Policies and Procedures

Operations Department

Research Ethics Policy and Procedure

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Research Ethics Policy and Procedure

Policy

High-quality research is characterized by standards that inspire trust and confidence in its execution, including the methods, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks used, as well as the reliability of the resulting findings and interpretations. This policy promotes and oversees ethical practice and research integrity as per MFHEA guidelines.

Future Focus Ltd is committed to ensuring that its research activities involving human participants, personal data, and/or regulated material and procedures are conducted in a way which:

- respects the dignity, rights, and welfare of all participants in research;
- minimises risk to participants, researchers, and third parties;
- appropriately manages personal data; and
- aims to maximise the public benefit of research.

Future Focus Ltd provides training to staff, lecturers and students to ensure that research design incorporates ethical decision-making, responsible participant recruitment, data collection, interpretation and analysis, as well as the accurate presentation and dissemination of research findings. Furthermore, Future Focus ensures that research relationships adhere to ethical standards.

1. Research design

The design of any research study requires careful ethical considerations. Applicants seeking ethical clearance must clearly demonstrate how they have

addressed the ethical concerns raised by their study and provide a strong justification for requesting approval and permission to move forward.

According to both Sikes (2004) and the UKRIO Checklist, the following should be addressed for ethical clearance:

1. What is the scope of the research, and why is this the focus?
2. Is the research topic sensitive?
3. Is the research topic of general concern, or is it solely of personal or vested interest?
4. In what ways does the research enhance current knowledge or advance methods and methodologies for investigating this field?
5. Have any potential risks been taken into consideration?
6. Have any potential unintended or unexpected consequences for the people directly involved in the research or resulting from its findings been considered?
7. If the research involves any level of secrecy, is there a valid justification for this?
8. Are the participants being depicted and described with respect?
9. Does the proposed study adhere to all applicable legal and ethical standards?
10. Is the information given to potential participants, their representatives, or their guardians and caregivers presented in a clear and understandable manner?
11. How will consent be recorded?

2. Recruitment of, and access, to participants

No pressure is to be made on participants to enrol in the study. Moreover, as per the MFHEA guidelines, permission needs to be sought for use of visual representations which enables the identification of individuals, whether or not

they are participants who have given their consent or people who just happened to be in the frame.

Prior to the commencement of the research, researchers are to be made aware of technological and social advancements which may enable participants to hide their identities and intentions.

The participants in the study should be reassured that they can withdraw at any time without penalty. Additionally, the participants should be aware of who to contact if there are concerns regarding how the research is being conducted.

3. Interpretation and analysis of results

It is crucial for researchers to recognise the significance of their own beliefs and values in the interpretation and analysis of research findings.

4. Research integrity and academic misconduct

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, fabricating research data, stealing ideas or documents, purchasing work and submitting it as one's own, and claiming credit for work done by students or junior colleagues.

Procedure

Explanation of procedure

The course lecturer is to explain the policy and procedure at the start of the module. This will include plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence (AI) checkers and the respective reports which are to be uploaded together with the assignments.

The internal verifier should also check for plagiarism and use of artificial intelligence. Students who plagiarise or use AI will be informed that this will affect their mark and may even lead to disqualification. Students who do not agree with the allocated mark have the right of appeal (see *Student Appeals Procedure*).

Lecturers are to use plagiarism and AI checkers when preparing course material. The institute has the right to ask for the reports.