ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND ETHICS HANDBOOK

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David Gorton
Version 2

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
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MARYLEBONE ROAD, LONDON NW1 5HT
RAM.AC.UK

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook for research integrity aims to bring together institutional policy and guidance for good research conduct and its governance. Situated within a framework of ethical, professional, and legal obligations and standards, the handbook sets out the responsibilities of individual researchers and the Royal Academy of Music, as an employer of researchers, in the production of high-quality research underpinned by the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

The principles of research integrity have been established internationally for over a decade. Four principles of responsible research were published in the *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity* in 2010:

Honesty in all aspects of research;
Accountability in the conduct of research;
Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others;
Good stewardship of research on behalf of others.

These were further developed by the *Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations* (2013), revised editions of *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* (2017 and 2023), and the *Cape Town Statement on Fostering Research Integrity through Fairness and Equity* (2022).

Institutional policy is drawn principally from the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2012, revised 2019), which provides the standards expected of all stakeholders of research, and identifies five commitments that all those engaged with research must be able to make:

1. Uphold the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
2. Ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
3. Support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the development of researchers;
4. Use transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to handle allegations of research misconduct when they arise;
5. Work together to strengthen the integrity of research.

The policies outlined in this handbook apply to all forms of research undertaken by employees, visitors, Honorary Research Fellows, contractors, and students on taught and research programmes within the purview of the Royal Academy of Music. The provided guidance is tailored towards the most common forms of research activity undertaken at the Academy, including research that involves other people within the overlapping contexts of professional music making and the pre-professional training of musicians, and research that involves the artefacts of such practices. The policies and guidance within this handbook do not replace existing institutional expectations of the general conduct of staff, students, and visitors, or existing national guidance on good research conduct and governance. Rather, the handbook is designed to complement such internal and external expectations and set them within the context of the institutional research environment.

2. RESEARCH INTEGRITY

2.1. DEFINITIONS AND KEY PRINCIPLES

For the purpose of this handbook and the enclosed policy and guidance, research is defined in the same way as for the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), published in the *REF Guidance on Submissions* (2019), as:

> a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.... It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (hereafter, the *Concordat*) identifies five core elements that apply to all areas of research activity, including the preparation of funding applications, design and delivery of projects, the publication of research outcomes, and the provision of expert (peer) review. The five core elements are:

> **Honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings;
> **Rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results;
> **Transparency** and open communication in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public;
> **Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record;
> **Accountability** of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by [the *Concordat*].

While researchers must be able to exercise freedom in their academic, scholarly, and creative decisions, it is the responsibility of researchers to act in accordance with these core principles in all aspects of their research. The *Concordat* identifies the following key responsibilities:

Researchers are responsible for:

understanding the expected standards of rigour and integrity relevant to their research;
maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in their work at all times.

Employers of researchers are responsible for:

maintaining a research environment that develops good research practice and embeds a culture of research integrity;
supporting researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours;
defending researchers when they live up to the expectations of this concordat in difficult circumstances;
demonstrating that they have procedures in place to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with standards of best practice; systems to promote research integrity; and transparent, robust and fair processes to investigate alleged research misconduct.

2.2. RESEARCH INVOLVING OTHER PEOPLE

A significant amount of research undertaken at the Academy involves other people acting in a variety of capacities across one or more phases of a research process. The interactions of such individuals with a researcher are particularly complex in situations where there is an overlap between research and other kinds of activity, including professional or pre-professional music making, teaching situations, and outreach or public engagement work. The status of individuals interacting with research can vary significantly, with some individuals having more than one status in relation to a researcher; these include other employees of the Academy, students (internal or external), researchers from other institutions and disciplines, professional musicians, music industry professionals, audiences, or those taking part in outreach projects. Such persons may be acting in one or more of the following roles:

Co-researcher: another researcher who may be working as a co-author on the same project or using a shared situation for their own independent research.
Collaborator: an individual working closely with the researcher towards a shared outcome. This outcome could be artistic or educational, or both, and the collaborator may, or may not be, acting as a researcher themselves.
Participant: an individual whose actions are studied as part of a research process. These actions include the completion of surveys or interviews, or taking part in artistic or educational activities.
Contributor: an individual whose actions form part of the delivery of a research project, but who may view the project only from an artistic or educational perspective. Contributors include musicians and other industry professionals.

Researchers should always interact with other people with the highest standards of rigour and integrity. Understanding the role of an individual in relation to research and other kinds of activity will help to define the mode of engagement and the requirements for institutional procedures, such as ethical review. For example, while the inclusion of participants as objects of study within a research project would require ethical review and approval (see Section 3.), the involvement of a contributor such as a publisher or audio engineer within a research project would not require such institutional scrutiny.

2.3. COLLABORATION AND CO-PRODUCTION IN RESEARCH

In the planning and management of research projects that involve collaborators or co-researchers, the following external guidance should be taken into consideration.

