



**Methods of work and routines for maintaining good research practices and ethical review of research at the Department of Media Studies (IMS)**

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## **Regarding this document**

This document aims to explain routines and procedures for sustaining good research practices alongside ethical reviews of research at IMS. The following routines are designed to aid each employee in taking responsibility for following good research practice, and if necessary, conduct an ethical review in accordance to Act (2003:460) concerning ethical review of research involving human beings, (the ethics review act), and to follow the conditions established in an approved ethical review.

The institution's four main areas each have intra-scientific routines and approaches that concern, e.g., scientific integrity, meticulousness and ethics. It is therefore important to note that work methods and routines described within this document should be noted as a supplement to the already existing traditions, procedures and working methods that refer to good research practice and research ethics within each main area.

## **Research ethics policy and good research practice.**

In the Stockholm University document “Research Policy”<sup>1</sup> (Forskningsetisk policy), it is emphasized that even if the meaning of good research practice varies depending upon the nature of each separate research area, there are nonetheless established documents outlining basic principles. The documents mentioned within the University Policy are the Research Council texts, “Good Research Practice”<sup>2</sup> (God forskningsed), and “The European Codex for Research Integrity” (Den europeiska kodexen för forskningens integritet) published by All European Academies (ALLEA).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Research Policy, dnr SU FV-1.2.1-4285-20, <https://www.su.se/staff/organisation-governance/governing-documents-rules-and-regulations/research/stockholm-university-s-research-integrity-and-ethics-policy-1.540778>

<sup>2</sup> The Swedish Research Council, Good Research Practice. Stockholm 2017. Available in Swedish and English: <https://www.vr.se/analys/rapporter/vara-rapporter/2017-08-29-god-forskningssed.html>

<sup>3</sup> ALLEA. The European Code of Research Integrity. Berlin, 2017. Available in several languages: <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

All those who conduct or participate in research, or similar activities, must be familiar with the basic principles introduced in these documents. They must also understand how these principles are applied to their specific research areas. Especially the following fundamental principles as specified by the ALLEA Code:

- **Reliability** concerning that the research is of quality as reflected within design, method, analysis and deployment of resources.
- **Integrity** in developing, conducting, reviewing, reporting and informing about research in an open, fair, complete and objective manner.
- **Respect** for co-workers, research subjects, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and environment.
- **Responsibility** for the research from idea to publication, for management and organization, for education, supervision, mentorship and further consequences.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the above-mentioned documents from The Research Council and ALLEA, there are further points of advice concerning ethics of research conducted on, or via, the Internet to be found on The Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) website.<sup>5</sup> Act (2003:460) regarding the ethical review of research concerning humans, (the Ethics Review Act), is an additionally significant document concerning research ethics.<sup>6</sup>

### **All research is subject to good research practice.**

The Ethical Review Act, as well as principles for good research practice, apply to all research undertaken at Stockholm University. This includes research performed within the line of duty even when it is not financed through external funds. Student essays are also included within the demand for good research practices, although exempt from ethical review according to the

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<sup>4</sup> Research Policy, dnr SU FV-1.2.1-4285-20. <https://www.su.se/staff/organisation-governance/governing-documents-rules-and-regulations/research/stockholm-university-s-research-integrity-and-ethics-policy-1.540778>

<sup>5</sup> <http://aoir.org/ethics/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-ometikprovning-av-forskning-som\\_sfs-2003-460](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-ometikprovning-av-forskning-som_sfs-2003-460)

Ethical Review Act as long as there is no intention to publish them in any form other than student essays.<sup>7</sup>

If the intent is to convert a student essay to another form of research publication, an ethical review must be conducted before the student begins the collection of materials for the student essay. An ethical review cannot be conducted afterwards.

Ahead of each research project the research leader/primary supervisor should together with the other researchers/supervisors and doctoral students conduct research ethical considerations as to identify and assess possible, and relevant, ethical aspects or risks. These considerations shape the basis of the research leader/primary supervisors' assessment of whether the research project should be reviewed by the Ethical Review Authority. All research activity is subject to this, even research conducted within the space of the FUK-period.<sup>8</sup> In cases concluding that an ethical review is not necessary, the Head of the Department always needs to be informed.

