RCM RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

As signatories to The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019), the RCM is committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical standards and that all their research is subject to active and appropriate consideration of ethical issues. To that end, the RCM Research Ethics Policy and the associated RCM Research Ethics Committee sets out basic principles and together they enable a clear ethical review process, training in ethics, and arrangements for advice and guidance on good practice in the conduct of research practices. The RCM acknowledges that research is governed by a range of ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards which will change over time. The RCM will ensure that it has up-to-date knowledge of the frameworks, standards and obligations that apply to our work, reviewing this policy annually.

1.   Principles and Commitments

1.1 The RCM expects all its researchers, RCM including students and staff and any collaborating partners to adhere to the principles as set out in the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019).

1.2 All those engaged with research have a duty to consider how the work they undertake, host or support affects society and the wider research community, and specifically, to:

> 1. uphold the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
>
> 2. ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
>
> 3. support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity
> and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the development of researchers
>
> 4. use transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to handle allegations of research misconduct when they arise
>
> 5. work together to strengthen the integrity of research.

1.3 The RCM also adheres to the principles and guidance set out in the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research and Misconduct Investigation Procedure. The RCM follows the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct. All researchers, whether directly or indirectly funded by one or more of the UK Research Councils, are bound by this policy. As a member of Conservatoires UK (CUK), the RCM adheres to the Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Guidelines.

1.4 RCM researchers are also expected to adhere to the [British Psychological Society's](#) standards or those of the [British Educational Research Association](#), depending on the nature of the project.

2. Access to sensitive or extremism-related research material

2.1 In accordance with the 'Prevent' responsibilities of higher education bodies, which are intended to 'prevent' radicalisation and extremism, research students and staff must seek approval from the RCM to gain before seeking access to electronic or other material related to subjects concerning radicalisation and extremism. Such access will not be withheld where the student or member of staff has good academic reasons to access such material, in accordance with academic freedom principles.

2.2 Where access is provided, the researcher is responsible for ensuring that such material is securely stored, whether in secure physical or electronic storage, and that it is disposed of securely when no longer needed.

2.3 The RCM contact for requests to access such material is the Director of Research. The RCM is guided by the [Universities UK guidance](#) in this area and the RCM Research Ethics Committee ensures that any changes there or in the RCM's own [Prevent Policy on Students of Concern](#) and [Prevent Policy on Staff of Concern](#) are reflected in its own practices.

3. RCM research ethics process

3.1 According to the second commitment of the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity, all research involving human participation must be subjected to ethical review and gain approval before any activity commences.

3.2 The RCM has an internal Research Ethics Committee and procedures to be followed by student and staff researchers. The terms of reference, process and forms are provided in the appendix to this policy document.

3.3 RCM researchers whose research already has ethical approval from another institution must provide the application and certificate of approval to the RCM Research Ethics Committee, which will determine their equivalence with RCM ethical approval procedures and policies.

3.4 In the following circumstances ethical review will be undertaken by the CUK Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, rather than the RCM Research Ethics Committee:

- Multi-institution: Applications from CUK researchers who wish to carry out research in more than one CUK member institution.

- Conflict of interest: Applications for which an institutional committee has a conflict of interest.

In these cases, you should apply to the CUK Research Ethics and Integrity Committee and submit the certificate of approval to the RCM Research Ethics Committee.

3.5 Non-RCM researchers affiliated to an institution that does not have its own research ethics process who wish to undertake research at the Royal College of Music require a nominated RCM staff sponsor who must apply for ethical approval for the research from the RCM Research Ethics Committee.

3.6 Ethical approval to undertake research involving human participation does not imply permission. Permission to undertake research at institutions other than the RCM must be obtained from that institution before the research is carried out.

4. Training in research ethics

4.1 The RCM commits to providing training in research ethics to its staff and students and Research Ethics Committee members.

4.2 Annual monitoring to ensure that awareness of research ethics is integrated into relevant modules is carried out by the relevant Head of Programme taking advice from the chair of the Research Ethics Committee.

4.3 Research Ethics Committee members and all new staff are provided with research ethics training. Resources for optional further training will be made available.

5. Appeals

5.1 Appeals against the decisions of the RCM Research Ethics Committee or any concerns about the ethical conduct of research should be directed to the Director.

5.2 Appeals against the decision of the RCM Research Ethics Committee, complaints or concerns regarding any aspect of research ethics at the RCM should be directed to the Director within 10 working days of notification of the original outcome.

1. Appeals will be subject to an initial review by the Director in consultation with relevant members of the Research Ethics Committee. If the case presented in the appeal is so clear-cut as to warrant a decision in favour of the researcher without need of an appeal hearing, then that outcome will be taken forward. If the case is not clear cut, an Appeal Hearing will be arranged.

2. Appeals which require a hearing will be considered by a standing panel constituted as follows:

- Director (Chair)
- Academic Registrar

- Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development.

3. In the absence of either standing staff member, the Director may nominate an alternate. No member of an appeals panel may be a member of the Research Ethics Committee.

4. Decisions of the hearing panel may be:

(i)   to uphold the decision of the Research Ethics Committee
(ii)   to recommend that the researcher submits a revised proposal for consideration by the Research Ethics Committee, which addresses the ethical concerns

5.3 Anyone who believes reasonably and in good faith that misconduct or malpractice has occurred in any research activity conducted either by a member of RCM or in research otherwise undertaken within the RCM or research involving RCM staff or students in another setting, should report this immediately to a Designated Officer, that being the Clerk to the Council or, in their absence, the Head of HR & Organisational Development. The Designated Officer will report to the most senior person in the organisation, who will commission any further investigation in accordance with the institutional Whistleblowing policy.

6. Reporting

6.1 The RCM Research Ethics Committee reports once a term to the RCM Research Committee on the number of applications for ethical clearance and numbers of cases accepted, referred, or refused.

6.2 The Head of Research reports annually to Senate (normally at its Autumn meeting) on research ethics applications processed in the preceding year. They also report any instances of research misconduct, and the actions which were taken in response to them.

Appendices
RCM Research Ethics Committee Terms of reference
RCM Research Ethics Committee Application and Assessment Process
RCM Research Ethics Committee Application Form
RCM Research Ethics Committee Amendments Form