

Policy on Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation Activities

1. Policy Statement

Queen's University is committed to creating safe research and innovation environments free from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, psychological abuse and physical violence. All individuals employed and/or engaged in the University's research and innovation activities must be treated with dignity and respect and the research activities undertaken to the highest standard of integrity.

The University recognises its ethical and legal responsibility to ensure the duty of care for those individuals i.e. staff, students, participants, external individuals conducting research and/or innovation activities on behalf of the University and communities impacted either directly or indirectly by these activities.

Queen's University commits to ensuring collaboration agreements and/or contracts reflect funder requirements with respect to preventing harm (safeguarding) in research and innovation activities.

For the purpose of this Policy, safeguarding or preventing harm in research/innovation is defined by UKCDR (UK Collaborative on Development Research) as:

"Preventing and addressing any sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse ... such as bullying psychological abuse and physical violence"

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- (i) Staff, students and those individuals engaged by the University to conduct research and innovation activities.
- (ii) Research participants and any communities or individuals involved in the University's research and/or innovation activities.
- (iii) All research and innovation activities regardless of geographical location i.e. whether located in UK or internationally.

Queen's University recognises that these research and innovation activities may occur in nations and/or organisations with differing regulatory/legislative requirements of their own and/or cultural environments. On those occasions where differences arise and the partner legislation must take precedence we ask that the PI/internal lead documents the rationale behind this requirement and discusses alternative options that could be employed to ensure safeguarding/preventing harm in research/innovation activities is considered.

Please note, Queen's staff and students are always expected to personally act to the highest standards regarding safeguarding, however the University recognises that it cannot force its internal policies/procedures on research and innovation partners which is why dialogue is encouraged amongst partners around this issue.

It should be noted that this Policy on Preventing Harm in Research and Innovation is a vehicle which allows complaints/allegations and concerns to be directed to and dealt with by the most appropriate University policy or procedure. It should be

acknowledged that the University has a [Code of Behaviour](#) which sets out the expected behaviours for all those staff and students engaging with children and adults of risk for, or on behalf of, the University.

The University's Policy on [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk](#) details the requirements that must be followed when conducting research relating to children and/or adults at risk.

The University's online [Safeguarding Training \(sharepoint.com\)](#) must be completed by all staff and students engaging with children and/or adults at risk for, or on behalf of, the University.

This Policy is supported by the below University policies:

- [Policy on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk](#)
- [Code of Conduct and Integrity in Research](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Code of Regulations](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidance on Fieldwork](#)
- [Policy on the Ethical Approval of Research](#)
- [Regulations Governing an Allegation of Misconduct in Research](#)
- [Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

3. Prevention

3.1. The University's Responsibilities

Queen's University will take all reasonable steps to prevent harm in their research and innovation activities. These responsibilities will include ensuring:

- The appropriate policy, and supporting activities are in place and made available to researchers to ensure prevention of harm in all research and/or innovation activities.
- Regular review of safeguarding policies, procedures, and guidance to incorporate feedback and lessons learned. Period of review is detailed within the policy.
- Clear definition of expectation regarding conduct of staff, student and/or any other individuals associated with research and innovation activities.
- Clear and well-defined reporting and investigation mechanism for safeguarding concerns relating to research and innovation activities using the most relevant investigatory/disciplinary procedure(s) to the concern raised.
- Due consideration is given to funders' requirements in terms of approach to investigations, onward reporting, and, where legally required the undertaking of relevant safeguarding checks e.g. AccessNI in line with Northern Ireland legislation.

3.2. Individual Responsibilities

Queen's University recognises that all staff, students, and any associated personnel directly engaged in research and innovation activity have a role to play

in preventing exploitation, abuse or harm from occurring by anticipating and mitigating risks associated with the activity, and by reporting concerns or incidents if they do occur.

Queen's University expects all staff, students, and any associated personnel directly involved in research and innovation activity to:

- Treat each other, research and innovation participants, and members of the public with dignity and respect. To act with the highest standards of integrity, honesty, and professionalism, and to embed good practice in every aspect of their work.
- Adhere to the ethical requirements of the research, in line with conditions set out by national and international regulatory bodies, professional and regulatory research guidance, and research ethics frameworks issued in appropriate areas.
- Recognise the inherent power imbalances that exist in research and innovation enterprises and take all reasonable steps to redress this within individual partnerships and collaborations.
- Engage in equitable partnerships throughout the design, delivery and execution of your research and innovation activities to avoid exploitative and extractive approaches.
- Ensure awareness of relevant QUB policies and procedures and know how to respond to and report concerns about exploitation, abuse, and harm.
- Raise concerns that you have, and/or of those that are reported to you through the appropriate channels.

