

Applied Research in Psychology

Week Two: Research Integrity and Ethics

Module Code: ECAS7009

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MSc Applied Psychology

Professional Integrity

Upholding our values

“Thinking is difficult,
that’s why most
people judge.”

Carl Jung
@RedefiningRefuge



Integrity is doing
the right thing,
even when no
one is watching.

C. S. Lewis

QuotesNSayings.net

Why?

Because what we do and say as Psychologists or Psychology students is important

It is easy to lose your focus through your university and professional journey

Important for YOUR futures that you understand and demonstrates core values and competencies



Britain's Mental Health Crisis

With funding cuts drastically reducing bed numbers, Panorama goes inside one of the UK's largest frontline mental health trusts.

🕒 30 minutes

[Show more](#)

Schools trained to help children facing trauma at home

🕒 12 March 2018 · [Comments](#)



GETTY IMAGES

| The pack will help teachers identify pupils who are dealing with adverse childhood experiences such as family breakdown

Jenni Hermoso 'didn't consent' to Luis Rubiales kiss as Spain players refuse to play

© 25 August 2023 | Women's Football



Luis Rubiales: Spanish federation president kisses Hermoso during ceremony

How many people cross the Channel in small boats and how many claim asylum in the UK?



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53699511>

Ocean heat record broken, with grim implications for the planet



Psychology has a more important role to play in the world than possibly ever before

How we, as professionals, conduct ourselves every day is critical to protecting our reputation and that of our discipline

The nature of the work we do means we have a huge responsibility to each other and those we work with in order to make a difference

Being able to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to these values is critical on many levels

BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct





- Consider these values... how important are they to you in your daily lives?
- Why?





- How important are they for your professional lives?
- Why?



BPS Code of Human Research Ethics

- SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Psychologists must be able to work in partnership with others (including professional colleagues, research participants, and other persons);



be self-reflective;



be open to challenges that question the contributions of psychological knowledge to society.



Psychology researchers need to be aware of their personal and professional responsibilities,



be alert to the possible consequences of unexpected as well as predicted outcomes of their work, and to acknowledge the often problematic nature of the interpretation of research findings.