The *Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations* (2013) identifies 20 responsibilities within research collaboration, divided into four categories, and summarised as follows:

> General Collaborative Responsibilities: **Integrity**, **Trust**, **Purpose** that advances beneficial knowledge, and agreed **Goals**.
> Responsibilities in Managing the Collaboration: **Communication**, **Agreements** that govern the collaboration, **Compliance with Laws, Policies and Regulations**, the fair distribution of **Costs and Rewards**, **Transparency**, responsible **Resource Management**, and ongoing **Monitoring**.
> Responsibilities in Collaborative Relationships: mutual understanding of **Roles and Responsibilities**, open discussion of **Customary Practices and Assumptions**, prompt resolution of **Conflict**, and agreement on the **Authority of Representation**.
> Responsibilities for Outcomes of Research: agreement of the use of **Data, Intellectual Property and Research Records**, agreement on **Publication**, agreement on **Authorship and Acknowledgement**, **Responding to Irresponsible Research Practices**, and **Accountability** within the collaboration and to other stakeholders.

The *UK Research and Innovation Good Research Resource Hub* encourages researchers to consider four broad areas in the management of research that involves collaboration and co-production, summarised as follows:

> 1. A wide involvement in the design and conduct of research that values the different forms of knowledge, experience and expertise amongst collaborators from the earliest stages of the research process.
> 2. Recognition that co-production may raise complex ethical considerations around responsibility, accountability and power since it can blur the lines between the researchers and other stakeholders. All partners should consider such issues in advance and establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and agree how to manage any tensions between competing accountabilities. Researchers should follow the principles of equitable partnerships to address inherent power imbalances when working with partners, particularly public and community partners where imbalances may be more prominent.
> 3. Co-production often includes academic and wider partners who may come from a variety of organisations in the UK and abroad, which may have their own perspectives regarding issues of ethics around joint research. These differences may be due to organisational culture, training, access to research resources and participant populations. Attitudes towards the project and any perceptions about conflicts of interest should be assessed.
> 4. Research partners should agree to a progressive and shared process of ethical reflection and regular monitoring while the research is taking place, and agree a streamlined ethics review process. This will ensure that ethical issues are promptly reported to all organisations involved and appropriate advice sought from a research ethics committee.

A further consideration within Practice Research concerns the practitioner-researchers' personal understanding of the research process. While such insider perspectives can provide valuable insight within a research narrative, it should be recognised that an individual interpretation of events can be shaped by unreliable memory and various forms of unconscious bias. To mitigate

the risks of misrepresentation, a range of qualitative research methodologies can be used to arrive at objective and shared representations of the research process that may supplement independent perspectives.

2.4. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Authorship of research has been defined by the *Vancouver Protocol* (or Vancouver recommendations, or "the uniform requirements"), established in 1978 by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). The identification of authorship establishes important academic and financial benefits for individuals in relation to the research, and additionally identifies responsibility and accountability for such work. The ICMJE recommends that authorship be based on the following four criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Contributors to research who meet all four of the above criteria should be credited as authors. Contributors who meet fewer than all four of the criteria should not be listed as authors but should nevertheless be acknowledged.

The Academy's Intellectual Property Policy (4 October 2022) states that employees retain ownership of the intellectual property in their creative output, including academic and research output. This is subject to the employee granting to the Academy (where possible) a perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive right to use such content for the Academy's non-commercial purposes. The policy recognises that intellectual property may be subject to separate ownership or control by a third party (such as a publisher or record label).

Within Practice Research, output that also has the recognised status as artistic work is protected by the legal frameworks related to the defined roles of composer and performer. Interests are administered in the UK by the Performing Rights Society (PRS) for composers and Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) for performers on recordings. Where the conventions of artistic practice and the guidance of the Vancouver Protocol do not converge, the approach to acknowledgement should be agreed by all contributors.

2.5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Office of Research Integrity identifies the existence of a conflict of interest "when two or more contradictory interests relate to an activity by an individual or an institution. The conflict lies in the situation, not in any behaviour or lack of behaviour of the individual" (Korenman, 2006). The ICMJE additionally states that "the potential for conflict of interest and bias exists when professional judgment concerning a primary interest (such as … the validity of research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain). Perceptions of conflict of interest are as important as actual conflicts of interest." UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) defines a conflict of interest "as a situation in which an individual's ability to exercise judgement

or act in one role is, could be, or is seen to be impaired or otherwise influenced by their involvement in another role or relationship. Even a perception of competing interests, impaired judgement or undue influence may be damaging."

Within a small and collaborative institution, conflicts of interest in research are likely to be common. While a conflict of interest does not usually represent any wrongdoing by an individual or institution, and is not always a negative situation, it is important that conflicts should be identified and declared so that appropriate mitigations can be put in place. It is also recognised that the avoidance of a conflict of interest might occasionally create a more problematic circumstance. Declaration of conflicts of interest can be made through various routes, depending on the context: for example, on PhD examiner nomination forms, or an ethical review application.