4. Enabling Reporting

Queen's University will investigate all reports of allegations that a member of staff or student has exploited, abused, or harmed another member of staff, student, associated personnel, research/innovation participants or members of the public. Any investigation will be conducted under the relevant University policy/procedure, deemed appropriate by People and Culture and line management.

Queen's University will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, students, associated personnel, research/innovation participants, and where appropriate the communities involved.

The University acknowledges that reporting mechanisms need to be flexible to adapt to cultural and contextual differences encountered within the global research and innovation arena.

Principal Investigators and partners will be encouraged to discuss and identify the most culturally and contextually appropriate local reporting mechanism for each individual project/activity at initiation phase and throughout duration of project/activity.

Reports regarding concerns associated with safeguarding in research and innovation activities should be brought to the attention of Head of School/Centre Director or nominated representative in the first instance who will then liaise with

the Director of Research & Enterprise, or their nominee. Please note, should it be inappropriate to raise concern with Head of School/Centre Director in the first instance, concerns may be reported directly to the Director of Research & Enterprise, or their nominee.

5. Response

Queen's University will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns in accordance with the relevant policy and procedure, and/or legal and statutory obligations, including funder requirements.

Upon receipt of report, internal consultation will be undertaken with relevant departments/individuals including but not limited to Research Governance, People & Culture, ESS, Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Head of School, Research Contracts etc to determine the appropriate internal policy/procedure by which this allegation should be investigated and external reporting requirements.

In the event of an immediate concern regarding potential ongoing harm, the University will ensure mitigating actions are implemented as soon as possible.

6. Monitoring and Review

The University recognises the importance of preventing harm in research and innovation activities and as such, where deemed necessary, this policy allows for reporting to the Research Governance and Ethics Committee for oversight purposes.

This policy and associated process will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently in the event of legislative changes, which will allow for evaluation of effectiveness and review of feedback.

7. Policy Supporting Documents

The Appendices contain several supporting documents which provide further guidance and information in relation to compliance with this policy and must be read in conjunction with the main text of this document.

8. External References

Additional references relating to preventing harm in research and innovation activities are found below.

UKCDR – [Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research](#)

UKCDR – [Webinar “Preventing Harm in Research”](#)

UKRI – [Preventing Harm \(Safeguarding\) in Research and Innovation Policy](#)

NIHR – [NIHR Policy on Preventing Harm in Research](#)

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NIHR – [NIHR Safeguarding Guidance](#)

CHS Alliance – [Guidance for Investigations](#)

Bond – [Safeguarding Resources](#)

