Training and Professional Development

EUAA Guidelines for Research Ethics

EUAA Guidelines for Research Ethics

2026

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Introduction

These Guidelines for Research Ethics outline the ethical principles and responsibilities for carrying out research at the EUAA Academy and the necessary procedures for the effective implementation of these guidelines. The guidelines apply to lecturers, supervisors, teaching assistants, trainers, assessors, students and learners conducting and participating in research activities at the EUAA Academy (hereinafter referred to as researchers). The guidelines are specifically tailored to research conducted in the field of asylum and reception within the European Union context, where particular ethical considerations arise due to the involvement of vulnerable populations and institutional actors.

> Research is the quest of knowledge obtained through systematic study, thinking, observation, and experimentation. While different disciplines may use different approaches, they each share the motivation to increase our understanding of ourselves and the world in which we live.
>
> European Union Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, ALLEA (2023)

The guidelines are in line with the EUAA Internal guidance on academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic integrity, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority guidelines for ethical practice and research integrity and the European Union Code of Conduct for Research Integrity[1] (hereafter EU CoC), which has been endorsed by the European Commission and provides a common reference point for responsible research across Europe. Using the EU CoC alongside other European and international policy documents ensures that the guidelines reflect widely accepted standards for research integrity.

The purpose of research ethics is to promote trustworthy and responsible research while fostering excellence in academic practice by upholding integrity, respect, and accountability while protecting the rights and well-being of all participants.

Researchers at the EUAA Academy are obliged to comply with the principles and norms stipulated in these Guidelines. The researchers are responsible for familiarising themselves with these Guidelines, seeking assistance from supervisors when in doubt and reporting ethical concerns related to research misconduct.

[1] ALLEA (2023) The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – Revised Edition 2023

1. Ethical research practices

Research integrity includes practices that uphold ethical principles throughout the entire research process and are an integral part of internal quality assurance systems. In this respect, the EUAA Academy adopts the good research practices outlined in the EU CoC:

PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics and integrity are inherent components of the research process. The basic principles of research integrity are:

- **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, methodology, analysis, and use of resources.
- **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting, and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full, and unbiased way.
- **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, research subjects, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage, and the environment.
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision, and mentoring, and for its wider societal impacts.

European Union Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, ALLEA (2023)

2. Research environment.

The Academy strives to ensure a culture of research integrity and an environment of mutual respect. Researchers should consider ethics issues throughout the lifecycle of a research project and promote a culture of ethical reflection, debate and mutual learning. The lifecycle of research starts with the planning and research design stage and finishes with a public dissemination of the results and the archiving and sharing of data for future use. (Economic and Social Research Council, 2025). Researchers are made aware of policies and guidelines for good research practice, including the management of research materials and the protection of data. The system for handling alleged violations of ethical principles is explained in the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

3. Training, supervision and mentoring.

Core elements of ethics in research are integrated in the curricula of programmes containing a research element such as a dissertation, capstone projects and/or other relevant research-related outputs. For example:

- During induction training

- Through specific modules covering research ethics concepts relevant to research involving vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Students will follow a module explaining how to prepare a research proposal, including support on carrying out a self-assessment to identify ethical considerations and preparing an application to the ethics committee

4. Procedures to apply ethical principles in research

All persons carrying out research activities at the EUAA Academy should design, carry out and document their research in a careful and transparent manner. If the research is in any way covert, this must be justified. Research protocols take account of, and are sensitive to, relevant differences among research participants, such as age, gender, sex, culture, religion, worldview, ethnicity, geographical location, and social class. Researchers should report their results and methods in a transparent manner, including the use of external services or AI and automated tools, in a way that is compatible with the accepted norms of the discipline and facilitates verification or replication, where applicable.

In line with the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority Guidelines for ethical practice and research integrity, the EUAA Academy requires that persons implementing research activities prove in the research proposal their commitment to avoid any kind of physical, emotional, mental, financial, or reputational, harm to participants.

4.1. Informed consent

Before conducting research, researchers must hold preliminary meetings with prospect participants to ensure full transparency of the process. No research is to be carried out without the subjects' full awareness. The process should include:

- a clear explanation of the research purpose, methods, potential risks, and benefits (if any),
- assurance of participant's right to withdraw at any time without consequences and measures taken to protect participants' confidentiality and data security.
- transparency about how far confidentiality and anonymity can be maintained.
- a data management plan detailing how data will be treated and stored and for how long it will be kept and, what use will be made of them.

Moreover, participants should be made aware of any foreseen measures to address potential problems indirectly or directly caused by participation in research activities (such as emotional distress, re-traumatisation, disclosure of abuse). Finally, participants should receive information on whom to contact and how, in case of concerns about the research activities.

See: Annex 1 -Information letter/script

The researcher must obtain voluntary, prior and informed consent[2] from participants, when possible, in writing. In situations where written statements cannot be collected, the researcher should try and meet in person with the prospect participants and audio record their

[2] European Commission, Ethics and data protection, 2021

acceptance. The written statements and transcripts of any audio recordings should be submitted with the research proposal.

See: Annex 2 - Consent form

Researchers must process all personal data in compliance with applicable data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and adhere to the principles of lawfulness, fairness, transparency, data minimisation, purpose limitation, and storage limitation.

5. Safeguards.

All persons implementing research projects at the EUAA Academy recognise and weigh potential harms and risks relating to their research and its applications and mitigate possible negative impacts and adopt necessary measures to protect the interest of research subjects, throughout all phases of research projects, dissertations and capstone projects. Specific safeguards are put in place when implementing research activities around vulnerable groups and populations (e.g. children, migrants and refugees, inter alia).

5.1. Research with vulnerable populations

Participants in research should be treated equitably, with special consideration for vulnerable groups, including minors, individuals with disabilities, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. In line with the European Commission Guidance note — Research on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants[3], vulnerable groups are to be considered as high-risk research subjects and therefore require enhanced safeguards aimed at protecting their dignity, wellbeing, autonomy, and safety. Researchers should adhere to the following principles:

1. **Care and sensitivity:** Treat participants with empathy, ensuring their dignity, wellbeing, and autonomy.

2. **Objectivity and transparency:** Conduct research impartially and communicate findings clearly and honestly.

3. **Respect for diversity:** Recognise and respect participants' ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and cultural background.

4. **Protection of vulnerable participants:** Provide special safeguards for individuals with diminished autonomy (e.g., unaccompanied minors) by involving experienced NGOs or national authorities for legal advice, psychological support, language interpretation, and/or legally appointed supervision.

5. **Autonomy and informed consent:** Respect participants' values and their right to make independent decisions regarding participation.

[3] European Commission Guidance Note – Research on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrant, 2021

6. **Safety and confidentiality:** Avoid collecting unnecessary personal data, store data securely, and maintain anonymity when requested to prevent social stigma, discrimination, or risk to participants, their families, or associates.

7. **Non-interference:** Ensure that participation in research does not affect housing, resettlement, relocation, or asylum/status determination procedures.

By adhering to these principles, researchers align their work with both research integrity standards and the fundamental rights of vulnerable populations.

As per point 5.1, researchers must ensure that participation is voluntary, safe, and based on free, prior, and informed consent. The individual's capacity to consent should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, recognising that vulnerability varies across individuals and situations[4].

When conducting research with vulnerable populations, students must be aware of the following risks:

- re-traumatisation
- cultural misunderstanding and misrepresentation
- false expectations
- coercion or undue influence

5.2. Considerations of power imbalance

In addition, they should take into account potential power imbalances and contextual vulnerabilities[5]. Researchers who are also professionals within national asylum or reception systems must clearly distinguish between their institutional role and their role as researchers. They must ensure that participation is not influenced, directly or indirectly, by their institutional authority or perceived power. Research on participants should not influence housing, resettlement, relocation, or status determination procedures.

5.3. Research with children

Minors by reason of their physical and mental immaturity, need special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection[6]. Research involving children must include informed consent from parents/legal guardian and assent from the child, subject to national law. Individuals with diminished autonomy (e.g., unaccompanied minors, persons with cognitive impairments, survivors of torture or trafficking) require additional safeguards, which may include the involvement of qualified NGOs, national protection authorities, legal guardians, interpreters, or psychosocial professionals.

[4] Economic and Social Research Council, 2025
[5] National Research Ethics Committees, 2023
[6] UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

5.4. Research with culturally defined groups

In research on culturally defined groups, gaining knowledge about and respecting the local context and social relations is important[7]. Understanding the significance of cultural differences is crucial to research but does not necessarily entail acceptance of all cultural practices. Research must comply with ethical principles and respect human rights with particular attention to participants who may be considered vulnerable. When cultural practices conflict with general human rights or international obligations, these fundamental values should take priority.

5.5. Data collection

To protect participants' safety and prevent possible stigmatisation, social exclusion or racism, researchers should be extremely careful about which type of information they collect. They should gather only data that is essential for their specific research aims, store all data safely and keep completely anonymous any information that participants wish to hide for reasons of personal safety or privacy. Researchers must be attentive not to disclose data that may endanger the safety of participants, family, friends, or associates[8].

6. Data practices and management.

All persons implementing research projects shall establish in advance measures related to data management. They should detail:

- the ownership of the research data,
- about the rights to its use,
- its processing, storage and possible reuse.

They should comply with current data protection legislation and obligations. Access to data should be as open as possible, as closed as necessary, and where appropriate in line with the FAIR Principles[9] (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) for data management

7. Collaborative Working.

In case of collaborative projects all members of research teams need to abide to standards and prescriptions of good research practices and be accountable for them. When research proposals for dissertations or capstone projects are submitted, they must be complemented by individual ethical self-assessment and declarations of honour confirming the adherence to the present ethical and integrity guidelines.

7.1. Teamwork and responsibilities

When multiple researchers collaborate on a project, it is essential that the rights and responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined and mutually agreed upon. Fostering

[7] Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities
[8] European Commission Guidance Note – Research on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrant, 2021
[9] FAIR Principles

integrity in collaborative research is the shared responsibility of all individual and institutional partners.

- Members of research teams have a joint responsibility for ensuring that their participation in research is in accordance with recognised norms of research ethics.
- Supervisors, mentors and project leaders have a general responsibility for research ethics in projects conducted under their supervision.

Everyone who has contributed significantly to the research project should be offered the opportunity to participate in the further work towards publication and be listed as an author[10].

8. Ethical review process

Persons involved in reviewing and assessing research activities at the EUAA Academy shall perform these duties in a transparent, objective, and confidential manner. Reviews should be based solely on the academic and methodological merit of the work, free from bias or undue influence. All materials under review must be treated as confidential and not shared, used, or disclosed in any way. Ethical reviewing ensures fairness, protects intellectual property, and upholds the integrity and credibility of the research process.

8.1. Submission to Ethics Committee

Once a research proposal is drafted, it should be complemented by an annexed self-assessment of ethical considerations and submitted for approval by the EUAA Ethics Committee. In line with the Guidelines for Ethical Practice and Research Integrity of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority, and as stipulated by the EUAA Internal Guidance on Academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic integrity, every research proposal submitted for ethical clearance must explicitly address the following issues:

- All potential risks to participants and researchers must be identified, assessed, mitigated, and clearly communicated to participants.
- Possible unintended or indirect consequences for participants or others affected by the research should be anticipated and addressed as far as possible.
- Covert or undisclosed research methods must be ethically and legally justified, with a clear rationale provided.
- The proposed study must comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, and ethical requirements, including institutional, national, and international standards governing research integrity and participant protection.
- Information provided to participants, their proxies, or guardians should be accurate, accessible, and appropriate to their level of understanding. Templates may need to be adapted for specific audiences—for instance, children or individuals with limited literacy.

[10] TENK, 2023

- Consent should normally be recorded in writing. Where signed consent forms are not feasible for safety or contextual reasons, alternative methods of obtaining and documenting informed consent must be clearly described.
- If circumstances change significantly during the study and affect the nature of participation, the researcher must record these changes, suspend the study, and seek additional ethical review where necessary.
- Recruitment methods and access to participants must be ethically justified, especially when involving individuals or groups with limited social power or capacity to consent (e.g. children, asylum seekers, students, vulnerable persons).
- Researchers must ensure that gatekeepers (such as parents, guardians, employers, or institutional representatives) act transparently, have consulted with participants wherever possible, avoid applying undue pressure, and act in the best interests of those they represent.

Only research proposals that appropriately address all the ethical implications of the research would be cleared by the EUAA Ethics Committee.

8.2. Consultation with EUAA Data Protection Officer

In line with European Commission guidance on research involving refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, particular attention must be paid to data protection, confidentiality, and risk of harm. Consultation with and, where required, approval from the EUAA Data Protection Officer (DPO) must be obtained prior to the start of the research. Where necessary, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) should be conducted. The DPO should also approve the Data Management Plan, whose template in annexed to these guidelines.