### **Each researcher is responsible for maintaining a good research ethic.**

As the Head of Research, it is the responsibility of Stockholm University to ensure that research follows good research practice. This further implies that research should not be performed in violation of the Ethical Review Act.

At each department/equivalent, it is the responsibility of the Head of the Department/equivalent to take steps to ensure that the department follows good research practice. This includes preventing research without authorization from being carried out where the Ethical Review Act requires the approval of the Ethical Review Authority, or research conducted in violation of conditions as communicated in connection to such an approval.

The Head of the Department/equivalent represent the University vis-à-vis the Ethical Review Authority and the Appeal Board for Ethical Review.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://etikprovningsmyndigheten.se/en/>

<sup>8</sup> Forskning, utvecklingsarbete och egen kompetensutveckling. (Research, development work and personal competence development.)

The Dean holds an overall responsibility that research undertaken by the faculty is carried out as per good research practice. The Dean is also responsible that Heads of Departments/equivalent, have sufficient qualification, competence and resources to fulfil their overall responsibility.

IMS have established an ethics support group for researchers and supervisors with questions on research ethics and ethical reviews. Further areas of responsibility include collaboration with the Head of the Department, organizing department-wide seminars on good research practice, as well as revision, and possible updates to IMS policy documents when needed.

The ethics group members represent all units at the department. To build competence and sustain continuity, the ethics group members should be permanent employees (except doctoral student representatives). The members consist of the directors of studies for IMS doctoral programs, the Chair, and Vice Chair of the doctoral council, as well as the Deputy Head of the Department.

To widen the groups competence and expertise, further member/s can be chosen to join the group. The Deputy Head functions as the coordinator of the groups work. The ethics group gather at least once a year.

In the University's document "Research Policy" it is emphasized that "[e]ach individual researcher is responsible for following good research ethics in their research, and everyone at Stockholm's University has a responsibility to stay informed of, and follow applicable rules and guidelines within the field of research ethics."<sup>9</sup> Among other things, this entails an obligation to read the documents and guidelines as well as partaking in proposed training on good research practice and ethics. But also to seek advice and knowledge of the offered support concerning good research practice as to "contribute to a good common research and work environment, and to the collegial discourse concerning research ethical questions."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "Varje enskild forskare ansvarar för att följa god forskningssed i sin forskning och alla vid Stockholms universitet har en skyldighet att hålla sig informerade om och följa tillämpliga regler och riktlinjer inom det forskningsetiska området."

<sup>10</sup> Research Policy, dnr SU FV-1.2.1-4285-20. <https://www.su.se/staff/organisation-governance/governing-documents-rules-and-regulations/research/stockholm-university-s-research-integrity-and-ethics-policy-1.540778>

Teachers/researchers who are supervising postgraduate students hold a specific responsibility to ensure that postgraduate students receive information concerning regulations, guidelines, control, and support documents, as well as participating in good research practice training. Part of the supervisor's role is also contributing to creating a good environment besides giving the postgraduates guidance in questions concerning good research practice. When uncertain of questions concerning these matters, the supervisor can approach the ethics assistance function at the Department of Research and Collaboration Support.<sup>11</sup> Postgraduates in their turn have an individual responsibility to acquire information and partake in training, as well as following the instructions of their supervisor. As long as this does not imply any deviation from good research practice. When needed, postgraduates can also turn to the ethics support group. Supervisors should also be of assistance to their postgraduates with subsequent ethical applications.

### **Who to approach for help and advice**

At Stockholm University, the Department of Research and Collaborative Support are advisors for questions concerning ethical reviews. For advice and assistance on ethical reviews per the Act, individual researchers (including postgraduates and their supervisors) should always, as a first step, turn to the Department of Research and Collaborative Support. Inquiries can be put forth to the mail address [etik@fu.su.se](mailto:etik@fu.su.se). Also visit the homepage of the department where ethical and research information is collected together with a digital ethical review tool which can be used supportively.

