# Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE) Research Ethics Processes

1. As part of the University, CODE supports the University of London in its commitment to carrying out its research, teaching, consultancy, and other activities within a comprehensive ethical framework.

2. CODE has delegated authority to manage research ethics applications, within a defined scope:

   - CODE projects (we have up to 30 projects annually, commissioned by stakeholders from across UoL and the Federation, some of the projects will include a research element, which may need research ethics consideration)

   - Other CODE research and evaluation activities - CODE leads on, and is regularly commissioned, to undertake evaluation or research to support innovation in online and distance practice. This activity will generally involve an element of research which will require approval or research ethics.

   - Activity undertaken by CODE visiting scholars. CODE hosts visiting scholars from across the Globe. Visiting scholars undertake supervised research projects, which usually require research ethics approval.

3. For CODE related activity, appropriate research ethics approval should come from either:

   - The home institution of the lead researcher. This will often be a University of London Federation Member.

   - The University of London.

4. CODE commits to supporting annual monitoring, audits and tracking.

Appendix A

# Research Ethics for CODE related activity
14.11.24 approved at REC autumn 2024.

This document outlines the process for consideration of research ethics in activity undertaken within the Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE). The scope includes:

- CODE projects.
- CODE research and evaluation activities.
- Activity undertaken by CODE visiting scholars.

**As part of the University, CODE supports the University of London in its commitment to carrying out its research, teaching, consultancy, and other activities within a comprehensive ethical framework.**

Full details of University of London (UoL) research ethics policies are available on our website: https://www.london.ac.uk/about/policies/research-governance/research-ethics

For CODE related activity appropriate research ethics approval should come from either:

- The home institution of the lead researcher. This will often be a University of London Federation Member.
- The University of London.

In both cases the CODE Centre manager will retain a record that includes the name of the institution providing ethical approval and a relevant reference number as appropriate. This information will be stored on the CODE SharePoint site.

## Research Ethics procedure for CODE related activity

The following procedure should be followed:

## Step 1 Identifying the Research Ethics approval institution

Identify whether research ethics will be sought from the lead researcher's home institution or UoL.

Generally, research ethics approval should be sought from the home institution of the lead researcher.

If research ethics approval is being sought in home institution of the lead researcher, once research ethics approval has been granted, at the relevant institution, then details must be provided to code@london.ac.uk.

If research ethics approval is being sought from the University of London, then step 2 should be followed.

## Step 2 Seeking research ethics approval through the University of London

The researcher should:

1. Prepare by reviewing the UoL Research ethics information at:
   https://www.london.ac.uk/about/policies/research-governance/research-ethics

2. Review the BERA research guidance ethics
   https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024

3. Complete their **research ethics application** for initial consideration by the CODE Research and Scholarship ethics panel. The research ethics application must include:

   Initial Self-Evaluation (Research Ethics Self Check Form [Word] required from all requests for research ethics approval.

   In completing this form, the researcher self-certifies in the following categories:
   - A. That no significant ethical issues are raised by the research, or
   - B. That adequate safeguards in relation to such issues can and will be put in place or
   - C. That the research will need to be subject to a full review.

   In addition to the Initial Self-Evaluation, where projects involve interactions with humans including interviews, surveys or focus groups, researchers must also supply a completed:

   - Participation Information Sheet and Consent forms [Word]
   - data management plan [Word]

4. **Research teams**, (other than Visiting scholars) submit paperwork to the CODE research ethics panel, by emailing the paperwork to code@london.ac.uk. Indicate in the subject line 'Research Ethics application'.

5. **Visiting Scholars** must complete the research ethics module before submission of the ethical assessment form. To do so follow these steps:

   Log on to https://reshaped.sas.ac.uk/
   Set up an account.

Once this is done, visit the URL:
https://reshaped.sas.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=29
and enter the enrolment key: ResearchEthics_2023

Visiting scholars should <u>submit all relevant paperwork to their supervisor</u>(s).

6. The **application will be reviewed, and feedback provided as appropriate.**

7. Outcomes from the review will be:

   - **Further adjustments** are required to the planning before ethics approval can be granted.

   - **Formal ethics approval of the project**, noting that adequate safeguards are in place.

   - **Recommendation that the proposal goes forward for full review** by UoL research ethics committee. Advice will be provided on how to undertake this. Full details can be found here: https://www.london.ac.uk/about/policies/research-governance/research-ethics

8. Details of the research ethics approval will be retained by CODE on behalf of the University.

9. It is the **responsibility of the lead researcher to ensure that any significant changes to the approved research methodology are be submitted for review**, as the initial approval applies specifically to the methodology proposed. Researchers should inform the CODE Research and Scholarship ethics panel, via code@london.ac.uk, of any such changes to determine whether re-evaluation is required.

10. All research activities **may be subject to ongoing review and audits**, at any time after approval is granted. This ongoing monitoring will ensure adherence to ethical guidelines and may be conducted in alignment with UoL standards.

11. To maintain up-to-date oversight, reporting will follow a structure aligned with the University of London Research Ethics Committee (REC) meetings held twice a year to allow timely updates, especially if any new developments arise between REC meetings. **CODE will prepare a bi-annual report for REC**.

12. All publications and outputs arising from CODE funded activity should include indication that the work has been funded/part-funded by the Centre for Online and Distance Education at the University of London, and where relevant that ethical approval has been granted by the University of London.