In case of research being undertaken in Third Countries, further information might be requests and additional safeguards might need to be planned at the proposal design phase.

8.3. Compliance with EUAA policy

Any research carried out by the EUAA must also comply with applicable decisions of the Executive Director. This may entail a pre-approval process to ensure that the research is aligned with the Agency's mandate and single programming document.

In the event of ethical concerns being identified by members of the ethics committee or the data protection officer, these should be addressed and resolved before commencing research.

8.4. Ongoing ethical compliance

Researchers remain responsible for ensuring ongoing ethical compliance throughout the research lifecycle. Any significant changes to the research design must be reported and may require additional ethical review.

9. Publication.

Authors publishing research under the auspices of the EUAA Academy are responsible for the accuracy and integrity of their publications. They must ensure that all contributors are appropriately acknowledged, that authorship reflects genuine contributions, and that any financial, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest are fully disclosed. Ethical publication practices foster accountability, transparency, and trust in research, in line with the principles of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)[11] guidelines.

9.1. Dissemination as a social responsibility

Researchers have a social responsibility toward society to ensure clarity, transparency and comprehensibility when sharing and communicating research findings[12]. Researchers should promote access to research results and engage in the sharing of scientific data between researchers, and to policymakers, and to the public wherever possible, while being mindful of existing rights. They should ensure that knowledge is appropriately credited and accessible, follow the guidelines set out by UNESCO's Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers[13].

Transparency

Transparency refers to the quality of being clear and open about the methods for how research decisions were made, information was obtained, assessed, and presented.

Examples of the application of these principles include:

(1) adequate and visible terms of reference, an introduction and a disclaimer explaining how, why, and for whom the [research was carried out].

(2) making every piece of information traceable to the original/primary source.

(Adapted from EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, 2023)

[11] Commission on Publication Ethics (COPE) Website
[12] Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research, (2020)
[13] UNESCO's Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2018)

Researchers must be mindful of the potential societal impact of their findings, particularly in relation to vulnerable populations, and avoid contributing to stigma, discrimination, or misrepresentation.

10. Academic integrity

All students should be familiar with EUAA Internal Guidance on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Integrity.

The reliability of research findings is supported by academic responsibility, integrity, and honesty. Researchers must present their results truthfully, uphold ethical principles, and appropriately credit and acknowledge knowledge derived from various sources[14].

Researchers should build their research on others' work in a respectful and accountable manner, recognising the work of others and providing accurate references. This also applies when reusing one's own text and when using non-scientific sources[15].

Plagiarism (including copying own's work), fabrication, falsification and other forms of academic misconduct are not allowed. Researchers should acknowledge contributions properly, avoid plagiarism and properly cite all sources and contributions. The EUAA Academy punishes plagiarism and other sever academic misconduct (see EUAA Academic Misconduct Procedure). Plagiarism detection tools are used at the EUAA Academy throughout all phases of research, including dissertation and capstone project design, drafting, and submission, to ensure proper attribution and academic integrity.

10.1. Violations of good research practices

Definitions

Fabrication refers to the creation of research material that does not exist, such as fictitious data, fake sources, or deceptive descriptions.

Falsification involves manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or altering, omitting, or suppressing data or results without academic justification. These practices misrepresent the research and compromise the reliability and credibility of scientific findings.

Plagiarism involves presenting the work of others as one's own.

Academic misconduct represents any behaviour that endangers the quality of teaching, learning and research and undermines the achievements of members of the academic community. Violations of good research practices breach the principles of research integrity. They damage the quality and credibility of research and undermine research collaboration

[14] UK Framework for ethics in research - Framework for research ethics – UKRI

[15] TENK, The Finnish code of conduct for research integrity and procedures for handling alleged violations of research integrity in Finland, 2023

and authorship. According to the MFHEA Guidelines for ethical practice and research integrity, academic misconduct "relates to a range of unethical practices which compromise the integrity of academic writing and research and, thereby, harm the academic community as a whole". The MFHEA Guidelines list several examples of misconduct such as plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of research data, theft of people's ideas and documents, purchasing of work done by others and submitted under the purchaser's name and academics putting their name on work done by their students or juniors. Violations of good research practices may also be addressed in accordance with the EUAA Internal Guidance on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Integrity, as well as any applicable institutional procedures governing academic misconduct and disciplinary measures. The EUAA Academy will assess on a case-by-case basis such violations of good research practices.

