


#	POLICY TITLE	POLICY AREA:	VERSION:	DATE ADOPTED :
	5.6 RESEARCH POLICY	5) TEACHING AND LEARNING	4.0	Oct 2020
<p>Introduction and Context</p> <p>Research activities play an important role in maintaining an environment in which effective third level teaching and learning processes occur. SNMCI is fully committed to the advancement of high quality academic research and to ensuring that all research activities undertaken by staff and students, involving human subjects or personal data, are undertaken in a way that safeguards the dignity, rights, health, safety, and privacy of those involved.</p> <p>The SNMCI Research Policy sets out the basic principles of best practice in research.</p> <p>This Code of Good Practice applies to all SNMCI researchers (staff and students) and should be read in tandem with QA 5.7: SNMCI Code of Good Practice for Student Research; QA 5.8: Terms of Reference for Submission of Student Research; QA 5.9: Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures Ethics Committee</p>				
<p>Staff Involved:</p> <p>All involved in Research Activities staff and learners</p>				
<p>General Principles:</p> <p>The surest foundation for good practice is an acceptance of and commitment to a number of shared principles. Research integrity demands that those engaging in research and scholarship should at all times accept personal responsibility and adhere to the following basic principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highest professional and ethical standards in designing and conducting investigations - A critical, open-minded approach in conducting research and scholarship and analysing data - Frankness and fairness with regard to the contributions of colleagues, partners, competitors and predecessors - Absolute honesty at all stages in scientific enquiry 				
<p>Leadership and Cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The culture and tone of procedures within any organization must be set by those in authority. Within SNMCI it is the responsibility of mentors (in the case of staff research) and research lecturers and supervisors (in the case of student research) to ensure that a 				

research climate of mutual cooperation is created which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good research practice.

- Staff Research: Ideas for research projects to be conducted with participating students of the College, or pupils of the school, must first be approved by the Academic Board, protecting the research participants, the researchers and the good name of the College.

Honesty:

At the core of all research endeavour, regardless of discipline or institution, is the need for researchers to be honest in respect of their own actions and in their responses to the actions of other researchers.

- All individuals attached to SNMCI who are engaged in research must refrain from plagiarism, deception, or the fabrication or falsification of results.
- Committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.
- Researchers are also required to declare conflicts of interest.

Supervision and training

Students:

- Responsibility for ensuring that new researchers and students understand and adopt best research practice rests with all members of the SNMCI research community.
- The needs of new researchers are of paramount importance. In particular it is the responsibility of SNMCI Programme Directors to ensure that all student researchers have the opportunity to receive appropriate research training including attendance on relevant modules, supervision by qualified tutors and specific guidance from professional bodies.

Staff:

- The research community of SNMCI is committed to providing every possible support to research supervisors to enable them to provide professional and efficient guidance and supervision to the students researchers in their care.
- New research supervisors should receive adequate formal training to enable them to supervise student researchers to the highest professional standards. This should include, but not be limited to, a mentoring system for new research supervisors within a research area.

Guidance from professional bodies:

- It is the responsibility of the researcher to fully abide by the codes of ethics and standards of professional conduct relevant to their profession and any other existing guidance issued by their respective regulatory or professional bodies.
- In the case of SNMCI, where much research is conducted in the area of childhood studies, it is recommended that, for a comprehensive understanding of the issues involved, students will be directed to the guidelines developed by the Psychology Society of Ireland (PSI), the Sociological Association of Ireland, the British Psychological Society (BPS), British Ethical Research Association (BERA), The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), The National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, Data Protection Acts (1988, 2003) and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Documenting Research Results and Storing Primary Data:

Accurate Records

Throughout their work, researchers are required to keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed, approvals granted and of interim and final results. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained.

Securing Data

Data generated in the course of research, where consent has been obtained, whether electronic or paper format, must be stored securely. Depending on the nature of the research and its future use (what a participant consented to), data should either be archived or held for a period of two years after the completion of a research project (staff) or destroyed after the research degree has been awarded (students).

Personal Data

All personal data collected and processed in the course of a research project is subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018 (previously 1988 and 2003), which safeguards the privacy of individuals regarding their personal data. All researchers must be familiar with the terms of this legislation.

Archiving Data

Where possible, researchers are encouraged to archive their data in an anonymized state for future use. If archiving data, researchers must ensure that consent to archive the data for future use is sought from participants at the consenting stage of their study.

Best Practice in Publication

Researchers (staff and students), who wish to present or publish their work, should be aware that many journal editors seek assurances that all research has been approved by an appropriate Research Ethics Committee (REC). In addition, journal editors may also seek evidence regarding research practices and ethical aspects of the research.

