



Embedding new norms

ARE THESE NORMS PART OF PRACTICE AT MY UNIVERSITY?

Ethics is relevant across the entire research journey, and beyond – from idea to legacy. Policies and practices need to reflect this.

In complex research things may deviate from the initial plan.

Our ethics approval processes should therefore be reiterative – not a one-off approval process with no follow-up.

ARE THESE NORMS REALLY NEW?

Historically, these norms have not been strongly reflected in how global research has been framed and supported in academic institutions, especially those operating with a 'Western' framework. Given the priority placed on relationships, interconnectedness, context and accountability, it is likely these norms will feel familiar to many communities and participants invited to contribute to global research.

Researchers are encouraged to speak up when confronted with ethical challenges and to reach out and seek support from peers in the global academic village. We must expect the reporting of changes and challenges within the research and actively support solution-finding.

Ethics is contextual as well as being bound by regulation and legislation. Robust ethical application processes are those that highlight potential contextual issues and regulatory conflicts.

Robust ethics processes must have both an approval and a support component.

Accountability for complex projects should include:

- Independent review of all projects (not signed off by PI or supervisor)
- A process for reporting on, and sharing, challenges encountered and solutions reached (for both enhanced accountability and to promote a culture of learning)

Support may include access to a peer support person or reference group – i.e. a non-decision making body/person to provide collegial ethics support to global researchers and partners.

Enabling ethical solutions in global challenges research

Ethical solutions:

- are designed to encourage social equity and thriving, sustainable communities
- can be found in many places
- are built on shared humanitarian and communitarian values
- take the whole research journey into account, including research legacy
- should be aligned with essential principles and relevant regulation
- are enabled through collaboration, reflective practice and openness to innovation
- are mindful of the impact of power differentials on research agendas, processes and reporting
- are supported by institutional processes and ongoing support
- may require that we (and our partners) are prepared to 'take the long road'.

Ethics in global challenges research is not:

- adopting and following a standardised process or rigid procedure
- a 'one time' action (e.g. completing a form or an approval process)
- driven primarily by funding decisions or political agendas
- conducted in isolation from the communities involved or imposed on groups.

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A guide for researchers, practitioners and others who enable research in complex, low income or fragile settings

* This image is derived from a presentermedia template

An Ethical Research Journey

What will enable sustained ethical action in global research?

Global research projects present unique challenges. They are dependant upon the development of successful interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaborations, including those with stakeholder groups who may be vulnerable or marginalised.

Doing Ethical Global Research Together

This project exists to strengthen how we lead, support and enable ethical action in global research. The project promotes a values-driven, solution-focussed and iterative approach to ethics. It seeks to illuminate and address existing and emerging issues in a rapidly changing landscape of expectations about ethical research conduct. In collaboration with a global network, we identify key issues and solutions in order to develop practical tools and guides to support people involved in global challenges research.

A living document shaped by the global academic community

More than 200 researchers, practitioners and others involved in global research contributed to this guide through a series of roundtable events at the University of Edinburgh and feedback events in 16 countries. This included representation from over 30 countries, more than 60 disciplines in 45 universities and 11 other institutions. These rich and intensive conversations inspired and shaped the development of this resource.

Research impacts lives. Ethical global research is compassionate and accountable in equal measure.

Ethical challenges are not always obvious and finding solutions can be challenging. Partnerships can be strengthened when this work is undertaken together.

There is often more than one ethical solution to the same problem. Sometimes it is a question of choosing 'the most ethical, albeit, imperfect, option, for now'.

Both challenges and solutions exist in a dynamic interplay – what works this time may not work next time – our solutions need to be responsive to unfolding circumstances.

Openness to new ideas can drive innovation at unexpected moments. Often creative solutions can be ethical solutions

INSIDE: Infographic

BACK COVER: Embedding the new norms in our practice and institutions



An Ethical Research Journey

Strengthening how we work in complex and fragile settings to enable ethical actions and outcomes.

Ethical considerations are relevant at every stage of a research journey.

Global researchers* have identified a range of ethical issues that can emerge. These have been distilled into key questions to guide us in our day-to-day decision-making and action (see italics).

HOW DO I CONTRIBUTE TO ETHICAL ACTION? WHAT'S MY PLAN?

The research journey is neither linear nor predictable. Many academically-driven projects share a similar pattern, though the order of stages could be different. Revisiting previous stages is often required. This illustration has been developed to prompt our reflection on different aspects of a research journey and consider what is most relevant to our work.

The four Ps Interconnected Threads

Where ethical challenges and dilemmas emerge. Where solutions can be found.

These interdependent threads weave through all stages of research. To understand dilemmas and find ethical solutions, we need to reflect on these strands in multi-dimensional ways.

PLACE

What will work in this context?

