

The Courtauld

Research Ethics Policy

1. Aim and purpose

The Courtauld Institute of Art is committed by its Strategic Plan to achieving international standards and world recognition in research and research-led teaching. Fundamental to this commitment to research is a commitment to research ethics and integrity. The Courtauld Institute of Art and its members are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards, and to foster the values of integrity, openness, honesty, tolerance, fairness, accountability and responsibility.

This policy aims to provide a framework for research ethics at The Courtauld. This is done by:

- Setting out ethical principles and procedures that The Courtauld requires researchers to follow.
- Defining research misconduct and the procedure for assessing and addressing it.
- Defining the obligations of The Courtauld and its researchers under this Policy.

This policy is substantially based on, and intended to be consistent with, relevant standards issued by Research Councils UK, the UK Research Integrity Office and individual research councils. It will be updated as necessary to take account of developments in these standards. This policy does not endanger those principles outlined in the [University of London position statement on Freedom of Expression & Speech](#).

Courtauld researchers are expected to follow any ethical standards or codes of practice issued by relevant professional bodies that are specific to their area or discipline: for example, the code of ethics issued by the [Museums Association](#), and guidance issued by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). In the unlikely event of conflict between such standards and this policy or The Courtauld's ethical procedures, The Courtauld's policy and procedures should be followed.

2. Status

This policy was approved by the Research Committee in April 2023, and by Academic Board in May 2023. It will be reviewed and revised by the Research Committee periodically.

3. Definitions and scope

This policy applies equally to staff and students at The Courtauld conducting research at any level, and to any other person (regardless of their status) engaged in research under the auspices of The Courtauld or on behalf of or in association with The Courtauld (for example, independent contractors, consultants, visiting staff, staff from other institutions, emeritus staff, and staff on joint or honorary contracts). Research conducted collaboratively with other institutions or non-Courtauld researchers is covered by this Policy, to the extent that it involves a contribution from a researcher acting under the auspices of The Courtauld. This Policy does not apply to research conducted by individuals in a private capacity, except for research conducted as part of consultancy or "third stream" activities approved by The Courtauld.

Research: Any form of diligent inquiry or examination to seek or revise facts, principles, theories, ideas, or applications, carried out at or under the auspices of The Courtauld, as above.

Research ethics:	The moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication or dissemination of results and beyond. These principles are set out in section 4.
Research misconduct:	Conduct or performance by a researcher of The Courtauld that exhibits one or more of the characteristics set out in section 6. The existence of any of these characteristics is indicative of research that has failed to meet The Courtauld's principles of ethical research.
Research participants:	Living individuals who are the focus of and/or participants in research.
Researcher:	Any member of The Courtauld conducting research at any level, including staff and students, and any other person (regardless of their status) engaged in research under the auspices of The Courtauld or on behalf of or in association with The Courtauld (for example, independent contractors, consultants, visiting staff, staff from other institutions, emeritus staff, and staff on joint or honorary contracts).

4. Principles of ethical research

The Courtauld believes that ethical research will be guided by the following principles, which researchers of The Courtauld are expected to follow. This list is not exhaustive: it defines a set of core values that should apply in any research, although additional values and principles may be relevant in specific contexts.

- Research should aim to maximise knowledge benefit for individuals and society and to minimise risk and harm.
- Research should be conducted openly and without deception, coercion, or intimidation, explicit or implied.
- The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected.
- Research should be conducted with integrity, transparency, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability.
- The participation of living subjects should be voluntary and appropriately informed.
- Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit.

These principles must inform all research and research dissemination activities conducted at or under the auspices of The Courtauld. Researchers must:

- Conduct research in a way that minimizes the harm or risk to groups or individuals, including research participants, research staff and fellow researchers. Harm includes physical or mental harm and harm to an individual's organisation, business, livelihood, family, kin or community.
- Ensure that research staff and research participants must be fully informed about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails, and any risks to them that may be involved.
- Gain and record the informed consent of research participants and subjects, taking into account the practicalities of field research and cultural contexts that may affect understanding of the concept of consent. Inform participants of their right to refuse to participate in research or to withdraw from research. Respect the confidentiality of information provided by research participants and respect their anonymity, unless they have consented to the disclosure of information. Covert research involving research participants may only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances after formal ethical approval.
- Be sensitive to the values and cultures of locations where research is undertaken. Ethical and political issues relating to personal and national disparities in wealth, power, the status of the researcher, political interest and national political systems must be taken into account in planning research projects. Researchers should be sensitive to the differences between the

civil, legal and/or financial position of national and foreign researchers and scholars, and the inherent power position that may exist between the researcher and those being studied.

- Ensure that there is no undeclared conflict of interest (whether personal, academic, or commercial) in their research. Sources of funding, and the roles and requirements of research funders, should be made clear to research participants and disclosed when research is published.
- Avoid plagiarism, the misrepresentation of authorship or results, and other forms of academic dishonesty.
- Ensure that research observes the rights of researchers, subjects, and participants, including human rights; privacy and rights covered by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); intellectual property rights; the right to be identified as the author of one's own work; and rights enshrined in the Equality Act.
- Ensure that information and data are appropriately and respectfully shared within research teams, ensuring that information and data are shared with other team members in accordance with employment obligations, supervisory or line management relationships and contractual requirements. Give appropriate acknowledgement and credit for all contributions to a research project, including recognition in publications and further grant applications.
- Ensure that primary data and research results are preserved and accessible for a reasonable period of time after the completion of research, to enable the verification of findings.
- Ensure that their research fulfils their obligations to research funders and any conditions imposed as part of the approval of research.
- Legal and regulatory obligations (including obligations specific to the country where the research is conducted) must be taken into consideration.
- Ensure that any other relevant ethical issues are taken into account in planning, conducting, and disseminating research.

