Futureworks

Version Control Statement

ID Number:	FW039	Document Name:	Ethical Practice Policy (Academic) V1.6.2	
Approving Committee:	Academic Board			
Last Review:	Nov-25	Next Review:	Sep-27 to Nov-27	
Owner:	Principal	Review Lead:	Principal	
Amendments Since Approval:	Detail of Revision:		Date of Revision:	Revision Approved by:
	Minor changes to reflect current practice		26/10/21	Academic Board
	Change title to add (Academic)		21/11/21	Academic Board
	Additional sections relating to Principles for good practice in research, productions, presentations, talks, etc., and Misconduct in Research were added in response to external consultation		28/11/25	Academic Board
	Minor changes made in line with feedback from expert reader as part of institutional validation process.		20/05/2026	Academic Board
	Roles updated in line with changes in management structure		13/08/2026	Academic Board

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Futureworks

Ethical Practice Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purposes of this Policy are to: 1) allow Futureworks staff and students to give due consideration to the ethical implications of any academic activities taking place; 2) establish clear guidelines, which all staff and students should be aware of and compliant with at all times; and 3) ensure that such ethical considerations are reviewed and progressed in an appropriate manner.

1.2 This Policy does not set out to provide answers to specific ethical issues. All decisions made regarding ethical matters should be on the basis of careful consideration of all contributing factors. This Policy does not attempt to define or alter the obligations of staff or students under English law, for example:

1.2.1 Equality Act (2010).

1.2.2 Children Act (2004).

1.2.3 Human Rights Act 1998 (Amended 2001).

1.2.4 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001).

1.2.5 Data Protection Act (2018).

1.2.6 UK General Data Protection Act (2018)

1.2.7 Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (Amended 2023).

1.2.8 Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

2 Ethical Statement

2.1 The ethical standards which apply to academic activities (including research, teaching, consultancy and outreach work) arise from the basic principle that such activities should neither include practices which directly impose a risk of serious harm nor be indirectly dependent upon such practices.

2.2 Serious harm includes, for example, failure to respect the interests of human beings and animals as well as damage to items of cultural value or the natural environment. Ethical practice also requires that the use of individuals' personal data be fully justified, and that statutory

controls and codes of practice are observed at all times. Futureworks has a responsibility to maintain suitable standards of propriety whilst carrying out academic and other activities in a respectful and ethical manner without compromising the welfare or morality of staff, students and the wider public.

2.3 It is the responsibility of all Futureworks staff and students to consider the ethical implications of all academic modules, assessments, and activities, using this Policy as a guide.

3 Definitions of Academic Activities

3.1 Decisions concerning ethical or unethical practice in relation to academic activity could arise in, but not limited to, the following contexts:

3.1.1 The acceptance of external funding for research or teaching projects, including assignments.

3.1.2 The subjects for teaching or research projects.

3.1.3 Decisions concerning methodology.

3.1.4 Dissemination and publication of findings from research or teaching.

3.1.5 Business engagement and professional practice, such as consulting, contract research and training.

3.2 Decisions concerning ethical investment, ethical trading, or the acceptance of gifts or benefactions to the institution are the responsibility of the Board of Directors. Any concerns relating to these aspects of business should be referred in the first instance to the Vice-Principal.

3.3 When faced with a decision which raises potential ethical concerns, the following types of questions should be considered:

3.3.1 Might the outputs of this activity be used to progress or support unethical practices?

3.3.2 Does this activity have the potential to do harm to individuals or groups?

3.3.3 Does this activity have the potential to do harm to vulnerable adults or children?

3.3.4 Might this activity have potentially detrimental impacts, for example on the environment?

3.3.5 Might the undertaking of this activity infringe on the human rights of any individual?

3.3.6 Does this funding or activity have the potential to bring the School/Programme/Futureworks into disrepute?

3.3.7 Might this funding/activity detrimentally affect other existing relationships or partnerships within and/or external to the institution?

3.4 Ethics must also be considered when the outputs from research or teaching are published, or disseminated in any other way, for example through an exhibition, presentation, film production, artwork, game artifact, or talk. Publication of findings must respect the privacy of participating individuals and must give due credit to all contributors involved, both staff and students.

4 Principles for the Consideration of Ethical Issues

4.1 Futureworks has developed management and decision-making systems designed to ensure compliance with its ethical standards. Compliance is achieved by establishing a system of accountability, under the oversight of the Board of Directors, which works to develop, implement and publish the ethical review process comprised of the following elements:

4.1.1 A clear process for identifying and assessing the risks, actual or potential, of undertaking activity.

4.1.2 A systematic means of identifying and recording, through the use of checklists, questionnaires or survey forms, all relevant information.

4.1.3 A robust system of record keeping.

5 Principles for good practice in research, productions, presentations, talks, etc.

5.1 Futureworks requires that those supervising or conducting research during their academic duties or studies adhere to the following principles:

5.1.1 Demonstrate integrity, professionalism, honesty, rigour, transparency, and open communication.

5.1.2 Observe fairness and equity.

5.1.3 Avoid, or declare, and manage, actual or potential conflicts of interest.

5.1.4 Show care and respect for all participants, subjects, users, and beneficiaries of research including humans, animals, the environment, and cultural objects.

5.1.5 Observe all legal, regulatory and ethical requirements laid down by the University or other statutory bodies.

5.1.6 Appropriate briefing and training on research ethics will be provided by supervisors and/or teaching staff for their researchers.

6 Misconduct in research

6.1 Futureworks defines misconduct in research as including, but not limited to:

6.1.1 Fabrication;

6.1.2 Falsification;

6.1.3 Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement;

6.1.4 Plagiarism; and

6.1.5 Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for:

6.1.5.1 avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to humans or the environment; and

6.1.5.2 the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

6.2 Allegations of misconduct will be investigated and addressed using the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

7 Procedures for the Consideration of Ethical Issues

7.1 Staff

7.1.1 Where a programme team proposes to introduce an element of curriculum or assessment, which gives rise to ethical issues, such issues shall be considered by: the relevant School Committee, the Learning and Teaching working group (LTwg) and/or any

committee considering the academic rationality of the proposal, i.e. a programme validation or minor modification/amendment panel or other relevant committee overseeing the quality assurance procedures. Evidence of this ethical consideration and approval must then be presented to the Academic Board to demonstrate that ethical issues have been satisfactorily addressed.

7.1.2 Staff should also ensure inclusion of the following statement in Module Handbooks, to inform students of their ethical obligations and responsibilities during their studies at Futureworks:

7.1.2.1 Futureworks aims to be professional and ethical in all academic activities and requires that students engaged in academic activities are aware of the ethical implications of such activities and are committed to undertaking these in an ethical manner and demonstrating good practice, which meets a high professional standard of conduct. That commitment to this ethical practice policy is supportive and not intended to act as a barrier to any academic activity.

7.1.2.2 Futureworks has a responsibility to maintain suitable standards of propriety whilst carrying out academic and other activities in a respectful and ethical manner without compromising the welfare or morality of staff, students and the wider public.

7.1.2.3 An Ethics Self-Assessment Form is available on the VLE. Following tutorial advice, this should be completed and submitted to the Module Leader/activity supervisor by e-mail. Where a need for the completion of an Ethics Self-Assessment Form has been agreed with the relevant tutor, no activity must commence until an approval decision has been granted. Projects/ assignments/activities that would be deemed eligible for ethical consideration include:

- Major independent research projects.
- Any projects/assignments/activities involving human or animal subjects.
- Any projects/assignments/activities which raise any questions of legality.
- Any projects/assignments/activities analysing sensitive data.

7.2 Students

7.2.1 Where assessment contains a negotiated element, students should consult with their Module Leader to discuss the nature of the proposed work. Prior to commencing the work, students must follow guidance from their Module Leader and where it is identified there is a need, complete and submit an Ethics Self-Assessment Form.

7.2.2 A Module Leader should be aware of the potential in any given task to raise ethical issues, be familiar with this policy, and be prepared to advise students accordingly.

8 The Approval Process

8.1 The completed Ethics Self-Assessment Form must be submitted to the Module Leader/activity supervisor and approved before any projects/assignments/activities commence. If a project/assignment/activity has a low risk level, Module Leaders/activity supervisors will approve it without further ethical consideration and will return the Ethics Self-Assessment Form confirming this decision to the student(s) alongside storing a copy of the completed form within the relevant programme archive (module data) on SharePoint.

8.2 If further ethical consideration is necessary, the student will be guided to also complete the Ethics Self-Assessment Form and submit it to the Programme Leader, who will then complete a risk assessment with the student, which will determine the level of risk level. At that point, the Programme Leader may reject the submission, ask for revisions, or pass on the submission to the Vice Principal with a recommendation for approval. The Vice Principal may in turn approve it, request revision or reject it. Students may appeal this decision to the Principal as the final arbiter.

8.3 However, where there are exceptional circumstances and a case for approval is warranted, the completed Ethics Self-Assessment Form will be reviewed by the Academic Board, returned to the student(s) alongside storing a copy of the completed form within the relevant programme archive (module data) on SharePoint.

9 Communication & Training

9.1 Futureworks will provide relevant ethical practice training for academic staff.

10 Auditing and Reviewing

10.1 This policy statement will be reviewed by the Academic Board annually.

11 Consequences of Non-Compliance

11.1 Ethical practice should provide a positive contribution to the academic activities of Futureworks. It is the responsibility of all Futureworks staff and students to consider the ethical implications of all academic modules, assessments, and activities. Non-compliance with this Policy will therefore be viewed as a serious matter, ultimately subject to the disciplinary procedure for staff and the Academic Misconduct Procedure for students.