Appendices

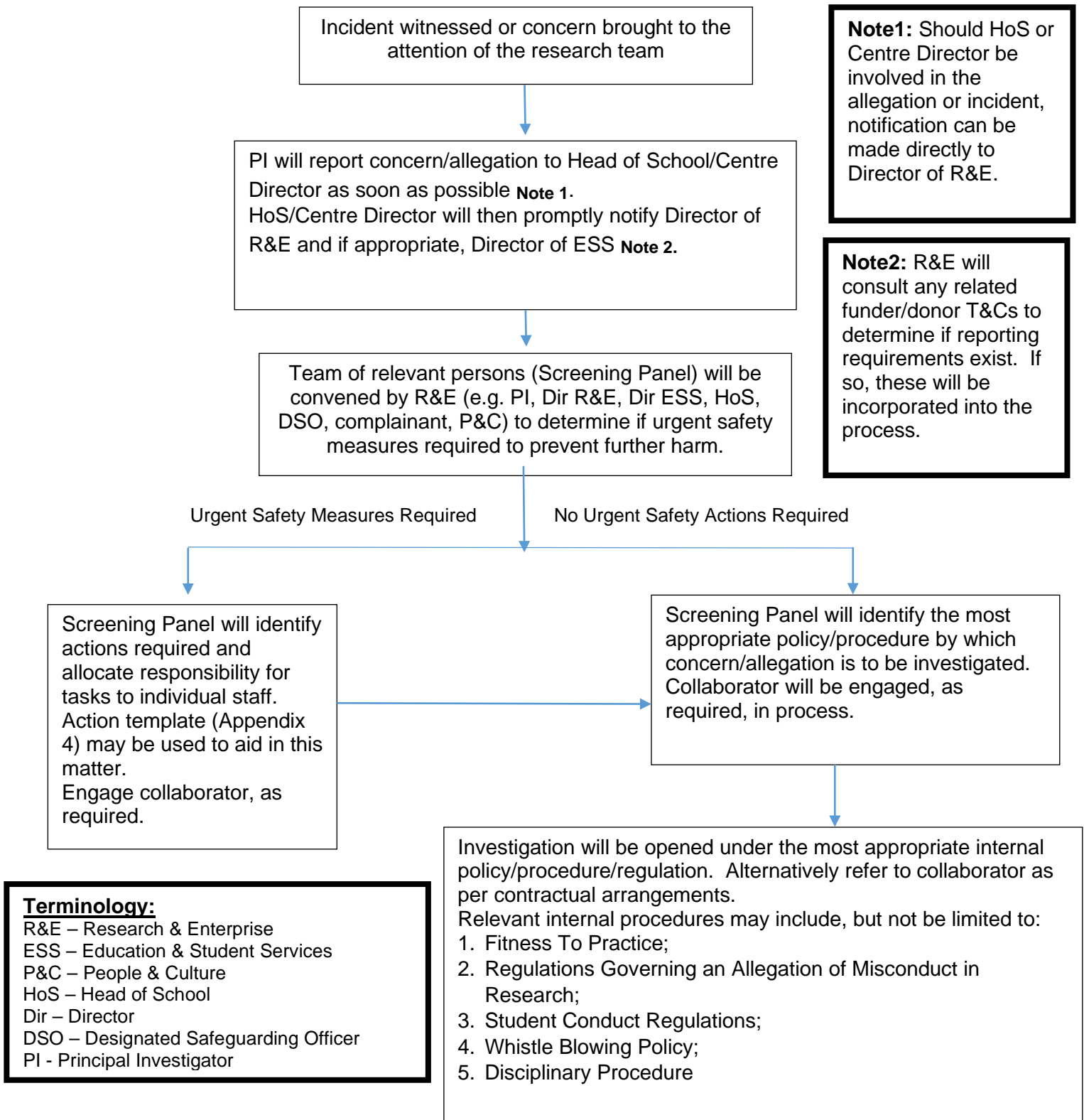
Appendix 1: Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) In Research & Innovation Policy Flow Diagram

Appendix 2: Template Risk Assessment for Preventing (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Appendix 3: Aid to Researchers in Relation to Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Appendix 4: Template Action Plan for Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Appendix 1: Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) In Research & Innovation Policy Flow Diagram



Appendix 2: Template Risk Assessment for Preventing (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Risk Assessment – Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) In
Research & Innovation



Risk identified	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Gross risk (Likelihood x Impact)	Mitigation strategy	By whom?

**Appendix 3: Aid to Researchers in Relation to Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in
Research &
Innovation**

Items for consideration:

- Agreements and discussions with partners regarding safeguarding expectations, risks, mitigations, processes etc are documented in writing to guarantee clarity and understanding regarding the prevention of harm in research and innovation activities. The project team may also consider incorporating it into formal partner/collaboration agreements or within specific project documentation.
- Ensure that both you and your partner(s) are aware of each other's organisations' safeguarding requirements including routes to report concerns regarding exploitation, abuse and harm. This requirement should extend to all researchers and contractors.
- Ensure that any agreed project/activity safeguarding expectations and/or code of conduct is disseminated to all relevant project team members including subcontractors. Please note, Queen's has a [Code of Behaviour](#) regarding interaction with children and adults at risk.
- Ensure that expectation regarding appropriate conduct/behaviour by staff/students/contractors etc during research and innovation activities is clearly communicated to research/innovation participants and where appropriate members of the general public. Consider the most appropriate medium for this communication e.g. posters, video, written word etc.
- Ensure that during consideration of specific project safeguarding reporting methods, the cultural and contextual appropriateness of the mechanism has been considered. Engage in conversation with your partners for advice regarding this. (CBCM – Community Based Complaints Mechanism)
- Does the work undertaken legally mandate the undertaking of criminal checks either here in the UK or locally, where the work is occurring? For information regarding legal requirements in the UK, please consult the [Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk](#) policy for guidance. Engage with your partners/collaborators for assistance in identifying any international legislation in relation to safeguarding laws.
- Has due consideration been given to digital safeguarding? E.g. social media platforms, online interviews, personal data etc. Please note that the University has an [eSafety Guidance](#) available for consultation.
Further information on QUB policies in relation to this can be located within the University's Staff/Student [Social Media policies](#) and the [Policy on Photographing, Filming and Audio Recording Children and Adults at Risk](#).

