confirm that they have received and read the information about the study? If not, why not? <i>Please attach a draft information sheet and/or consent form if this has been prepared</i>
ii	How has the study been discussed or are there plans to discuss the study with those likely to be involved, including potential participants or those who may represent their views?
iii	Has information (written and oral) about the study been prepared in an appropriate form and language for potential participants? At what point in the study will this information be offered? (see Annex A of the

	research ethics policy for links to guidance on informed consent).
iv	How will potential participants be informed of whether there will be adverse consequences of a decision not to participate? Or of a decision to withdraw during the course of the study?
v	What provision has been made to respond to queries and problems raised by participants during the course of the study?
<b>3. Research design and methodology</b>	
i	Where relevant, how does the research methodology justify the use of deception?
ii	If the proposed research involves the deception of persons in vulnerable groups, can the information sought be obtained by other means?
iii	How will data be collected and analysed during the project?
iv	How have the ethical and legal dimensions of the process of collecting, analyzing and storing the data been addressed?
v	What concerns have been taken into account with regard to the preparation and design of the research project? If agencies, communities or individuals are to be directly affected by the research (e.g. participants, service users, vulnerable communities or relations), what means have you devised to ensure that any harm or distress is minimized and/or that the research is sensitive to the particular needs and perspectives of those so affected?
vi	Have you been able to devise a timetable of research?
<b>4. Ethical questions arising from the provision of incentives</b>	
i	Are any incentives being offered to participants?
<b>5. Research participants</b>	
i	Who do you identify as the participants in the project? Are other people who are not participants likely to be directly impacted by the project?
ii	What are the specific risks to research participants or third parties?
iii	If the research involves pain, stress, physical or emotional risk, please detail the steps taken to minimize such effects.
<b>6. Confidentiality</b>	
i	What arrangements have been made to preserve confidentiality for the participants or those potentially affected, and compliance with data protection law?

<b>7. Dissemination</b>	
i	Will the results of the study be offered to those participants or other affected parties who wish to receive them? If so, what steps have been taken to minimize any discomfort or misrepresentation that may result at the dissemination stage.
<b>8. Risk to researchers</b>	
i	Are there any risks to researchers? If so, please provide details.

## REFER TO RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Approval is required by the Research Ethics Committee on one or more of the following grounds (please mark with an 'X' in the appropriate place in the right-hand column):

a.	Significant ethical issues are raised by the research, including research characterised by one or more of the following features: (i) Research involving deception of participants, or which is conducted without their full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out or when the data is gathered, or which involves the use of confidential information. (ii) Research involving more than minimal risk of harm to participants, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o research involving vulnerable groups</li> <li>o research involving personally intrusive or ethically sensitive topics</li> <li>o research involving groups where permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members</li> <li>o research which would induce unacceptable psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain</li> </ul>	
b.	The researcher wants to seek the advice of the Research Ethics Committee	
c.	External obligations (for instance, funder requirements, data access requirements) require it	
d.	Research undertaken by a student or member of staff who has not received appropriate training or has insufficient experience in research ethics and has been unable to access appropriate advice or support.	

## NOTES

1. If your research involves NHS patients, staff or premises then it will most likely fall under the remit of the NHS Research Ethics Committees; similarly, social care research involving adults, intergenerational social care studies involving adults and children or families and some proposals for social science studies situated in the NHS will fall under the remit of the Social Care Research Ethics Committee. For further guidance see: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/research-community/before-you-apply/determine-which-review-body-approvals-are-required/>

2. Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, research involving adults aged 16 or over with learning difficulties or who otherwise 'lack capacity' will be subject to approval by an NHS REC if that research is deemed to be 'intrusive'. For guidance see: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/resources/research-legislation-and-governance/questions-and-answers-mental-capacity-act-2005/>

3. As general guidance, research participants under the age of 18 may be vulnerable. Also, see Note 2 above re the Mental Capacity Act.



4. Deception can occur at a variety of levels: for example, at one level, experimental methods may depend on participants being deliberately misled as to the true nature or purpose of the research in which they are taking part; at another, covert participant observation may entail an implicit deception as to the true identity and role of the researcher. Deception may be a legitimate and necessary feature of social scientific research, but its use must always be properly justified.

5. Please refer to the School's guidance on handling the Data Protection aspects of research data: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/legalAndCompliance/dataProtection/researchData.asp>. Further information about the Data Protection Act 1998 can be found in Annex A of the research ethics policy

## Annex C: Flow chart of the research ethics review process

