

Research Guidance Note 8

Research conducted outside the UK

Taught overseas programmes containing research projects

Edinburgh Napier University has a number of taught overseas programmes that contain research projects conducted through our partner institutions. The University acknowledges that our partner institutions are highly regarded universities or institutes of education with their own processes to monitor research ethics. Ethical approval should therefore be conducted by the local partner institution where they have appropriate established infrastructure.

Different sets of legislation and social or cultural norms in different countries make this a complex issue, and detailed discussions with any potential partners about ethical standards should be conducted to ensure no reputational damage could occur to the University.

Processes for ethical approval of projects should be built into any collaborative programme approval process:

- a. It should be confirmed that the partner institution has a policy and process in relation to the ethical approval of research.
- b. The appropriate body for ethical approval within the partner institution should be identified.
- c. A process should be agreed for communicating to Edinburgh Napier staff that ethical approval has been given by the partner institution.
- d. The assumption would be that local decisions would hold, although the University would retain the right to veto a decision in exceptional cases.

The programme team should make explicit any limits to the nature of projects that can be undertaken.

Research conducted overseas by UK based staff and students

There may be situations where UK-based staff or students are conducting research overseas which is not being conducted through a partner institution (for example, field studies). If this is the case, they should gain approval by the normal Edinburgh Napier University research ethics approval process. In addition, researchers should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the local legal and cultural context to ensure that research is carried out appropriately in the foreign setting.

Researchers should consider their safety when carrying out research overseas, and should consult with the University Health and Safety team to minimise risks²⁵.

²⁵ Edinburgh Napier University Health and Safety guidance for research and fieldwork. Available at <https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/governance-compliance/healthandsafety/guidance/Pages/Research.aspx> [last accessed September 2018]