- Have you assigned Safeguarding Focal Points/Leads within your project/activity?
This should take into account all partners and locations of activities.

Consider the safeguarding cycle during your project/activity:

- **Identification** – Identify, via risk assessment, all potential subjects and means of harm that may occur during activity
- **Prevention** – Via risk assessment, assign mitigating actions to decrease the likelihood of harm occurring.
- **Reporting and responding** – Ensure that you and your internal QUB project team are aware of the Queen’s “Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research and Innovation” policy and the process of reporting and responding to harms. Ensure that you and your partners have considered reporting requirements within your particular research and innovation activities, including consideration of cultural and contextual differences.
- **Accountability** – It is important that we recognise and accept that we all have a responsibility with regards preventing harm in research and innovation activities.
- **Monitoring and learning** – Beyond the Institutional commitment to monitor safeguarding allegations within the research/innovation setting and ensure the incorporation of lessons learned within our process, it is critical that individual researchers regularly review safeguarding concerns within their own activities. Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly within your project allowing for the emergence of new risks to be identified and/or gross risks of identified risks to be re-calculated.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a systemic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a project or activity.

Risk Assessment Terminology

Likelihood – The probability of an event occurring. The higher the likelihood/probability the higher the score.

Likelihood Ratings Score Guidance:

1 = Unlikely, 2 = Possible, 3 = Likely, 4 = Very Likely, 5 = Certain

Impact – The consequence or effects of a risk. The greater the impact of harm, the higher the score.

Impact Ratings Score Guidance:

1 = Minor, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Serious, 4 = Very Serious, 5 = Extreme

Gross Risk – The product of the impact score and likelihood score.

I.e. Likelihood Score x Impact Score = Gross Risk

Mitigation – The action of reducing the severity, seriousness, or likelihood of an event happening.

Tips for Conducting Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments must identify and record all risks of intended or unintended harm. Please note, consideration must be given to all those involved, including researchers themselves.
- Mitigating measures should be implemented for risks identified.
- Risk assessments should be a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated as needed by the project team.
- Risk assessments should be completed in collaboration with all partners, including those local partners, who can identify external risks and vulnerabilities which must be taken into consideration.

Below are a few questions which may aid in your risk assessment activity.

- 1) **Does the research/innovation activity involve working with children or adults at risk?**
- 2) **Which groups either involved in, or potentially affected by, the project need to be considered for safeguarding purposes? E.g. internal researchers (staff/students), external partners, research participants, wider community.**
- 3) **Have you considered any risk factors which may make any particular group vulnerable to abuse or exploitation? E.g. age, disability, economic/social status, ethnicity, race, gender, environmental factors, literacy, sexuality, displacement etc. Do not forget to include intersectionality in your assessment.**
- 4) **Have you, in collaboration with all partners, identified the most culturally appropriate method for reporting safeguarding concerns?**
- 5) **Ensure due consideration is given to any potential power imbalance that may lead to exploitation either between the research participants/community or our partners.**
- 6) **Ensure digital safeguarding concerns are considered e.g. online interviews, social media platforms etc.**
- 7) **Are there any barriers to reporting concerns which you may need to consider and mitigate against?**
- 8) **Does your risk assessment highlight, if required by donor, the need to report safeguarding concerns to any external organisation e.g. donor/funder/sponsor?**

Appendix 4: Template Action Plan for Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation



Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation Action Plan

Project: QUB PI: Partners/Collaborators Involved:

What needs to be done?	By whom	By when

Completed By: Date Completed:
