

Research Ethics Policy

The British School at Rome's fundamental mission is to promote knowledge of and deep engagement with all aspects of the art, history and culture of Italy by scholars and fine artists from Britain and the Commonwealth, and to foster international and interdisciplinary exchange. We work closely with universities, charities and trusts to deliver this mission.

For the most part, research conducted at the BSR will be governed by the ethical code of practice of the University or other official agency with which any resident at the BSR is associated. Our own research is governed by a simple set of precepts, which we would expect any such code to be consonant with, and which govern activity conducted under the auspices of the BSR, subject to further conditions set by any relevant and competent Italian authority. These are that each person should:

- Act with skill and care, and keep skills up to date
- Prevent corrupt practice and declare conflicts of interest
- Respect and acknowledge the work of other researchers
- Ensure that research is justified and lawful
- Minimise impacts on people, animals and the environment
- Be open about the possible wider impact of research on society
- Present evidence honestly and not mislead

Dignity, respect and care for others

Where research involves the participation of individual human beings as the subjects of investigation, procedures must be followed to ensure that its design, implementation and conclusion respects the dignity, health and safety of such participants, as well as taking full account of any ethical guidelines drawn up by relevant professional bodies. Participants in a study have the right to be informed about the aims and purposes of research (except in specific circumstances where disclosure would be prejudicial to the outcome of the research project), the likely publication of its findings, the context in which the findings will be reported and the potential consequences for individuals.

Informed consent should be sought where appropriate, and particular attention should be paid to any code of conduct governing the participation of children, vulnerable adults, the treatment of animals, or the use of human remains. Researchers should respect the cultural, religious, gender and other significant characteristics of sections of the population in planning, conducting and reporting research. Subjects of research are entitled to withdraw from participation at any time.

The storage, processing and disposal of information about individuals who are research subjects must meet legal requirements in each country in which the research takes place, including the individual's explicit written consent to the proposed holding and use of the data. Individuals' right to access and correct information held about them should also be explained.

Integrity and honesty

The integrity of research results should always be ensured. In any publication, the author(s) must be able to identify their contribution to the publication, be familiar with the content, and accept personal responsibility for it.

The contribution of others, either as formal collaborators or less formally as supporters of the research, must be acknowledged properly. Both academic fraud and plagiarism must be guarded against. Academic fraud strikes at the whole basis of academic activity and the quest for knowledge. It may involve fabricating or falsifying research results (such as making false claims in relation to experiments, interviews or surveys; the omission of statements relating to data, results or interviews; or claims which cannot be justified). Plagiarism — the unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, words or work — can arise deliberately as a serious form of cheating, or may occur accidentally through poor standards of scholarship.

The BSR will not knowingly publish false or fabricated evidence, and will seek to terminate its relationship with anyone who engages in academic fraud. This includes undisclosed duplication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication.

Accountability

Under the Freedom of Information Acts information held by researchers may have to be released on request, unless an appropriate exemption can be applied. Full, clear and secure records of all stages of research work should be kept for a defined period of time, so that data can be released if appropriate or a proper exemption sought. This period is set out in a Retention Schedule. Records, whether stored electronically or as hard copy, should include accurate and contemporary details of primary experimental data and results, in order to provide unambiguous answers to any questions which may later arise regarding the validity of the data and to demonstrate good research practice.

Data protection

The Data Protection Act protects information (personal data) about identifiable individuals ('data subjects') and enforces a set of standards for the processing of such information.

Responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of the Act is vested in the Data Protection Registrar.

The BSR is registered with the Data Protection Registrar as a Data Controller, and as a consequence any research using personal data for whatever purpose must comply with the provisions of the Act. Researchers must ensure that the personal data that they use fits within the declared purposes (including the subjects, classes of data, sources, disclosures and transfers) (as indicated in the Register — www.ico.gov.uk) or raise the need for additional purposes to be registered before data collection commences.

Openness

External scrutiny of research, whether in its preparation, execution or publication, is an important benefit for researchers. Publication of the results of research is generally expected. Account must, however, be taken of relevant intellectual property rights and the confidentiality of any commissioned research carried out under contract.

Leadership

Those responsible for academic leadership should ensure a climate within which research can be conducted in accordance with the ethical considerations set out in this Code. The health and safety of researchers in conducting research should always be considered, including appropriate support mechanisms. Research should be appropriately mentored, and advice should be available on matters of research integrity and academic conduct. It is the responsibility of experienced staff to inculcate these principles in less experienced researchers and students.

Intellectual Property

The BSR will assert IPR on a case by case basis, normally before an agreement is reached, and will always respect the individual researcher and their home institution.

Responsibility

The responsibility for the conduct of research associated with the BSR rests with the Director of the BSR, who may consult with members of the Faculty of the Fine Arts, the Faculty of Archaeology, History and Letters, and the Council of the BSR. It is the duty of all those to whom these guidelines apply to bring any ethical issues relating to a new research proposal or ongoing project to the attention of the Director.