5. Ethical approval for research

Ethical approval by Research Committee is required for research involving living human participants prior to the research commencing. In cases of research where the involvement of living participants is straightforward and undertaken in the professional capacity of those participants (e.g. interviews with artists, curators, etc.), ethical approval can be assumed on the condition that the process of informed consent has been followed and documented. Complex or highly sensitive cases (e.g. those involving highly vulnerable participants or contested political contexts) may be referred to the Courtauld Ethics Committee.

6. Research misconduct

This policy is intended to ensure ethical research practices. Conduct or performance by a researcher that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics shall be treated by The Courtauld as research misconduct. The presence of any of these characteristics in a research project will indicate behaviour that falls significantly short of the principles of ethical research set out in section 4.

1. Fabrication: e.g. the creation of fictitious data, results, evidence, citations, or documentation, including knowingly doctored images.
2. Falsification: e.g. the inappropriate manipulation or selection of data, evidence, imagery or documentation, including knowing misattribution.
3. Misrepresentation: this may include:
 - a. Misrepresentation of data, e.g. the undisclosed suppression of evidence or findings, or the deliberate or negligent presentation of a flawed interpretation of data or sources.
 - b. Misrepresentation of interests, e.g. the failure to disclose the interests of the researcher or of the funder of the research.
 - c. Misrepresentation by the researcher of their qualifications or experience.
 - d. Misrepresentation of involvement, e.g. the inappropriate or unjustified claim by a researcher to authorship or attribution, or the denial of others' rights to authorship or attribution.
 - e. Misrepresentation of publication, e.g. the undisclosed duplication of publication, or undisclosed duplicate submission of works for publication, where this involves deception or the deliberate circumvention of publishers' or funders' policies.
4. Plagiarism and false authorship: the misappropriation or use of the ideas, intellectual property

or work (written or otherwise) of others without acknowledgement or permission, including the undeclared use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

5. Mismanagement of research data or results: the failure to ensure that research data, evidence and research results are preserved and accessible for a reasonable period after the completion of research, in accordance with The Courtauld's retention and archiving policies and funders' requirements.
6. Breach of duty of care. This may include instances when a researcher:
 - a. Discloses improperly the identity of research participants, or information provided by research participants, without their consent or in breach of confidence. Particular care must be taken when conducting research involving human participants or privileged or personal data.
 - b. Places research participants, research staff or others involved in research at risk of harm, without their prior consent and without appropriate safeguards.
 - c. Fails to take reasonable care to ensure the informed consent of research participants.
 - d. Fails to observe legal, regulatory, contractual or ethical requirements, and obligations to research funders.
 - e. Fails to acknowledge the intellectual property of third-party rights holders, e.g. in reproducing images without permission from the rights holder(s).
 - f. Conducts themselves improperly in the peer review of applications or publications, e.g. through the gross misrepresentation of the content of material, inadequate disclosure of limited competence, or the abuse of material provided in confidence for peer review.

Conduct or performance by a researcher that falls into at least one of the above categories will be research misconduct if it involves deliberate intent, negligence, or recklessness. Research misconduct includes acts of omission as well as acts of commission. However, research misconduct does not include:

1. Genuine academic disagreements, e.g. over research methodology, attribution, interpretation of sources.
2. Honest errors or mistakes, where no negligence, recklessness or deliberate intention is involved.

Researchers who detect errors or mistakes in their research are expected to make all reasonable efforts to rectify them: e.g. by publication of a correction or retraction, or acquisition of retrospective permission from third party copyright holders. Deliberate failure to rectify research errors will be treated as misrepresentation.

Allegations or suspicions of research misconduct will be investigated according to the Research Misconduct Policy, a process that is overseen by the Vice-Dean for Research. Interpretation of these categories will depend on the context of the research project and will reflect the judgement and experience of those charged with investigating.

7. Obligations of researchers and The Courtauld

The development of a culture of ethical research at The Courtauld requires a partnership between The Courtauld and its researchers. This section defines the obligations of both parties under this Policy. Researchers must:

1. Ensure that they are informed about and consult research ethics, integrity, and misconduct policies and procedures.
2. Conduct research in accordance with the principles of research ethics outlined in section 4 and ethics approval procedure outlined in section 5.
3. Avoid research misconduct as defined in section 6.
4. Following The Courtauld's procedures, report instances of behaviour by fellow researchers of The Courtauld that they reasonably believe represents research misconduct. Researchers should recognize that research misconduct, if tolerated or ignored, undermines the entire research community.

The Courtauld must:

1. Periodically review this and related policies and review procedures for:
 - a. Reporting complaints relating to research projects.

- b. Investigating and determining allegations of research misconduct.
 - c. Handling personal data relating to research participants for instance interviews with living artists or family members of artists.
 - d. Retention and archiving of research data and results.
- 2. Alert its researchers to this and related policies regarding research ethics, integrity, and misconduct, including as part of the induction process for new or returning staff.
- 3. Address allegations or suspicions of research misconduct fairly, equitably and within a reasonable time.

Last updated: November 2023