They should always work within the limits of their professional competence

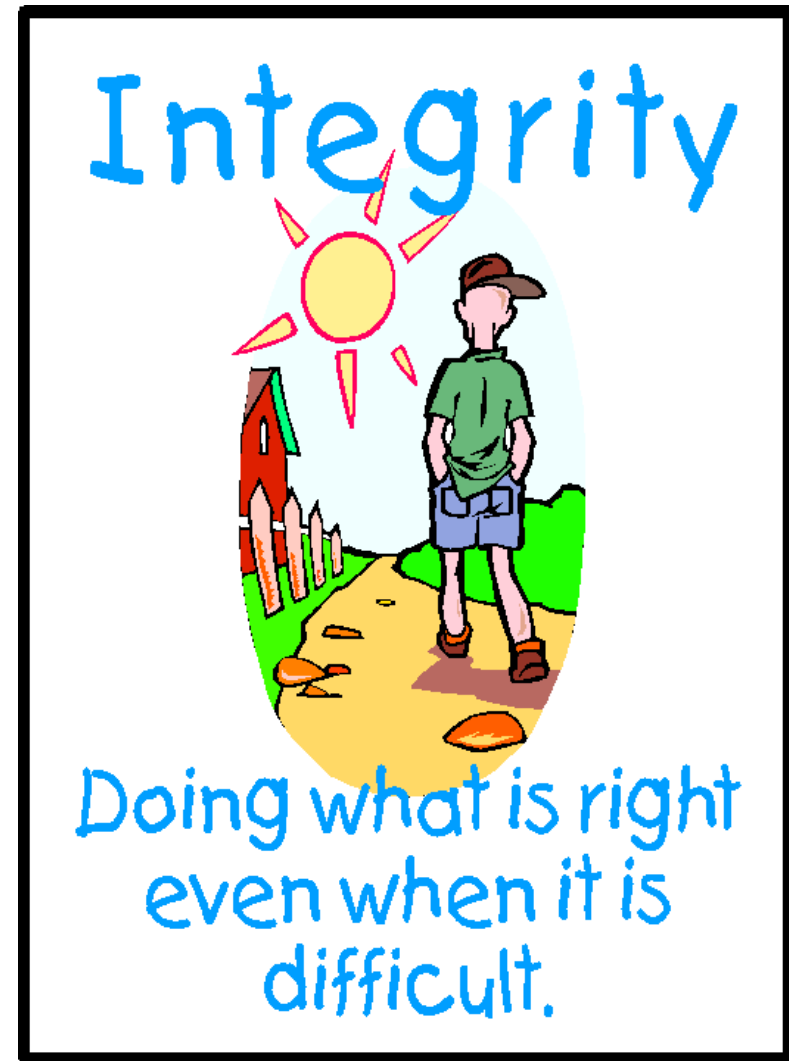
Personal and Professional Development

- Professional development focuses on acquiring the knowledge and skills that can improve your efficiency at work.
- Personal growth looks at developing your communication and social skills, including aspects of emotional well-being.
- <https://businessgraduatesassociation.com/>

- Personal development is the idea that people constantly strive to improve themselves, whether intellectually or emotionally
- Professional development is how people continue to improve their professional skills to benefit their careers.
- [Personal vs professional development: The guide | Indeed.com UK](#)

Summary

- Psychology has a more important role to play in the world than possibly ever before
- The nature of the work we do means we have a huge responsibility to each other and those we work with in order to make a difference
- Being able to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to these values is critical on many levels



Five Minute Reflection.....

Spend a few moments to identify:



three behaviours that you think currently demonstrate
your commitment to the values discussed today



three values or competences that you would like to
develop/demonstrate further

What is Research Integrity?



International Principles – Singapore Statement (2010)



UK Concordat Principles (2025)

Honesty – in ideas, methods, authorship, and findings.

Rigour – adherence to disciplinary standards and protocols.

Transparency – open communication, declaring interests, and sharing data.

Care and Respect – for people, animals, environment, and cultural objects.

Accountability – individual and collective responsibility for research integrity.

What is Research Integrity? - UK Research Integrity Office

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity 2019





RESEARCH ETHICS

RESEARCH ETHICS...THINKING DIFFERENTLY

- WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE A PARTICIPANT?
- POOR RESEARCH = POOR ETHICS
- WHO MAKES THE ETHICAL DECISION

Key ethical considerations in any project

Written **informed** consent
– at appropriate levels

Clarity and
comprehension of
research materials

- Appropriate for target audience?
– children, lay people, parents?

No potential coercion

Right to withdraw

Debriefing

Potential for
harm/discomfort/

distress

Confidentiality/Data
Protection

**For consent to be
considered both
legal and ethical
it must be:**

Given by a person with capacity;

Voluntarily given, with no undue influence;

Given by someone who has been adequately informed;

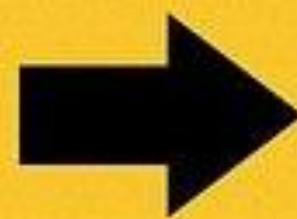
A fair choice.

Consent V Assent



What is good ethical review?

RIGHT



← WRONG



Ethics Review Form
(Lead Reviewer/REC
Member) - Health
Research Authority

Ethics Review



Favourable Risk Benefit Ratio; Anticipated benefits/risks for research participants present and future

- Is there evidence that the following factors have been considered?
Benefits/risks for individual research participants, including steps that have been taken to minimise or eliminate the risk, hazards, discomfort, and distress and enhancement of potential benefits.
- Whether the risk to the research participants are proportionate to the benefits to the research participant and society; and
- Whether the balance between risk and benefit is equitable?

Care and protection of research participants; respect for potential and enrolled research participants' welfare and dignity

- permitting withdrawal from the research
- protecting privacy through confidentiality
- informing participants of newly discovered risks or benefits
- informing participants of results of research
- maintaining welfare of participants
- Arrangements and feedback at the end of the study?
- Do the researchers demonstrate an awareness of research transparency? (For example, study registration, sharing of results, plans for publication)
- Provision of appropriate indemnity and insurance

Recruitment arrangements and access to information, and fair participant selection

- Consider the inclusion and exclusion of potential research participants. The benefits and risks of research should be distributed fairly among all social groups and classes, taking particular account of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, as well as economic status and culture. Suitably representative public involvement in the planning of the study can also provide assurances to the Committee that recruitment is likely to be equitable.
- Consider the population which is likely to be included in the research and what the needs of this group might be. Will it be feasible for provisions to be made available for potential participants who might have difficulty understanding English?
- How are research participants recruited? How does participation impact on their education or care?