See: Annex 5 for a non-exhaustive list of possible violations

11. Conclusion

Ethical research is a cornerstone of academic excellence. By following these guidelines, researchers contribute to the integrity, credibility, and social responsibility of their work within the master's programme at the EUAA Academy. The EUAA Guidelines for Research Ethics are intended to contribute to developing ethical judgement and reflection, clarifying ethical dilemmas, promoting responsible research, and preventing misconduct.

Annex 1: Information letter/script

[Date]

Dear XXX [fill in as appropriate]

My name is [insert name] and I am a student at the EUAA Academy, currently enrolled in the European Executive Master's on Asylum and Reception Management. I am presently conducting a research project for my [dissertation/thesis/capstone project] titled [insert title of project], under the supervision of Prof/Dr [insert supervisor title and name]. This letter is an invitation to participate in this study

The aim of my study is to [please add a short paragraph outlining the aim of the study]. Your participation in the project would contribute to [state the benefits of respondent's participation]. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to [explain what participation will entail]. It is estimated that your overall engagement would last approximately XXX /hours/days/weeks.

Data collected will be [provide details of how data will be handled, e.g., treated confidentially/coded/anonymised, where it will be stored and specify who will have access to it]. Please, rest assured that any raw identifiable data will be encrypted and stored offline on an external hard drive/ flash drive/or a secure folder. Any material in hard copy form will be placed in a locked cupboard. Only my supervisor and myself (and in exceptional cases, examiners) will have access to this data. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study and will not be shared with authorities in your country of origin.

The findings which emerge from this research may be published (e.g., in a dissertation, academic journals) and/or presented (e.g., during conferences, meetings, defence of thesis). Your name (or any other identifying information) will not appear when the findings are reported.

You are free to accept or refuse to participate, without the need to provide any justification, and without any consequences. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions. If at any point you choose to withdraw, we will delete any data collected from your interview as far as this is technically possible (for example, before it is anonymised or published). If erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair the overall the research objectives, the information will be retained in an anonymised form.

If you choose to participate, please consider that:

- there are no direct benefits to you/there are the following direct benefits to you: [select appropriate option, and specify benefits, if applicable].
- your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks/entails the following risks: [select appropriate option, and specify risks, if applicable; also explain any measures to be taken to minimise/mitigate risks].

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact myself or my supervisor on the details provided below.

Yours Sincerely,

_____ _____

[Student's name and contact details] [Supervisor's title, name and contact details]

Annex 2: Consent forms

For participants

I [*insert name of participant*], undersigned give my consent to take part in the study conducted by [*insert name of researcher*]. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study.

1. I have received written and/or verbal information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I received exhaustive clarifications.
2. I understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation at any time without giving any reason and without any penalty. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked. I understand that, in case of withdrawal from the study, any data collected from me will be erased as far as this is technically possible.
3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in [focus groups/ semi-structured interviews, etc...] in which the researcher will [explain what participants do or what is done to them] to explore/analyse [state the aim of the research study]. I am aware that the [focus group/interview, etc..] will take approximately [xx hours/days/weeks]. I understand that the [focus group/interview, etc..] will be held in a place and at a time that is convenient for me.
4. I understand that my participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks/entails the following risks: [select appropriate option, and specify risks and mitigation measures, where applicable].
5. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this study/there are the following direct benefits to me: [select appropriate option].
6. I understand that I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the erasure of data concerning myself.
7. I understand that all data collected will be erased/stored in an anonymised form [select appropriate option] on completion of the study and following publication of results within XX [insert number] months/years of completion of the study.
8. I am aware that my identity and personal information will not be revealed in any publications, reports or presentations arising from this research and it will not be shared with authorities in my country of origin.
9. I have been provided with a copy of the information letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form.

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's title and name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For parents or legal guardians of participants

I [*insert name of parent or legal guardian*], undersigned give my consent for [*insert name of participant*] to take part in the study conducted by [*insert name of researcher*]. This consent form specifies the terms of his/her participation in this research study.

