

RESEARCH ETHICS GUIDE

September 2025

Scope	All Academic Staff and Students at UK Business College studying Pearson Provision: Business Specification
OFS Condition	E2
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Approved by the Board of Governors

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1. The Role of the Tutor

1.1 All UKBC students will receive initial guidance from their tutors to plan their research projects. Regular individual monitoring meetings will be scheduled, ensuring student progression towards the assessment requirements. Tutors will use professional judgement to provide balanced guidance, maintaining academic integrity and independent research skills. Tutors are required to authenticate students' work through continuous progress reviews and interim evaluations.

2. Development, Review and Formative Feedback

2.1 At UK Business College (UKBC), the design of the Research Project (Unit 19) assignment includes structured opportunities for formative feedback, such as regular individual tutorials and Q&A discussions. These formative assessments are designed specifically to support students in understanding their progress, refining their research methodologies, and ensuring they are clearly aligned with achieving the learning outcomes of the unit.

2.2 Formative feedback provided by UKBC tutors will clearly indicate students' progress without prescribing excessive guidance or suggesting exact solutions. Tutors will use terminology similar to the language found in the unit assessment criteria, allowing students to clearly gauge their potential achievements and effectively focus on areas requiring further improvement.

2.3 Milestones play a crucial role at UKBC in supporting students to manage their research projects effectively. Each milestone set by tutors in consultation with students should be clear, achievable, and focused on specific elements of the research process, ensuring ongoing progression and momentum towards successful project completion.

2.4 Students at UKBC will typically agree upon at least two clear milestones with their tutors. Examples of suitable milestones for Unit 19 include:

- Completion and tutor review of the research proposal and ethics form.
- Submission of a preliminary draft of research findings.
- Completion and preliminary analysis of primary research data.

2.5 Tutors at UKBC will actively monitor the achievement of these milestones, providing feedback to redirect students' efforts as required. Tutors will clearly outline milestones and formative assessment points in alignment with the UKBC timetable and overall unit schedule to ensure meaningful intervals for student progress and effective reflection.

2.6 Sufficient intervals between interim reviews and formative feedback sessions will be maintained, providing students adequate time to implement feedback effectively and develop their independent research skills fully. This structured yet flexible approach ensures all students at UKBC are well-supported throughout the entire research process.

3. Authentication of a project

3.1 UKBC requires confirmation of the authenticity of each student's project. Students must sign a declaration confirming their submission is their own original work. Plagiarism awareness is explicitly discussed during guidance sessions to ensure adherence to UKBC's academic integrity standards.

4. Guidance for Tutors and Academic Support Staff

4.1 The following provides guidance of

- a. Research project briefs for this unit must be based on a proposal defined by the student.
- b. The student must agree and sign off their research proposal with you before embarking on their project. If this requires extra time to agree – this could be addressed through the student's tutorial time.
- c. On the following pages, there is an example of a research project proposal. This will form the basis of their project and must be related to their specific pathway, unless the student is on the general business pathway.
- d. Students must complete the research project in order to complete their work for this unit.
- e. Group work is not appropriate for this research project. Student work must be individual.
- f. Students should be taught how to go about planning, researching, conducting, recording and reflecting on the research project.
- g. It is advisable to direct students to appropriate research sources and advise on qualitative and quantitative methods.
- h. Students will need to reflect on the success of their research project and their performance at the end of the project with the inclusion of a project evaluation and recommendations.
- i. The research project can take the following forms:
 - i. Dissertation.
 - ii. Feasibility study.
 - iii. Investigation/fieldwork.

5. Guidance for Students

- a. As a UKBC student, carefully review this guidance before defining and commencing your research project. Ensure your research proposal is methodical, valid, ethical, and supported by substantial secondary literature. Regular meetings with your tutor must be attended to ensure your project remains on track, with your progress continually monitored and authenticated.
- b. Consider the development of a methodical and valid research proposal as the foundation for the project.
- c. Choose a topic of personal interest in a specialism. The topic chosen should allow a sufficient and suitable degree of research through the existence of adequate background materials.

- d. A good project proposal title should meet the following criteria:
- e. The proposal is one that has an existing body of literature or source material that can be reviewed.
- f. The proposal extends a current line of learning that will lend itself to further rigorous exploration.
- g. Decide on appropriate research methods and select an appropriate sample.
- h. Ensure that your proposal is ethical, reliable and valid. An ethics form must be submitted prior to completion of research as part of the research proposal.
- i. Agree your research proposal with your tutor before beginning your research.
- j. Conduct your research as outlined in the proposal agreed with your tutor.
- k. Carry out your research, analyse your research findings and draw conclusions. Apply both qualitative and quantitative research methods to evaluate data collected from primary research.
- l. Communicate your research outcomes in a manner appropriate to your audience.
- m. You will be asked to reflect on the success of your research project and evaluate the problems/ issues encountered.
- n. You must complete the research project in order to complete your work for this unit.
- o. You will need to reflect on the success of your research project and your performance at the end of the project with the inclusion of a project evaluation and recommendations.
- p. The research project can take the following forms:
 - i. Dissertation.
 - ii. Feasibility study.
 - iii. Investigation/fieldwork.