Data protection and research participant's confidentiality

- Where and how will data be stored?
- Will the data be anonymised/pseudonymised.
Pseudonymised data can be restored to its original state with the addition of information which then allows individuals to be re-identified.
- How long will the data be stored for?
- Who will access the data?
- Are research participants, informed that access to any records/ notes may be required?
- Are arrangements made to deal with incidental disclosure?

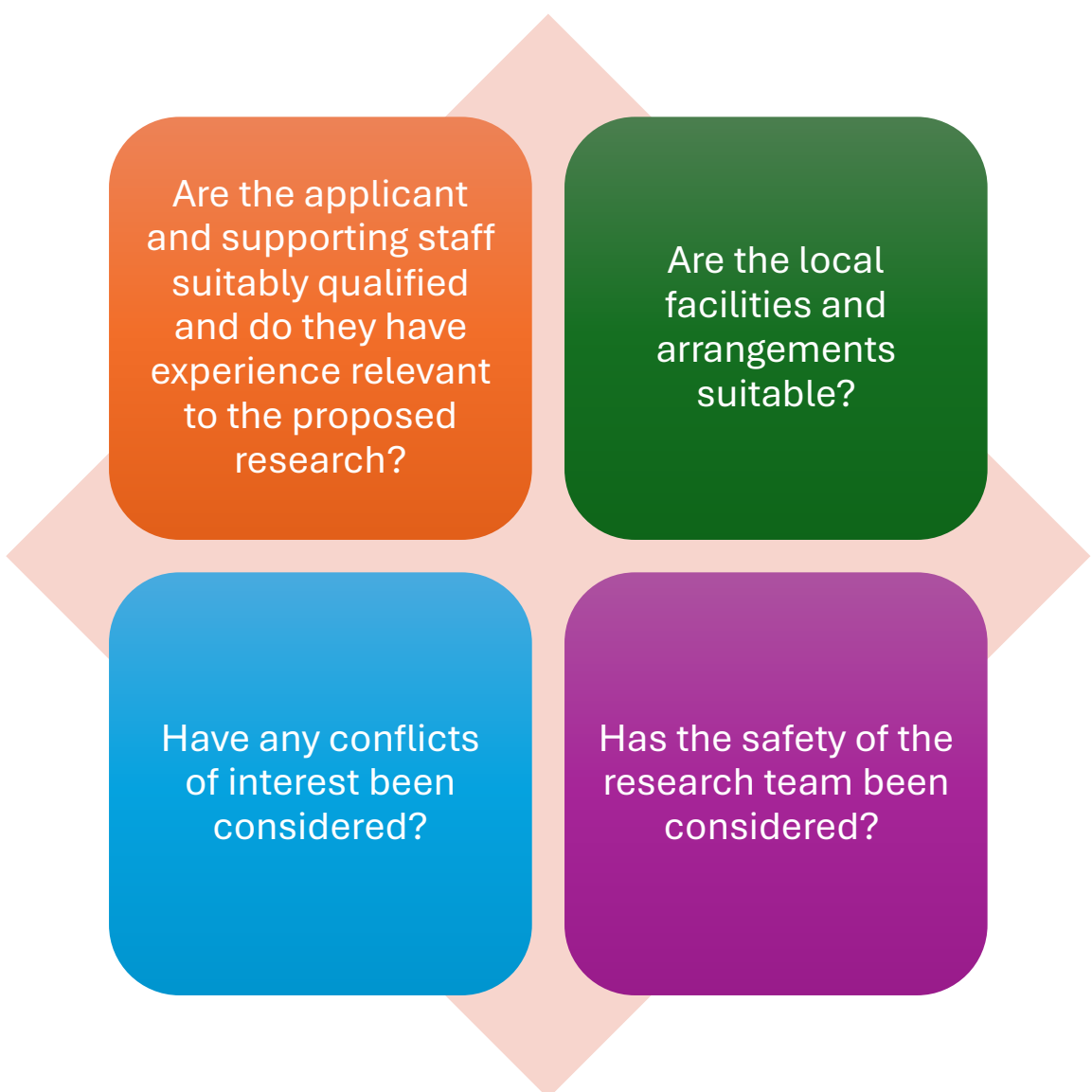
Informed consent process and the adequacy and completeness of research participant information

- Is consent taken as part of a process with research participants having adequate time to consider the information, and opportunity to ask questions?
- Is it clear to what the research participant consents or assents?
- Is there any inducement?