1. I have received written and/or verbal information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I received exhaustive clarifications.
2. I understand that he/she is free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation at any time without giving any reason and without any penalty. Should I choose to consent to his/her participation, he/she may choose to decline to answer any questions asked. I understand that, in case of withdrawal from the study, any data collected from him/her will be erased as far as this is technically possible.
3. I understand that he/she has been invited to participate in [focus groups/ semi-structured interviews, etc...] in which the researcher will [explain what participants do or what is done to them] to explore/analyse [state the aim of the research study]. I am aware that the [focus group/interview, etc..] will take approximately [xx hours/days/weeks]. I understand that the [focus group/interview, etc..] will be held in a place and at a time that is convenient for the participant.
4. I understand that his/her participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks/entails the following risks: [select appropriate option, and specify risks and mitigation measures, where applicable].
5. I understand that there are no direct benefits to him/her from participating in this study/there are the following direct benefits to him/her: [select appropriate option].
6. I understand that I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the erasure of data concerning the participant.
7. I understand that all data collected will be erased/stored in an anonymised form [select appropriate option] on completion of the study and following publication of results within XX [insert number] months/years of completion of the study.
8. I am aware that the participants identity and personal information will not be revealed in any publications, reports or presentations arising from this research and it will not be shared with authorities in my country of origin.
9. I have been provided with a copy of the information letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form.

I have read and understood the above statements and give my consent for *[insert name of participant]* **to participate in this study.**

Signature of parent/legal guardian: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's title and name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 3: Self-assessment checklist

1) Does your activity involve research on (vulnerable) persons? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please check the necessary safeguards and related supporting documents for each of the subcategories below

2) Are they volunteers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Mandatory documentation:

- ☐ Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures.
- ☐ Details on unexpected findings policy

3) Are they potentially vulnerable individuals or groups? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Mandatory documentation:

- ☐ Details on the type of vulnerability.
- ☐ Details of the recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures.
- ☐ Procedures to ensure participants are not subject to any form of coercion and undue inducement.
- ☐ Copies of ethics approvals (if required by law or practice).
- ☐ Informed consent forms and information sheets.

4) Are they children/minors? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Mandatory documentation:

- ☐ Details on the age range.
- ☐ Details on assent procedures and parental consent for children and other minors.
- ☐ Procedures to ensure the welfare of the child or other minors
- ☐ Justification for involving children/minors.
- ☐ Copies of ethics approvals (if required by law or practice).
- ☐ Informed consent forms and information sheets.

5) Are there other persons unable to give informed consent? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Mandatory documentation:

- ☐ Details on the procedures for obtaining consent from the guardian/legal representative.
- ☐ Procedures to ensure participants are not subject to any form of coercion and undue inducement.
- ☐ Copies of ethics approvals.
- ☐ Informed consent forms and information

Annex 4: Data management plan

1. Research project Information

Student name:
Programme:
Supervisor:
Research title:

Expected project duration:
Expected submission date:

2. Description of Data

2.1 Types of data to be collected or used

Describe the nature of the data:

☐ Interview transcripts
☐ Survey responses
☐ Focus group notes
☐ Observational field notes
☐ Administrative / policy documents
☐ Secondary datasets
☐ Audio / video recordings
☐ Other (specify):

Brief description (max. 200 words):

Example: Semi-structured interviews with asylum reception practitioners focusing on case management practices.

2.2 Data format and volume

- **Formats:** (e.g. .docx, .pdf, .xlsx)
- **Estimated volume:** (e.g. number of interviews, size in MB/GB)

2.3 Data source

☐ Primary data collected by the researcher
☐ Secondary data (publicly available / restricted)

If secondary data:

- Source:
- Access conditions:
- Licence or permission required: ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Ethical and Legal Considerations

3.1 Personal data and sensitivity

Does the research involve:

- Personal data? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Vulnerable participants? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If **yes**, outline any planned mitigation measures.