PEOPLE

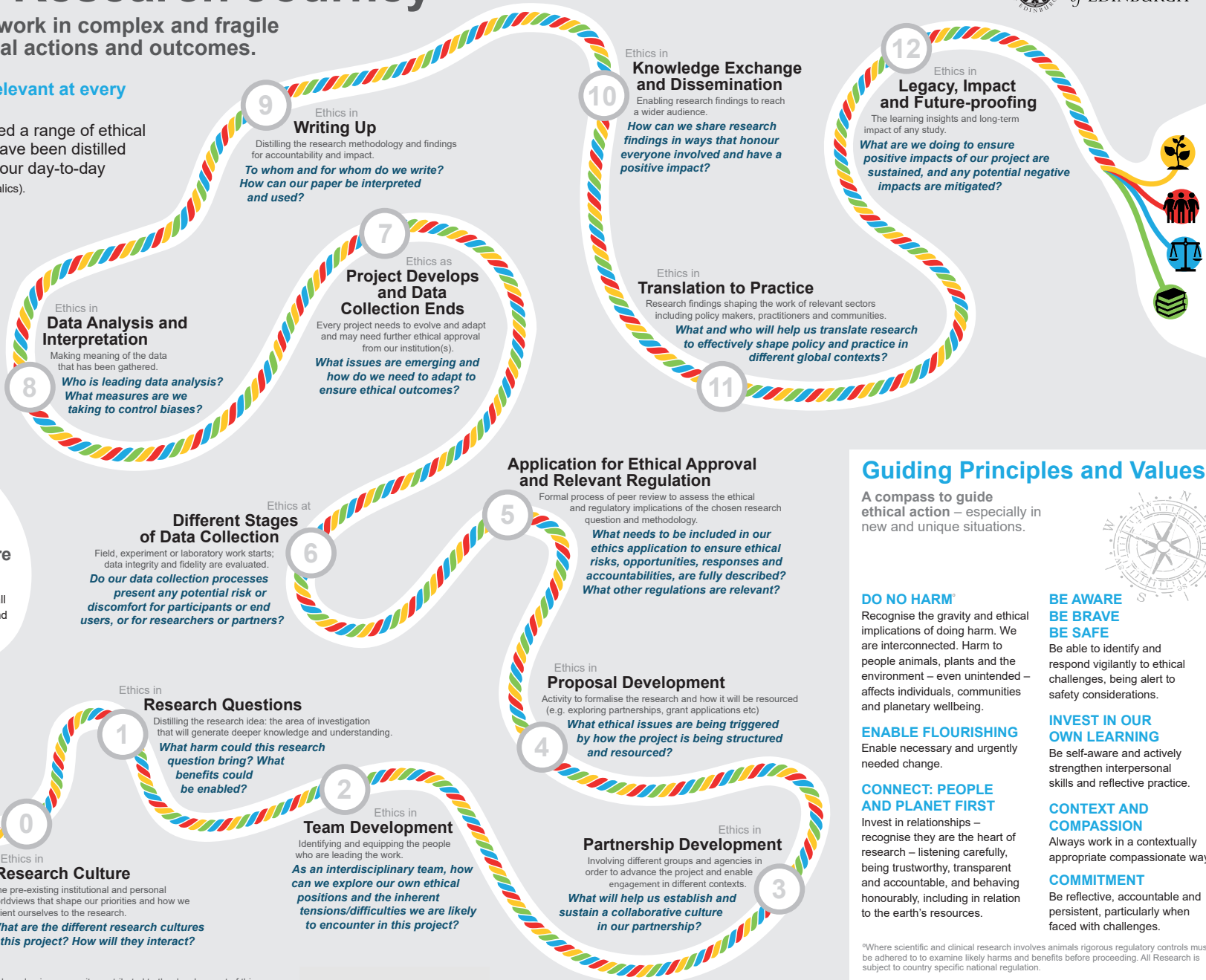
What will help us bring our best and draw in the support we need?

PRINCIPLES

What worldview and values will best guide us?

PRECEDENT

What do we need to follow or challenge in established ways of working?



Guiding Principles and Values

A compass to guide ethical action – especially in new and unique situations.



DO NO HARM*

Recognise the gravity and ethical implications of doing harm. We are interconnected. Harm to people animals, plants and the environment – even unintended – affects individuals, communities and planetary wellbeing.

ENABLE FLOURISHING

Enable necessary and urgently needed change.

CONNECT: PEOPLE AND PLANET FIRST

Invest in relationships – recognise they are the heart of research – listening carefully, being trustworthy, transparent and accountable, and behaving honourably, including in relation to the earth's resources.

BE AWARE BE BRAVE BE SAFE

Be able to identify and respond vigilantly to ethical challenges, being alert to safety considerations.

INVEST IN OUR OWN LEARNING

Be self-aware and actively strengthen interpersonal skills and reflective practice.

CONTEXT AND COMPASSION

Always work in a contextually appropriate compassionate way.

COMMITMENT

Be reflective, accountable and persistent, particularly when faced with challenges.

*Where scientific and clinical research involves animals rigorous regulatory controls must be adhered to to examine likely harms and benefits before proceeding. All Research is subject to country specific national regulation.

*More than 200 people from over 30 countries in the global academic community contributed to the development of this resource.