Academic Authorship

Due recognition is to be given in terms of academic authorship to all contributors in any publications and reports. In determining authorship and the order in which the authors are listed, weight of contribution, not seniority should be the determining factor.

To be listed as an author, a researcher must have made a substantial contribution to the research and be familiar with all the contents of the publication.

All authors of a publication (including electronic) must be prepared to publicly acknowledge authorship. Acknowledged authors of a multi-author publication should be familiar with the content of a publication and able to identify their own contribution.

It is not acceptable for researchers to publish multiple papers based on the same set(s) of data, except where there is full cross-referencing within the papers.

Ethical Principles:

Ethics can be defined as the morally right thing to do.

- In the context of research ethics, this involves the protection of humans and means that researchers have a duty of care for their human subjects. Researchers are responsible for how they manage their research.
- Although Research Ethics in SNMCI strives to safeguard the researcher, the research, the participants and the College, the essential prerequisite for ethical research is **the integrity of the researcher**.

Integrity can be defined as being truthful and living up to professional standards.

- In practice it means that research is conducted according to established rules, regulations, guidelines, or professional codes.
- The researcher must only pursue research questions that are designed to contribute to knowledge, be committed to the pursuit and protection of truth, and rely only on research methods which are appropriate to the discipline, the training and experience of the researcher.¹

¹ *The National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2014)*

There are basic ethical principles and concepts that apply to all research: These are:

- A commitment to the well-being, protection and safety of participants
- A duty to respect the rights and wishes of those involved
- A responsibility to conduct high-quality scientific research
- A commitment to communicate the results of research to relevant stakeholders and policy makers

Based on these principles, a number of core ethical concepts arise in research and, in the case of SNMCI where much research is conducted in the area of childhood studies, a number of additional issues: These are:

- Minimising risk of harm;
- Informed consent and assent;
- Confidentiality and anonymity;
- Child protection principles;
- Legal obligations and policy commitments in relation to children;
- A child-centred, inclusive approach to research;

These issues are addressed in further detail in document *QA 5.6 Code of Good Practice in Research for Students*

Respect for Persons

Respect for persons means that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents and persons with diminished autonomy must be protected. Ethics require that decisions are respected and persons are protected from harm. People (and specifically in the case of SNMCI, children) should not be used merely as a means to an end.

Beneficence and Non-maleficence:

- Beneficence and non-maleficence are concern for the protection and well-being of subjects.
- The researcher is obliged to ensure that the possible benefits to the participants will be maximized and possible harm minimized.
- Harm includes physical discomfort, psychological or emotional distress, and social and economic disadvantages.
- Researchers must assess the potential for risks and the possibility of benefits to the participants and be sensitive to their rights and interests.
- No incentives should be offered to research participants. In addition, researchers should reflect on the social and cultural implications of their research.

Competence:

- Researchers must strive to ensure and maintain the highest standards of competence in their work.
- They should recognize the boundaries of their particular competence and the limitations of their expertise.
- In so doing, researchers should engage in only those research practices and techniques for which they are qualified by education, training or experience.
- Researchers must show ethical awareness and recognize the risk to subjects of exceeding the boundaries of their competence.
- There is a duty on the researcher to maintain and develop competence by remaining up to date on relevant knowledge, research methods and techniques.

Allegations of Misconduct:

- The College takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct.
- Any member of the College who believes that an act of research misconduct has occurred or is occurring should, in a responsible and appropriate manner, notify the relevant Programme Director or Director of Quality Enhancement and Academic Affairs.

Research Ethics:

In keeping with good practice, SNMCI operates a research ethics approval system. Research projects are required to be approved through these procedures, protecting the research participants, the researchers and the good name of the College. QA 5.9 TOR and Operating Procedures Ethics Committee

Policy Control Sheet

Policy	QA 5.6 Research Policy
Version	4.0
Adopted by AB /Effective	Oct 2020
Supersedes	3.0
Monitoring	Every Two Years /Jan 2021
Responsible Officer(s) Designated Reviewer(s)	DQAA; Programme Directors; Chair of Ethics Committee; Research academics
Scope	College Wide

References

SNMCI Policy area	5) Teaching and Learning: QA Vol 2
Developed with reference to	<i>Guidelines developed by the Psychology Society of Ireland (PSI); The Sociological Association of Ireland; British Psychological Society (BPS); British Ethical Research Association (BERA); The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), <i>The National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland</i>; Data Protection Acts (1988, 2003); Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.</i>
Related SNMCI Policies / Forms	QA 5.7 Code of Good Practice in Research for Students QA 5.8 TOR for Submission of Student Research Proposals QA 5.9 TOR and Operating Procedures Ethics Committee.

Revision

Revision Number	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
3	General revision for blended learning	Office of DQAA	AB