3.2 Informed consent

Describe how informed consent will be obtained:

- Written consent ☐
- Oral consent ☐

Specify:

- Consent form storage location
- Right to withdraw procedures

3.3 Anonymisation and confidentiality

Explain:

- Whether data will be anonymised or pseudonymised
- When anonymisation will occur
- How identifiers will be stored separately

4. Data Storage and Security (During the Project)

4.1 Storage location

☐ Institutional secure server
☐ Encrypted personal computer
☐ Encrypted external drive
☐ Approved cloud service (specify):

4.2 Security measures

☐ Password protection
☐ Encryption
☐ Two-factor authentication
☐ Restricted access

Who has access to the data?
☐ Student only

☐ Supervisor
☐ Other (specify):

4.3 Backup procedures

Describe:

- Frequency of backups
- Storage location of backups

5. Data Processing and Documentation

5.1 Data organisation

Explain:

- File naming conventions
- Folder structure

5.2 Documentation and metadata

Will documentation be created to explain the data?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Examples:

- Codebook
- Interview guide
- Methodological notes

6. Data Sharing and Access

6.1 Data sharing intentions

Will any data be shared after project completion?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes:

- What data will be shared?
- With whom?
- Under what conditions?

6.2 Restrictions

If data **cannot** be shared, explain why:
☐ Confidentiality
☐ Legal constraints

☐ Ethical considerations
☐ Intellectual property

7. Data Retention and Disposal

7.1 Retention period

How long will the data be retained?
☐ Until thesis assessment
☐ X years after completion

7.2 Data disposal

Describe how data will be securely destroyed:
☐ Secure deletion
☐ Physical destruction of storage media

8. Responsibilities and Resources

8.1 Roles and responsibilities

- Student:
- Supervisor:

8.2 Resources required

Are additional resources required?
☐ Software (e.g. NVivo, SPSS, R,)
☐ Secure storage
☐ Transcription services

9. Compliance Statement

I confirm that this Data Management Plan complies with:

- Institutional research ethics policies
- GDPR and applicable data protection legislation
- Principles of research integrity and responsible data management

Student signature:
Date:

Supervisor approval:

Annex 5: Examples of disregard for good research practices

Disregard in planning and preparation

- Failure to request relevant permits, decisions and/or statements (e.g. official permits, data permits, research permits, decisions on the disclosure of data, ethical review statements by ethics committees)

Disregard in implementation

- Failure to comply with data permit or research permit decisions or with statements issued in the ethical review process
- Inappropriate use of research data or materials or failure to comply with research data agreements
- Inadequate documentation and storage of research results and data
- Inappropriately delaying or otherwise hampering the work of other researchers Authorship-related violations
- Inadequate or inappropriate references to previous results
- Omitting the name of a co-author who has made a significant contribution
- Denigrating or deliberately neglecting to mention other researchers' contributions
- Manipulating authorship by other means, such as adding guest authors or honorary authors who have not contributed to the work in question or by taking credit for work done by ghost authors

Disregard by embellishing one's research achievements

- Misleading the research community, research funders or the general public over one's research
- Exaggerating or changing one's research achievements or merits e.g. in a CV or its translation or a list of publications
- Self-plagiarism, i.e. republishing one's own work without reference to the original publication

Disregard by misusing one's academic status

- Failure to declare significant conflicts of interest
- Violation of confidentiality in the peer review process
- Inappropriate use of seniority and influence

Disregard in the research integrity process

- Inappropriate interfering with the research integrity process or harassment of those involved in the research integrity process
- Delaying or inappropriately hampering the work or career development of another researcher who has submitted a notification of an alleged research integrity violation
- Submitting a notification of an alleged RI violation with malicious intent

Source: The Finnish code of conduct for research integrity and procedures for handling alleged violations of research integrity in Finland 2023

Sources

All European Academies, ALLEA. (2023). European Union Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – *Revised Edition 2023. Berlin*.

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Economic and Social Research Council. (2025). *Framework for Research Ethics*. UK Research and Innovation.

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European Commission. (2021). *Guidance Note - Research on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants*.

Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, TENK (2023) The Finnish code of conduct for research integrity and procedures for handling alleged violations of research integrity in Finland

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority. (2022). *Guidelines for ethical practice and research integrity*.

United Nations General Assembly. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

United Nations General Assembly. (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* -

Further reading

EU frameworks and guidance

- European Commission – ethics and data protection
- European Commission – ethics in social science and humanities
- European Commission – ethics by design and ethics of use – approaches for artificial intelligence
- European Commission – Identifying serious and complex ethics issues in EU-funded research
- European Commission – how to complete ethics self-assessment (Checklist of chapter 2 – Humans)
- European Commission – Research ethics in ethnography and anthropology
- European Commission – Roles and Functions of Ethics and Advisory Boards
- European Research Council —Global Code of Conduct for research in research-poor settings -


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