2.6. HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all research activities comply with the Academy's Health and Safety at Work Policy and associated procedures and guidance. A documented process of risk assessment, management and mitigation should be completed before work begins for any research that involves significant risk to those involved and anyone else who might be affected by the work. Risk assessment is an important component of ethical review (see Section 3.) and should be included in all full ethical review applications. The risk assessment matrix included as Appendix 2 in *Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations* (UK Research Integrity Office and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators) is recommended as a template.

2.7. DATA PROTECTION

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that the collection, storage, and use of research data is compliant with the Academy's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR. Such data may include, but is not restricted to: interviews, questionnaires, images, video footage, and feedback data. Where possible, data should be anonymised, and if there is a specific need to retain the identity of individuals this should normally be kept separate from the collected data. Data associated with a specific individual (i.e. an interview with someone) should only be published with the explicit permission of that individual (see Appendix 6.2). All research involving personal data must undergo a research ethics review process (see Section 3.).

Research data should be stored securely using encryption. The Academy's IT policies prohibit the use of small external devices such as USB drives for the storage or transfer of any data. Data should be backed-up and transferred using an Academy account on Microsoft OneDrive. Personal accounts and other cloud services should not be used.

While the Academy is committed to the principles of Open Research and the open access of research data, it should be recognised that there can be a tension between the imperatives of Open Research and the protections of UK GDPR. In particular, within Practice Research, documentary materials may contain personal data that cannot be anonymised, such as video footage and images. Research data should first be compliant with retention policies and UK GDPR before considered for open access.

2.8. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXTS

Researchers are expected to have knowledge of and comply with UK legislation and guidance that relates to research conduct and management. This includes but is not restricted to: Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life (Seven Principles) 1995; Human Rights Act 1998; Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; Freedom of Information Act 2000; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Equality Act 2010; Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR); Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2023.

Researchers should seek guidance from supervisors, line-managers, or the Research Office regarding research that may involve risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, including but not restricted to: ethnicity; political opinion; religious or spiritual beliefs; physical or mental health conditions; sexuality or gender identity; abuse; nudity; sexually explicit materials; criminal activities; political asylum; conflict; personal violence; terrorism or violent extremism. Such research requires full ethical approval and a formal risk assessment, with plans to mitigate increased vulnerability and avoid discrimination as defined within the Equality Act 2010. It is a criminal offence to access, store, or disseminate certain classes of material unless for the purpose of a research project. Such projects should be clearly defined through the formal mechanisms of risk assessment and ethical approval. Additionally, the digital storage of certain classes of material may contravene the Academy's IT policy.

2.9. ANNUAL STATEMENT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

To comply with Commitment 5 (A Commitment to Strengthening Research Integrity) of the *Concordat*, the Academy will produce a short annual statement, which will be presented to Governing Body, and subsequently be made publicly available on the Academy's website. By conforming to the published template, the annual statement will include:

1. Key contact information, including a named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity and a named first point of contact for information on matters of research integrity;
2. A description of current systems and culture, explaining how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity;
3. A summary of changes and developments during the period under review;
4. Reflections on progress and plans for future development;
5. A statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct;
6. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

2.10. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Academy is committed to strengthening the integrity of research across its research environment, and to reviewing progress regularly and openly. The training and development of students and staff will occur principally through the following mechanisms:

1. The dissemination of this Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook and other guidance through the dedicated Research Office pages on the Academy's intranet;

2. The inclusion of research integrity and ethics within taught and postgraduate research skills training;
3. Termly research staff training events, managed by the Research Office;
4. Mentorship and the system of line management.

Progress on staff and student training in research integrity will be reported in the annual statement.

3. RESEARCH ETHICS

3.1. KEY PRINCIPLES

The ethical principles for research involving human participants were established by the World Medical Association in the *Declaration of Helsinki* in 1968. These include:

The requirements to monitor and minimise risk;
The requirement to specifically consider the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals;
The principles of privacy and confidentiality;
The principle of informed consent;
The requirement to develop a clearly described and justified research protocol;
The requirement for oversight and monitoring by an independent Research Ethics Committee.

Participants in research projects have the universally recognised right to:

Consent to participate in, withdraw from, or refuse to take part in research projects;
Confidentiality: personal information or identifiable data should not be disclosed without consent;
Security of data: data should be kept secure and should not be kept for longer than is absolutely necessary;
Safety: participants should not be exposed to unnecessary risk.

Researchers have an obligation to ensure that their research is conducted with: honesty; integrity; minimal risk; respect for other people and cultures.

Sector-wide expectations and guidance of good research practice are published in the following documents:

The British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (2021);
The British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018).

3.2. RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY AND REVIEW PROCESS

Scope

This policy applies to all research involving human participants or personal data, or that involves risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, conducted by Academy researchers or by researchers using participants who are Academy students. The Academy's definition of research is taken from the Research Excellence Framework 2021, which in its shortened form defines research as "a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared." Academy researchers include all those conducting research who are members of staff, both employees and those holding honorary positions, or students. Highly sensitive topics are those that are likely to cause significant risk to researchers, participants of research, or other groups with legitimate interest, and include but are not restricted to: ethnicity; political opinion; religious or spiritual beliefs; physical or mental health conditions; sexuality or gender identity; abuse; nudity; sexually explicit materials; criminal activities; political asylum; conflict; personal violence; terrorism or violent

extremism. Research with ethical ramifications that fall outside of the scope of this policy, including but not restricted to research involving animals or human tissue, is not normally permitted at the Academy.

Governance

It is the responsibility of individual researchers to uphold good research practice, and to safeguard the rights of the participants in their research projects.

The Academy's Research Committee is responsible to Academic Board, and ultimately to Governing Body for:

Reviewing institutional policies on research integrity and research ethics;
Offering guidance on the interpretation of such policies;
Promoting awareness of such policies;
Resolving disputed ethics approval decisions;
Suspending research activities in the event of arising concerns, pending further investigation;
Ensuring institutional compliance with external regulations concerning research integrity and research ethics;
Approving research ethics applications, normally as a delegated power to the Ethics Committee.

This policy is owned by the Academy's Research Committee. The Academy's Ethics Committee is responsible to Research Committee for considering research ethics approval applications from Academy researchers or researchers using Academy students as participants. Research ethics review is distinct from research governance and decisions over whether research can go ahead; consequently, the constitution and operation of the Ethics Committee should be separate from institutional governance. Corporate image or other institutional protections are separate from the practice of the Ethics Committee.

Research ethics review procedure

All research involving human participants or personal data, or that involves risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, conducted by Academy researchers or by researchers using participants who are Academy students must be reviewed by the Ethics Committee, and research ethics approval obtained, before data gathering commences. Individual researchers if working alone, or the lead researcher of a research group, should apply for ethics approval by completing a Research Ethics Approval Form and submitting it to the Ethics Committee Secretary.

In Practice Research it is understood that individuals interacting with research may have the roles of co-researcher, collaborator, or contributor (see Section 2.2.); in such cases ethical review and approval are not required unless the actions of such individuals are also studied as part of a research process (i.e. if they are also participants). In projects with a significant amount of collaboration or co-production, it is recommended that the ethical review procedure be used to monitor and manage the ethical dimensions of such work.

Many types of research, including Practice Research, may interact with highly sensitive topics as content or context. Where such interactions are routine and do not constitute significant risk, ethical review and approval are not required. For example, an analytical comparison of the

settings of the *Magnificat* by Stanford may involve an interaction with the topic of religious belief, but is unlikely to represent a significant risk. However, the addressing of highly sensitive topics in research can increase the vulnerability of participants, researchers, or other groups with legitimate interest (including audiences); such vulnerabilities may include physical harm, damage to social standing or reputation, or psychological or emotional distress. Research of this category would require ethical review and approval.

If ethics approval is granted, the Ethics Committee will issue a Research Ethics Approval Certificate to the applicant, which will be valid for the proposed duration of the project, or until there is a material change to the proposed project, or until there are relevant changes to the Academy's ethics policy.

In projects that involve Academy students as participants, a Research Ethics Approval Certificate does not provide permission for a research project to go ahead; rather it provides evidence that the project has received institutional ethics approval. Administrative approval will still need to be sought from the relevant Head of Department or senior manager, or the President of the Students Union, depending on the scope of the project and the mode of participant recruitment.

While ethics approval is required before any data collection involving human participants commences, applicants are expected to consider the ethical implications of their research at all stages of the project. If significant changes are made to the project after approval has been obtained, it will be necessary to obtain re-approval.

Personal data collected as a result of an ethics approval application will be stored and processed by the Royal Academy of Music in accordance with the provisions of UK GDPR. See www.ram.ac.uk/privacy for more information.

<u>Low-risk and full applications</u>
Applications that satisfy all of the yes/no questions in section 1 of the Research Ethics Approval form, and which do not include any of the circumstances listed below will be treated as low risk and will undergo a streamlined approval process. Such applications require brief descriptions of the research project and plans for recruiting participants.

Full applications are required for projects that are not able to satisfy all of the yes/no questions in section 1 of the Research Ethics Approval form, or which include any of the following circumstances:

1. Proposed research involves deliberately misleading participants;
2. Proposed research has realistic risk of participants experiencing physical or psychological distress or discomfort;
3. Proposed research uses Academy students as participants and concerns pain, anxiety, or other kinds of distress in performance or practice;
4. Participants include those whose competence to exercise informed consent is in doubt, including but not restricted to: those under 18 years of age; people with diminished mental capacity; people who suffer from psychiatric or personality disorders; those with a basic knowledge of the language in which the research is conducted;
5. Participants include those who may not be in a position to exercise unfettered informed consent, including but not restricted to: members of the

armed forces, prisoners, asylum seekers, family members or close friends of the researcher(s);
6. Participants include those whose circumstances may unduly influence their decision to consent, including but not restricted to: those with disabilities; those in poor health; the elderly; those in care;
7. Proposed research involves risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, including but not restricted to: ethnicity; political opinion; religious or spiritual beliefs; physical or mental health conditions; sexuality or gender identity; abuse; nudity; sexually explicit materials; criminal activities; political asylum; conflict; personal violence; terrorism or violent extremism.

Full applications require detailed descriptions of the research protocol and plans for recruiting participants, as well as a full risk assessment plan. The risk assessment matrix included as Appendix 2 in *Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations* (UK Research Integrity Office and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators) is recommended as a template. Full applications will not be disadvantaged in the review procedure. The Ethics Committee will assess the proposed risk management and mitigation strategies of the project, rather than the perceived level of risk. Research ethics is a matter of being risk aware rather than risk averse. Similarly, the streamlined approval process does not imply a lower standard of review, but rather that the ethical issues are relatively straightforward and have already been satisfactorily addressed through the completion of the questions in section 1 of the Research Ethics Approval form.

Outcomes of ethical review

The Ethics Committee will communicate one of the following outcomes to ethics approval applicants:

Approval
Approval with compulsory changes
No decision with request for further information
Rejection

The Ethics Committee reserves the right to refer applications to the Research Committee for further consideration. Rejected applications cannot be resubmitted unless substantial changes have been made to the proposed research project or risk management plan.

Appeals

Appeals against the decision of the Ethics Committee should be made in writing to the chair of the Research Committee within two weeks of the communication of the ethics review outcome. Appeals can only be made on the grounds of procedural irregularity in the conduct of members of the Ethics Committee; these might include an administrative error, demonstrable bias on the part of one or more of the reviewers, or evidence that the review was not conducted in accordance with the Research Ethics Policy and Review process and the Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. Upon receipt, the chair of the Research Committee will investigate the claims of the appeal, either independently or by convening an independent panel to hear the case, depending on the nature of the appeal. Such a panel would normally consist of two senior members of staff and a member of the Academic Secretariat as clerk. Following the investigation, should the chair of the Research Committee be satisfied by the claims of the

appeal, they will arrange for the ethics approval application to be reviewed again, using different members of the Ethics Committee or, as needed, co-opted external specialists.

Ethics Committee

The framework of standards that underpin the basic principles of research ethics review are drawn from the *Declaration of Helsinki* (see Section 3.1.), the *Singapore Statement* (see Section 1.), and the "Belmont Principles" (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001), which are often summarised as: Respect for persons (and their autonomy); Beneficence; Non-maleficence; Distributed justice (ensuring benefits and burdens are shared equitably).

The following four core principles for the design and implementation of best practice in ethics review and support processes are identified by the UK Research Integrity Office and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators in *Research Ethics: Support and Review in Research Organisations*:

> **Independence**: all institutional processes supporting best practice in research ethics must operate free from conflicts of interest so that the application of ethics principles and reasoning is neither impeded nor compromised.
> **Competence**: ethics review and other processes supporting institutional best practice and sector standards must be consistent, coherent and well-informed.
> **Facilitation**: ethics review and other supporting processes must make the facilitation of ethically sound research a priority.
> **Transparency and accountability**: decisions and advice by Research Ethics Committees must be open to public scrutiny and responsibilities must be recognised and discharged consistently.

As detailed in *Research Ethics: Support and Review in Research Organisations*, the primary aims of the Ethics Committee are to:

> Facilitate, not hinder, valuable research;
> Maintain ethical standards of practice in research;
> Protect human participants in research;
> Protect researchers from harm;
> Preserve the rights of participants;
> Protect legitimate interests of other individuals, bodies, and communities associated with research.

Research Ethics: Support and Review in Research Organisations recommends that membership of the Ethics Committee should normally be constituted so that:

> 1. It is multidisciplinary and has members who represent a broad range of methodological expertise;
> 2. It represents diversity and includes individuals who represent the demographic diversity of the local community;
> 3. It is chaired by a senior member of academic staff with experience in research and/or research ethics;
> 4. It includes at least one appropriately trained external member with no affiliation to the institution;

5. It has members with a broad experience of and expertise in the areas of research regularly reviewed by the Committee, and who have the confidence and esteem of the research community;
6. It includes at least one member who is knowledgeable in the field of ethics;
7. Conflicts of interest are avoided.

Where such membership is not possible due to the size and character of the institution, additional membership may be drawn from the ConservatoiresUK Research Ethics Committee or the wider CUK community so that the core principle of competence is upheld.

Reporting

The Research Committee acts as the oversight committee of the Ethics Committee. The outcomes of research ethics review applications with outline details of projects should be reported to the next meeting of the Research Committee as a rolling agenda item. Additionally, an annual report containing statistics and broad discussion of the decisions of the Ethics Committee should be made to the Research Committee. Summary details of reviewed research projects and outcomes should be retained for institutional reporting and audit, and subject to confidentially and security requirements be made available for public scrutiny through the Freedom of Information process.

3.3. ETHICS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Status: Sub-Committee
Parent Committee: Research Committee

Subject to any general or particular direction which from time to time may be given by Research Committee, the Ethics Committee, when dealing with matters of research ethics, is charged:

1. To receive details of research proposed to be carried out by Academy researchers that involves human participants or personal data;
2. To receive details of research proposed to be carried out by Academy researchers that involves risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, including but are not restricted to: ethnicity; political opinion; religious or spiritual beliefs; physical or mental health conditions; sexuality or gender identity; abuse; nudity; sexually explicit materials; criminal activities; political asylum; conflict; personal violence; terrorism or violent extremism;
3. To receive details of research proposed to be carried out that involves Academy students as participants;
4. To consider such research on behalf of the Research Committee and provide an ethics opinion on the research, whether: a) approved; b) approved with compulsory changes; c) no decision with request for further information; d) rejected; and to advise on the basis of such ethics opinions;
5. Following approval to issue a Research Ethics Approval certificate and where relevant to advise on the process of obtaining governance approval for the research to go ahead;

6. Following approval to exercise powers to require halting of research if substantive ethical problems are identified as a project progresses until such time as any such concerns have been satisfactorily remedied.
7. Undertake ongoing training to ensure that these duties are delivered with competence.

Meetings
Much of the business of the Ethics Committee can be discharged using electronic communication. Additionally, the Committee will normally meet at least once per academic year.

Membership
OFFICERS
Chair: A senior member of teaching staff and member of Research Committee, but not a member of the Research Management Team
Deputy Chair: A senior member of teaching staff with research experience
Secretary: A member of the Academic Secretariate or Research Office
EX OFFICIO
Research Manager
APPOINTED
Three members of teaching staff with research experience from at least two different departments
One member of non-teaching staff with a student-facing role (e.g. Department Administrator, Registry, Orchestral office)
CO-OPTED
External specialists as required, from CUK Research Ethics Committee or the broader CUK community
QUORUM
The quorum of each committee will comprise the Chair/Deputy Chair, and one-third of its members (excluding co-opted and observers). If the committee is not quorate the meeting will not take place and should be rearranged as necessary

3.4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the Ethics Committee should be sufficiently trained in: the sector-wide principles of ethical review; the ethical issues on which they may be required to make decisions; the basis on which ethical decisions can be made; the administrative processes of conducting Ethics Committee business. Training shall be ongoing and form a central part of committee meetings at least once per academic year. The chair of the Ethics Committee is responsible for the programme of training but may draw upon additional internal or external expertise.

3.5. ETHICS COMMITTEE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Ethics review applications will be collected by the Committee Secretary, who will determine the appropriate handling. Applications that satisfy all of the yes/no questions in section 1 on the Research Ethics Approval form (see Appendix 6.1), and do not include any of the circumstances in section 2 of the form, will be treated as low risk and will undergo a streamlined approval process. Such applications will be reviewed by one member of the committee, usually the Chair.

If the Chair identifies a conflict of interest, reviewing will be passed to the Deputy Chair or another member of the committee. This streamlined review process will be conducted using electronic communication and will normally be completed within five working days.

Full applications that do not satisfy all of the yes/no questions in section 1 of the Research Ethics Approval form, or that involve one or more of the circumstances listed in section 2 of the form, require a more extensive review process. Normally, such applications will be reviewed by four members of the committee including the Chair or the Deputy Chair, who will be selected by the Chair to ensure an appropriate balance of reviewers and that the principle of competence is maintained. In such circumstances the review process will be conducted using electronic communication and will normally be completed within four weeks of submission.

For applications of particular complexity, the Chair should table the application at the next meeting of the Ethics Committee, or organise an extraordinary meeting, so that the full expertise of the committee can be consulted. In such circumstances the review process can take some months from the date of submission, depending on the scheduling of the meetings.

Committee members should abstain from the review process if they identify a substantial conflict of interest. In the unlikely event that abstentions from the review process on the basis of conflict-of-interest result in the committee no longer being quorate, the Chair may co-opt additional external expertise in order to complete the review process.

In viewing the research protocol and (where appropriate) the risk management plan of an application, reviewers should exercise their judgement on whether and how:

The dignity, rights, and welfare of research participants are protected;
The legitimate interests of other individuals, bodies, or communities are considered and protected;
The safety of the researcher(s) is considered and protected;
The design of the research protocol is of appropriate merit.

If all of the reviewers of an application are satisfied that these criteria have been met, then the outcome of the review process should be 'approved.'

If all of the reviewers of an application are satisfied that these criteria would be met following some small alterations to the research protocol and (where appropriate) the risk management plan, then the outcome of the review process should be 'approved with compulsory changes.'

If the reviewers are unable to come to a conclusion because of a lack of information, then the outcome of the review process should be 'no decision with request for further information.'

If any of the reviewers have significant concern that any of the above criteria have not been met, then the outcome of the review process should be 'rejected.'

Reviewers should be prepared to offer recommendations and feedback to applicants on the basis that ethical decisions were made. Such feedback should be collated by the Chair or Deputy Chair and communicated to the applicant(s) by the Committee Secretary. All requests for amendments and any other correspondence should be communicated by the Committee Secretary.

