Research ethics criteria for evaluating commercial organisations

Commercial market research firms wishing to interact for research purposes with Oxford Brookes University will be required to demonstrate evidence of meeting the following criteria in order to be considered ethically responsible in their research practices. It should be noted that unless otherwise agreed, data generated from research will be the property of Oxford Brookes University and the University will remain the Data Controller. Freedom to publish outputs based on any such data will remain within the university.

1. Organisations must provide evidence of ISO 27001 certification and how they adhere to The Data Protection Act (1998).

2. Organisations must provide evidence of how they comply with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) principles of ethical research (updated January 2015) which form the basis of the University’s research ethics policies (updated March 2016), as listed below.

   2.1 Research and researchers should aim to maximise the benefit for individuals and society and minimise potential risk of harm to participants and researchers. All potential risk and harm should be mitigated by explicit robust precautions.

   2.2 The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected. Research participants should take part voluntarily, free from any coercion or undue influence, and their autonomy should be respected and appropriately protected.

   2.3 Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed. Research staff and participants should be given appropriate information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved.

   2.4 Individual research participant and group preferences regarding anonymity should be respected and participant requirements concerning the confidential nature of information and personal data should be respected. These should comply with data legislation.

   2.5 Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure recognised standards of integrity are met, and quality and transparency are assured.

   2.6 Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined within any research proposal.

   2.7 Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit to all stakeholders.

3. Organisations should provide relevant documentation of any research institution membership and professional practice bodies to which they belong.

Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee
21 December 2016