Departmental Research Ethics Guidelines

1. Researchers may not start to recruit participants until research ethics approval has been granted. It is essential that **all** research carried out in the Department has satisfied the currently adopted ethical requirements. Ethical approval, for research carried out by members of the Department of Psychology, is granted by the Departmental Ethics Committee (currently chaired by Dr. Philip Quinlan). Projects that involve neuroimaging or non-human animals are exceptions. The former need to be submitted to the York Neuroimaging Centre (YNiC) Research Ethics Committee, the latter to the Animal Welfare and Ethics Review Body (AWERB).

2. An overriding principle is 'Do no harm' and, more concretely, this means that a participant must not be left in a worse state having engaged with the research than prior to having been tested. The guiding principle is that the research should be considered from the standpoint of the participants, and any foreseeable threats to their psychological well-being, health, values or dignity must be eliminated from the procedure. In this regard, the best judges of whether an investigation will cause offence are the participants themselves, and they should be as fully informed as possible about the objectives and procedures at the outset.

3. With the introduction of GDPR, it is now a requirement that each participant is as fully informed about data processing and management as is feasible. To this end each participant should either be given their own copy of a relevant information sheet prior to testing or be given access to the information via the internet. Various information and consent sheet templates are available on the wiki and the standard wording on the sheets must not be changed. Generic information about data processing is available *here* and this must be made available to all participants prior to testing.

4. Typically, all participants must complete a consent form as part of the study. However, there may be exceptional cases where "implied consent" is deemed necessary or preferable. The Committee will look carefully at such cases, as seeking explicit consent is taken to be the norm. When explicit consent is sought, the consent form must be administered beforehand. A new adult template consent form can be downloaded from the wiki pages and this must be edited accordingly. The wording and questions should not be changed except in places highlighted on the form. The researcher must retain a copy of the consent form, signed and dated by the participant. Standard consent form templates are also available for Headteachers and parents.

5. Previously special consent that needed to be sought for cases of audio, visual and audio-visual recordings of participants. To be compliant with GDPR these recordings are now taken to be 'data' and need to be treated as such within the context of that legislation. Nonetheless, as it may prove to be difficult or impossible to anonymise such recordings, a new information/consent form is now available on the wiki.

6. Should it be impossible to obtain consent from individual participants directly, for example, from children or impaired adults, special procedures apply. Very clear guidance about such cases is provided in the BPS Practice Guidance.

7. Use of 'opt-in' rather than 'opt-out' sampling is the default given GDPR. 'Opt-out' samples are those where participants are contacted without volunteering to take part in the research – and excluded only when they say they are unwilling to participate. In contrast, when 'opting-in', participants actively consent to participate. However, there may be circumstances under which the research would be compromised if opt-in sampling were to be imposed. In such circumstances a case must be made for 'opt-out' sampling when seeking ethical approval.

8. In principle, deception of participants (misrepresenting the purposes and aims of the experiment) should be avoided if at all possible. Deception may be justified if the findings are to be unbiased or uncontaminated by knowledge of the experiment and the expectancies that such knowledge may bring. Any projects, which do involve deception will be closely scrutinised by the Committee, with a view to ensuring that nothing is done that is likely to harm or distress participants.

9. After they have taken part, and as part of standard practice, participants should be de-briefed about the nature of the research in language that can be easily understood by the participant. When deception was part of the study, participants should be informed about the reason for using deception. Reasons for departing from standard practice regarding de-briefing should be given when seeking ethical approval.

10. Previously providing personal results or individualized feedback on any psychological or behavioural measures was not permitted. However, participants can request copies of their data under GDPR although such requests may be turned down. Nonetheless, if the data are truly anonymized then it will be impossible to provide the data and indeed GDPR strictures do not apply to data that are truly anonymized. For data to be treated as being anonymised it must be the case that it is *impossible* to link a particular dataset with a given individual. Should a participant wish to obtain a copy of their data then all such requests must be dealt with at the university level and the participant should contact dataprotection@york.ac.uk.
11. If, during the course of the research, data are collected that are indicative of a potentially serious condition then participants must be informed and appropriate advice about where/how to seek further help advice should be provided.
12. If a researcher intends to follow-up a group of participants once initial testing is complete, consent for this should be obtained prior to initial testing. Detailed advice about follow-up testing is available on the wiki.
13. Particular issues arise when selecting participants on the basis of extreme scores on questionnaires or tests for a follow-up. Extreme care must be taken to try to ensure that the screened participants do not develop unsubstantiated ideas about belonging to a psychologically special, suspect, or otherwise anomalous group.
14. If the research involves procedures that could put the researcher or participant at risk then ethical approval will depend on the provision of a corresponding Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Please address queries regarding Health and Safety to the Chair of the Department's Health and Safety Committee (currently Dr. Philip Quinlan).
15. The Department has guidelines indicating whether or not payment should be made for participation, particularly with respect to collecting data in taught student projects.
16. Research involving neuroimaging has to be submitted to the YNiC Research Ethics Committee, currently chaired by Dr. Gareth Gaskell. When neuroimaging projects involve components of behavioural testing, no separate ethics form needs to be submitted to the Departmental Ethics Committee. The YNiC Ethics Committee is responsible for examining the behavioural components of neuroimaging studies.
17. Projects involving research with non-human animals will not be considered by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. Instead, these projects are to be submitted to the Secretary of AWERB, currently, Victoria Beale (victoria.beale@york.ac.uk). Notifications of approval by the AWERB are to be sent to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee for the records.
18. It is possible that staff links with outside bodies – whether government departments, commerce, industry, or others – may give rise to potential conflicts of interest. It is for individual researchers to assess whether or not their activities could give rise to a conflict of interest, and to disclose these activities to the Head of Department for inclusion in the Departmental Register.
19. To facilitate the approval process for requests from faculty, researchers and research students, a sub-group of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee meets on a rolling basis to deal with their applications. This sub-group will process applications as they are submitted. An aim is to deliver a decision on such requests within two weeks of submission. Projects of a particularly sensitive nature may require additional time, for example, if consultation with external experts is deemed necessary.
20. Applications from students on taught courses will be dealt with by the full committee at fixed times throughout the year. Key dates will be announced well in advance of the corresponding deadlines for these kinds of submissions.