3.6. GUIDANCE ON ETHICAL REVIEW FOR STUDENTS ON TAUGHT COURSES

Students undertaking research projects on taught programmes (such as BMus or MMus) should be aware of the ethical implications of their work, and as staff and research degree students, are required to submit an ethics approval application for any research that falls within the scope of the research ethics policy. Ethics and ethics review will be included within research skills training for students on taught programmes, and assistance in completing an ethics review process will be given by research project supervisors and course leaders of research modules. It is envisaged that the majority of research projects on taught programmes will be eligible for the low risk streamlined review process, and where a number of students are planning to conduct research that is of a similar nature, a single generic group ethics application can be submitted using one application form.

4. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

4.1. DEFINITIONS AND KEY PRINCIPLES

The *Concordat to support research integrity* defines research misconduct as "behaviours or actions that fall short of the standards of ethics, research and scholarship required to ensure that the integrity of research is upheld." It identifies the following forms of research misconduct:

Fabrication: making up results, other outputs (for example, artefacts) or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, and presenting and/or recording them as if they were real;

Falsification: inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery and/or consents;

Plagiarism: using other people's ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without acknowledgement or permission;

Failure to meet: legal, ethical and professional obligations, for example:

- not observing legal, ethical and other requirements for human research participants, animal subjects, or human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment;
- breach of duty of care for humans involved in research whether deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence, including failure to obtain appropriate informed consent;
- misuse of personal data, including inappropriate disclosures of the identity of research participants and other breaches of confidentiality;
- improper conduct in peer review of research proposals, results or manuscripts submitted for publication. This includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence; misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for the purposes of peer review;

Misrepresentation of:

- data, including suppression of relevant results/data or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence presenting a flawed interpretation of data;
- involvement, including inappropriate claims to authorship or attribution of work and denial of authorship/attribution to persons who have made an appropriate contribution;
- interests, including failure to declare competing interests of researchers or funders of a study;
- qualifications, experience and/or credentials;
- publication history, through undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication;

Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct: failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistleblowers, or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding. Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties through the use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements.

The *Concordat* also makes clear that honest errors or differences in interpretation or methodology do not constitute research misconduct, and that minor infractions with no evident intention to deceive may often be addressed informally through mentoring.

4.2. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Allegations of research misconduct can be received from both internal and external complainants and may be received through a variety of means including whistleblowing. Allegations will be dealt with under the provisions of the Academy's Discipline and Appeal Policy. The Discipline and Appeal Policy is available on the Academy's intranet.

In compliance with the *Concordat*, investigations of research misconduct will:

Ensure that any person involved in investigating allegations has the appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and authority to do so;
Take reasonable steps to ensure that the investigation is independent and avoids any potential conflicts of interest;
Ensure that the investigation is well documented and occurs over a reasonable timeframe.

5. REFERENCES

Beauchamp, T. L. & Childress, J. F. 2001. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 5th edn. Oxford University Press.

The British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018).

The British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (2021).

Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct (UK Research Integrity Office).

Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK).

The Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 1968).

The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (All European Academies, 2017, revised 2023).

Framework on Research Ethics review guidance (Economic and Social Research Council).

Good research resource hub (UKRI).

Korenman, Stanley G. 2006. *Teaching the Responsible Conduct of Research in Humans (RCRH)*. University of California Regents & Office of Research Integrity.

Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (World Conference on Research Integrity Foundation, 2013).

Policy and guidance on the governance of good research practice (UKRI).

Policy for investigating allegations of research misconduct in research (UKRI).

Procedure for the investigation of misconduct in research (UK Research Integrity Office).

Research Excellence Framework Guidance on Submissions (Research England, 2019).

Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations (UK Research Integrity Office and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators).

Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (World Conference on Research Integrity Foundation, 2010).

Template for annual statement on Research Integrity (Universities UK).

UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI).

UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research (NHS).

The Vancouver Protocol (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, 1978).

6. APPENDICES

6.1. RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

For research involving human participants or personal data, or that involves risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, conducted by Academy researchers or by researchers using participants who are Academy students.

Before completing this form applicants should make themselves familiar with the following documents:

Royal Academy of Music Research Integrity Handbook (2024)

and either of

The British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (2021)
The British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018)

Your personal data will be stored and processed by the Royal Academy of Music in accordance with the provisions of UK GDPR. Please see www.ram.ac.uk/privacy for more information.

Type of project	*Postgraduate / Undergraduate / Staff / External researcher*
Title of project	
Name(s) of researcher(s)	
Name(s) of supervisor(s)	*For student research*
Date	

Provide a brief summary of your proposed project, including start and finish dates

Describe how you plan to recruit and engage with project participants

If you plan to use a questionnaire in your research, please attach it to this application.

Questions, section 1: answer each question with Yes, No, or N/A

Will you describe the main experimental procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	
Will you tell your participants that their participation is voluntary?	
Will you obtain written consent for participation?*	
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	
With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	
Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will only be identifiable as theirs with their written consent?	
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)?	
With interviews, will you tell your participants that you wish to record the interview, and that they may decline to have their interview recorded?	
With research that requires audio or video recordings, will you tell your participants that their permission will be sought to play any excerpts in future presentations?	

