



School of Business
Pokhara University

RESEARCH MANAGEMENT CELL (RMC)

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH

All the research work undertaken by the faculties and students of the school should adhere to following ethical research practice:

- A key component of ethically correct behaviour is **informed consent**. Anyone assisting you in your research must receive a clear statement of what the research is about, what it involves, and what their part in it will be. If they are willing to take part they must confirm this in writing or in some other recorded form.
- Asking anyone to disclose information about their participation in activities which may be illegal (for example taking drugs or downloading music illegally from the internet) raises complex ethical issues and any project involving this will almost certainly have to be referred to the University Ethics Committee.
- Particular care is required when dealing with sensitive issues such as violence, child abuse and the like. If you are planning to research any sensitive issue of this kind, you must discuss your approach in detail with your supervisor/departmental representative and obtain ethical consent **before embarking on the research itself**.
- If you are planning on using a questionnaire, you **must** have the text of the questionnaire approved before handing it out.
- Anyone involved in an interview or focus group must be offered the option of remaining **anonymous**. If they choose this option you **must** adhere to it scrupulously.
- You **must** get consent from all present before recording an interview or focus group.
- In an interview or focus group situation you must treat others **fairly**. For example, you must not:
 - ask them leading questions (in other words, questions which attempt to steer them towards one specific answer)
 - be pushy, aggressive or condescending, or use any behaviour that might be interpreted as bullying
- Remember at all times that your role is neither to agree nor disagree with what those involved in the interview or focus group are saying, but to facilitate the expression of their views.
- Particular care is required when dealing with the old and frail, with children, with people in difficult or distressing situations, or people belonging to legally protected groups (for example people with Alzheimer's). **Young people under**

the age of sixteen in Scotland (eighteen in other parts of the UK) cannot take part in interviews or focus groups without written parental consent, and you will also require a disclosure (www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/) in order to be able to work with such groups.

- If you are planning to interview people or hold focus groups in an organisation such as a school, a business and so on, you must obviously seek that organisation's approval first.
- If debate in a focus group becomes unexpectedly heated, you should try to calm things down. If this is unsuccessful, you must bring the proceedings to a halt.
- Always remember that anyone involved in an interview or focus group can leave at any time, without asking permission or having to offer any kind of explanation.
- If they subsequently withdraw their consent after having first given it, you **must** respect this. Withdrawal of consent will automatically render any data they have provided unusable.
- If anyone asks to see a transcript of any part of the dissertation/thesis/article etc. containing references to them before it is submitted, you **must** comply with that. If they request it, you must remove all references to them (even anonymous ones) from the item in question.
- If you hold any information about anyone on file – and this includes transcripts of interviews and the like – they have an absolute right to see these.
- The Data Protection Act forbids you to divulge any personal details relating to anyone without their express permission.