Informed consent process and the adequacy and completeness of research participant information

- Suitability of supporting information
- Provision of information to research participants about the purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks, benefits, and alternatives
- Is the language used clear and understandable to the research participants it is aimed at?

Suitability of the applicant and supporting staff



Are the applicant
and supporting staff
suitably qualified
and do they have
experience relevant
to the proposed
research?

Are the local
facilities and
arrangements
suitable?

Have any conflicts
of interest been
considered?

Has the safety of the
research team been
considered?



Scientific/Independent Review

**“Poor science should
and must trouble RECs.
It is evident that it
does”**

**Health Research
Authority (2012)**

[peer-scientific-review-
of-research-and-the-
role-of-nres-research-
ethics-committees-.pdf](#)



Scientific/Independent Review

- Review of the design of the research, its proposed research participant population, and risk-benefit ratio by individuals unaffiliated with the research.
- The REC may be satisfied with credible assurances the research has an identified sponsor and that it takes account of appropriate scientific peer review.
- Role of supervisor/module team/academic discipline?

The slide features a light blue background with decorative geometric shapes in the corners. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are overlapping squares in shades of blue and grey. In the top-right corner, there is a large light blue triangle with a smaller, darker blue square overlapping its bottom-left corner. In the bottom-right corner, there are overlapping triangles in shades of blue and grey.

Shared Ethical Debate Exercise

Research Validity in Vulnerable Populations

A master's student proposes a study involving interviews with individuals experiencing homelessness to explore barriers to accessing mental health services. The student plans to offer small incentives (e.g., food vouchers) for participation and will obtain verbal consent due to literacy concerns.

- Is verbal consent sufficient when participants may be in vulnerable or unstable conditions?
- Could the incentive be considered coercive, especially if participants are in immediate need?
- How can the researcher ensure participants truly understand the study and their rights?

Challenging Assumptions and Minimising Bias

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Bias is a systematic deviation from rationality or objectivity.

It can be cognitive (e.g., confirmation bias), social (e.g., stereotyping), or methodological (e.g., sampling bias).

Important that we are able to recognise our own biases and assumptions in applied research and also advise others e.g. stakeholders

Examples of common biases

- **Confirmation Bias:** Seeking or interpreting evidence that confirms existing beliefs.
 - *E.g., only reading studies that support your hypothesis.*
- **Anchoring Bias:** Relying too heavily on the first piece of information encountered.
 - *E.g., initial data influencing all subsequent interpretations.*
- **Availability Heuristic:** Judging likelihood based on how easily examples come to mind.
 - *E.g., overestimating the prevalence of a social issue seen recently.*
- **Fundamental Attribution Error:** Over emphasizing personal traits over situational factors.
 - *E.g., assuming a participant is lazy rather than overwhelmed.*
- **In-group Bias:** Favouring people who are similar to oneself.
 - *E.g., giving more positive evaluations to participants from similar backgrounds.*
- **Halo Effect:** Letting one positive trait influence overall judgment.
 - *E.g., assuming a well-dressed participant is more competent.*
- **Stereotyping:** Applying generalized beliefs to individuals.
 - *E.g., assuming certain behaviours based on cultural background.*



Challenging Assumptions and Minimising Bias

In class interactive tasks



Critical thinking and Evidence-based Practice

- Use critical thinking skills and tools
- Diversify sources
- Slow down your thinking
- Apply evidence based practice
- Use structured decision making
- Encourage feedback and peer review
- Reflect and re-frame
- Engage in continuous CPD

Acknowledgement of Sources

[Ethical approval – UKRI](#)

[What is Research Integrity? - UK Research Integrity Office](#)

[Ethics Review Form \(Lead Reviewer/REC Member\) - Health Research Authority](#)

[The Concordat to Support Research Integrity – UKCORI](#)