Questions, section 2: answer each question with Yes, No, or N/A

Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?	
Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort?	
If your project uses Academy students as participants, does it concern pain, anxiety, or other kinds of distress in performance or practice?	
Does your project involve participants whose competence to exercise informed consent is in doubt, including but not restricted to: those under 18 years of age; people with diminished mental capacity; people who suffer from psychiatric or personality disorders; those with a basic knowledge of the language in which the research in conducted?	
Does your project involve participants who may not be in a position to exercise unfettered informed consent, including but not restricted to: members of the armed forces, prisoners, asylum seekers, family members or close friends of the researcher(s)?	
Does your project involve participants whose circumstances may unduly influence their decision to consent, including but not restricted to: those with disabilities; those in poor health; the elderly; those in care?	
Does your project involve risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, including but not restricted to: ethnicity; political opinion; religious or spiritual beliefs; physical or mental health conditions; sexuality or gender identity; abuse; nudity; sexually explicit	

* An informed consent form template can be found in the Appendices at Section 6.2.

materials; criminal activities; political asylum; conflict; personal violence; terrorism or violent extremism?	

If you have answered Yes or N/A to all of the section 1 questions, and No or N/A to all of the section 2 questions, your application will be considered low risk and undergo a streamlined approval process. In all other cases you will need to make a full application by attaching a detailed explanation on a separate sheet, including, where appropriate, a risk management plan. The risk assessment matrix included as Appendix 2 in *Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations* (UK Research Integrity Office and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators) is recommended as a template.

Should you wish to undertake research at other CUK conservatoires in addition to the Royal Academy of Music, please apply to the CUK Research Ethics Committee.
Details can be found here: https://conservatoiresuk.ac.uk/about-us/research-integrity-governance-and-ethics/

By signing this document, you confirm that you have read and are familiar with the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook (2024), and either the British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (2021) or the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018).

Please answer with Yes or No

I agree to process and store all personal and sensitive personal data in accordance with the principles of data protection. I will ensure that any participants are fully aware of and consent to the processing of their personal data as part of this project. I understand that I am solely responsible for this.	

When completed please send this form along with any relevant survey material, questionnaires and other attachments to the Ethics Committee Secretary.

Signed	
Print name	

6.2. INFORMED CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

This template can be used by researchers to gain written informed consent to conduct research that involves human participants and collects data using questionnaires, observations, interviews, video recordings, or similar. Completed consent forms should be retained for the same period as the research data.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to consent to participate in this research, your inclusion in any connected artistic, educational, or outreach activities will be unaffected. If the research involves a questionnaire, you have the option to omit questions that you do not want to answer. If the research involves an interview, you may decline to have the interview recorded.

Your personal data will be stored and processed by the Royal Academy of Music in accordance with the provisions of UK GDPR. Please see www.ram.ac.uk/privacy for more information.

If you have any concerns or wish to make a complaint, please contact the Research Office at the Royal Academy of Music: researchoffice@ram.ac.uk

To be completed by the researcher(s)

Name(s) of researcher(s)	
Contact email for further questions	
Title of project	
Name(s) of supervisor(s)	*For student research*
Date	

General information about the research

Provide a brief summary of the research, including:

1. *An explanation of the purpose of the research and a summary of its methods*
2. *A description of planned publication and dissemination, including any presentations*
3. *A clear description of what the participant is expected to do*
4. *Where relevant, an explanation and assessment of any risks, pain, or discomfort the participant may experience*
5. *A statement confirming ethical approval*
6. *A statement explaining planned usage of the data during research, including dissemination, storage, and retention*
7. *A statement confirming whether the research is observational*
8. *A statement that research data will be anonymised, or if not, a statement of how participants will be identifiable in the research outcomes*[†]
9. *A statement confirming payment arrangements for participation, where relevant, such as compensation for time and inconvenience, or expenses.*

[†] For example, if the participants may be identifiable through audio or video components of research outcomes, or if named musicians or public figures are being interviewed about their work, or if the identity of collaborating participants is relevant to the research, or if the participants expressly wish to be identifiable in the research outcomes.

To be completed by the participant or a person responsible for the participant: answer each question with Yes, No, or N/A

I have read and understood the information above, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the research and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions, can decline to have an interview recorded, and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.	
I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me will not be shared beyond the study team, except for any specific reasons given in the information above.	
If the research is observational, I consent to being observed.	
If relevant to the nature of the research project, as described in the information above, I consent to being identifiable in the research outcomes.	
If the research involves audio or video documentation, I consent to my image, voice, and musical performance in such documentation being included in the planned research outcomes and presentations described in the information above, and understand that additional usage would require additional consent.	

Signatures

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date

If participant is under 18

_____	_____	_____
Name of person responsible [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date

If participant is unable to sign their name, mark the box and witness ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of witness [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date