6. Proposal Form

- a. Define your research problem or question. This can be stated as a research question, objectives or hypothesis.
- b. Provide a literature review giving the background and conceptualisation of your proposed area of study. This would provide existing knowledge and benchmarks by which your data can be judged.
- c. Consider and define your research methodology and research process. Demonstrate understanding of the pitfalls and limitations of the methods chosen and ethical issues that might arise.
- d. Draw points (1–3, above) together into a research proposal for agreement with your tutor.
- e. Conduct your research as outlined in your proposal. Keep track of your findings as you work.
- f. Carry out your research and analyse your findings in relation to your original research question. Draw conclusions.
- g. Communicate the outcomes of your research project to the identified audience.
- h. Reflect on the success of your research project and your performance at the end of the project with the inclusion of a project evaluation and recommendations.

7. Templates for Evidence Collection

7.1 Project proposal form

Student details		
First Name	Last Name	Date
Centre Name	Tutor	
Proposed Title		

Section One: Title, aims, objectives
Title or working title of project (in the form of a question, objective or hypothesis) Project aims and objectives (e.g. what do you wish to achieve? What do you want to learn to do? What do you want to find out?)
Section Two: Reasons for choosing this project
Reasons for choosing the project (e.g. links to other subjects you are studying, personal interest, future plans, knowledge/skills you want to improve, why you feel the topic is important)
Section Three: Precedents and sources

Use of key literature sources and precedents to support your project objectives	
Section Four: Activities and timescales	
Activities to be carried out during the project	How long will this take:
Milestone one:	
Target date (set by tutor):	
Milestone two:	
Target date (set by tutor):	
Comments and agreement from tutor	
Comments:	
I confirm that the project is not work that has been or will be submitted for another qualification and is appropriate:	

Agreed:	(name)	(date)	
Agreement from Student			
I confirm that the project is not work that has been or will be submitted for another qualification.			
Agreed:	(name)	(date)	

7.2 Research ethics approval form

All students conducting research activity that involves human participants or the use of data, collected from human participants, may be required to gain ethical approval before commencing their research. Please answer all relevant questions and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

For further support and guidance please see your Unit Tutor.

Before completing this form, we advise that you discuss your proposed research fully with your Unit Tutor. Please complete this form in good time before your research project is due to commence.

Section One: Basic details			
Project title:			
Student Details			
Student Name			
Student ID			
Programme:			
School:			
Start date:		End date:	

Section Two: Project summary		
Please select all research methods that you plan to use as part of your project:		
Interviews	☐	
Questionnaires	☐	
Observations	☐	
Use of Personal Records	☐	
Data Analysis	☐	
Action Research	☐	
Focus Groups	☐	
Other (please specify)		

Section Three: Participants	
Will your research involve human participants?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Who are the participants? Tick all that apply	

☐ Ages 12–16	☐ Young people aged 17–18	☐ Adults
How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)?		
Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing:		
How will you obtain consent from participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time?		
Studies involving questionnaires: Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer?		☐ Yes ☐ No
If No, please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this:		
Studies involving observation: Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be approved.		☐ Yes ☐ No
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation? (e.g. give them a brief explanation of the study)		☐ Yes ☐ No
Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a summary of your findings generally)		☐ Yes ☐ No

Section Four: Data storage and security	
Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998)	☐ Yes ☐ No
Who will have access to the data and personal information?	
During the research	
Where will the data be stored?	
Will mobile devices, such as USB storage and laptops, be used?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please provide further details:	
After the research	

Where will the data be stored?	
How long will the data and records be kept, and in what format?	
Will the data be kept for use by other researchers?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please provide further details:	

Section Five: Ethical issues
Are there any particular features of your proposed work which may raise ethical concerns? If so, please outline how you will deal with these:
It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks that may arise as a result of your research. Please consider/address all issues that may apply. Ethical concerns may include, but are not limited to the following: • informed consent • potentially vulnerable participants • sensitive topics • risks to participants and/or researchers • confidentiality/anonymity • disclosures/limits to confidentiality • data storage and security, both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection) • reporting • dissemination and use of your findings.

Section Six: Declaration	
I have read, understood and will abide by the UKBC's Research Ethics Policy:	☐ Yes ☐ No
I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my tutor:	☐ Yes ☐ No
Student Name(s):	Date:
Please submit your completed form to your tutor	

8. Unit 19 Research Project (Pearson Set) Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Pass		Merit	Distinction
L01 Examine appropriate research methodologies and methods to identify those appropriate to the research process			L01 and L02 D1 Justify chosen research methodologies and processes supported by a credible academically underpinned literature review.
P1 Examine alternative research methodologies. P2 Explore alternative methods and tools used for the collection of research data that consider costs, ethics and access.		M1 Evaluate alternative research methodologies and data collection methods and justify choices made based on philosophical/theoretical frameworks.	
L02 Develop a research proposal, including a supporting literature review			
P3 Produce a research proposal, including a defined aim and objectives supported by a literature review.		M2 Evaluate the merits, limitations and pitfalls of approaches to data collection in compiling the research proposal.	
L03 Analyse data using appropriate techniques to communicate research findings			
P4 Conduct research using appropriate methods for a business research project. P5 Analyse data from research findings to communicate research outcomes in an appropriate manner for the intended audience.		M3 Present the analysis of data utilising appropriate analytical techniques, charts and tables to meet the research aim and communicate outcomes.	D2 Communicate to the intended audience the research findings and outcomes, including justified recommendations.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO4 Reflect on the application of research methodologies and process.		D3 Demonstrate critical self-reflection and insight that results in recommended actions for improvements to inform future research.

