Policy on Ethical Guidelines for Student Work
Dept. of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University
Approved by the Board 2017-09-06
Revised by the Board 2019-12-03

Ethical policy statement:

Researchers have an obligation to respect human dignity and to do no harm. Researchers shall respect their participants' integrity, freedom, and right to participate. Researchers have a duty to prevent research participants from being subjected to harm or other suffering as a consequence of their participation in research.

Definitions

"Researcher" in this case includes students

"Participant" refers to the individuals participating in the research, from whom data will be collected.

"Informed consent" entails that research participants are given the necessary information for gaining a good understanding of the purpose of the research, of the consequences of participating in the research project, and the identity and role of the researcher. Research participants should be informed that consent can be withdrawn at any time, this includes both during and after data collection. The information should be given in a form which can be easily understood by the participant. Informed consent should also specify that personal information about the participant will be collected (such as name, occupation, place of residence, or any other information which could identify the participant); note that identifying information should only be gathered in exceptional cases.

Procedure for ensuring compliance with the Ethical Policy in student work

Students at the Dept. of Peace and Conflict Research often wish to engage in original data collection or usage of existing data involving human participants, e.g. interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc. Ethical considerations must always be made when working with participants, particularly when gathering personal information. Because of the sensitive and potentially dangerous nature of the topics addressed in peace and conflict research, these concerns are heightened. The Department has a responsibility to ensure that its students do no harm, nor that its students knowingly enter situations which may put them at harm (e.g. travel to dangerous areas).

Students wishing to collect data from human research subjects must submit an **Application for Ethics Approval** to the convenor of their course. The course convener may consult, or delegate the decision to, the department's Ethics committee for student work. This application should be developed in collaboration with their appointed advisor. Applications without advisor signatures will normally not be considered. Only in exceptional cases, will the Ethics committee for student work accept applications without the advisor signature and/or outside the submission deadlines scheduled in the course.

Ethics approval by the course convenor or the Ethics committee for student work is required for the data to be included in the thesis and for it to receive a passing grade. Application for approval must always precede data collection; approval will not be granted post-hoc.

The Application should be no longer than 3 pages and include the following information:

- the research question, hypothesis, research design described in brief
- planned location of study.
    - Note that approval will not be granted for travel to areas which have warnings from the Swedish foreign ministry at the time of travel. These can be found at: http://www.regeringen.se/uds-reseinformation/ud-avrader/
- how research participants will be selected
    - Note that the requirement of informed consent means that individuals under the age of 18 or people with diminished capacity are not to be included in research projects. Note also that parental consent is not an acceptable substitute.
- whether identifying information (any information which could identify the participant) will be gathered and if so, why, how it will be gathered and stored. Note that identifying information should only be gathered in exceptional cases.
- ethical considerations in regard to the research, in particular, an assessment of possible risks the participant could face as a result of their participation. This includes not only the question of potential risk of traumatization during the research process but also possible future adverse consequences.
- the advisor's signature

In addition to the Application, the following documents should follow as attachments:

- Draft informed consent form. This form should contain information about the research project, what participation entails, the risks and benefits associated with participation, and contact information to both the student researcher and the faculty member responsible for the project (e.g. a course convenor). Obtaining written consent is permissible only when it is anonymized (e.g. by ticking a box in a survey); in all other cases, consent should be given orally. Names or other identifying information should not be collected. The written consent form should be read and discussed orally when appropriate, and a written copy provided to the participant in all cases.

- Draft questions/focus group topics/etc. While the exact wording of these may change, they should provide a sense of the general direction the research will take. Major changes may be made after approval if the advisor (or course convenor) provides written consent to the changes.

Timeline for application and Decision

The application must be submitted to the course convenor or the Ethics committee for student work in good time prior to booking travel. The course convenor (or the Ethics committee for student work) will render one of three decisions:

1. Approved
2. Revisions Required
3. Declined

In the case of Approved, the student is free to proceed under the guidance of their advisor.

In the case of Revisions Required, the student must make the necessary changes and re-submit the application.

In the case of Declined, the proposal is not viable and the student is not to proceed.