### **Ethical review under the Act on ethical review.**

An ethical review of research is conducted at the Ethical Review Authority. Information about the acts in their full, the ethics review authority, along with how an application and review is undertaken, can be found on the homepage of the Ethical Review Authority.<sup>12</sup> To assess the necessity of an ethical review, as well as any plausible need for a change to an application, the separate researcher should first approach the Research and Collaboration Support Unit for

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<sup>11</sup> Avdelningen för forsknings- och samverkansstöd. <https://www.su.se/medarbetare/rad-stod/forskning/avdelningen-for-forsknings-och-samverkansstod-1.19891>

<sup>12</sup> <https://etikprovningsmyndigheten.se/en/>

advice and help. Their mail address is [etik@fs.su.se](mailto:etik@fs.su.se), and the Head of Department should also be consulted.

Under the Ethical Review Act, research that concerns living humans and/or biological material from humans should undergo an ethical review. In the first paragraph, the Act states its reason as being one to "protect the individual human and human dignity within research".<sup>13</sup>

Always contact the Department of Research and Collaborative Support at the slightest uncertainty about the need to conduct an ethical review according to the Act. An ethical review cannot be performed afterwards, it should always be performed ahead of research. If the individual researcher and/or Head of Department makes the judgement that the Ethical Review Authority's assessment is incorrect, then the decision should be appealed.

Upon reaching the judgement that research should be ethically reviewed at the Ethical Review Authority, the application is submitted by the individual researcher, project manager/equivalent. Under the headline "Forms for documentation and archiving" below, the routines on how this documented should be conducted can be found, along with guidelines and routines for costs in conjunction with an ethical review.

### **When is an ethical review not of concern?**

If it from the start of the study is obvious that the research will not be involving living humans or biological materials, an ethical review is not of concern. This could for instance be research of a purely theoretical kind, or research based on archival materials. Nonetheless, this research should be carried out per good research ethics, which includes following the guidelines suggested above, and that the work methods undertaken be ethically defensible research within each main area.

Note that within archival materials concerning people who are not alive today there may be sensitive personal data about people who are currently living. It could be that there is e.g., a

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<sup>13</sup> [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-ometikprovning-av-forskning-som\\_sfs-2003-460](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-ometikprovning-av-forskning-som_sfs-2003-460)



known family connection to a person who is currently living, and/or that the material contains information about sensitive characteristics (e.g., hereditary disease).

### **Inform coworkers**

All employees at IMS are informed about, and encouraged to partake in the available good research practice education, which also includes education on ethical reviews as covered by the Ethical Review Act. Documents relating to research ethics are made available via the shared cloud service of the department, and the department's internal web. These documents should contain information on the Ethical Review Act, and the currently available information on research ethics in general, including those collected in the Swedish Research Council document "Good Research Practice", "The European Codex for Research Integrity" published by ALLEA, as well as AoIR's advice on ethics for research conducted on, or via, the internet. The Head of Department and the department's ethics group hold the main responsibility for this collection of documents.

Newly admitted doctoral students should receive the above-mentioned information from the Director of Doctoral Studies and should also be invited to participate in available courses by supervisors. The Director of Doctoral Studies at each department is responsible for creating a system for attending newly admitted doctoral students in terms of introductions, and an assessment should be made of each thesis project, as well as documentation of the process. The Head of Department and the ethics group are responsible for regularly organizing department-wide seminars on good research ethics.

### **Forms for documentation and archiving**

As earlier stated, it is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that their research is carried out within good research practice. This includes an ethical review of research, and adherence to the conditions set out in an approved ethical review. If necessary, this also includes applying for revisions.

Following that a researcher has assessed the necessity for an ethical review in consultation with the Research and Collaboration Support Unit, and if needed, the Head of Department, the assessment should be documented in text by the researcher. The researcher's documented

decision regarding the ethical review should be reported to the Head of Department, who then makes a decision, and archives said decision through the department's human resources.

The researcher must send the submitted ethical review application, and any reply from the Ethical Review Authority to [hr@ims.su.se](mailto:hr@ims.su.se) for digital archiving.

In cases where an ethical review of the research is *not* to be undertaken, the individual researcher establishes a document of this. This document is then sent to the Head of Department who after an assessment, and possible consultation with the researcher, ensures that the document is archived by the department's H.R. manager.

The assessment concerning whether research should be tested ethically or not, is to be documented through the template available on the department's internal website. If the research is not to be ethically reviewed, this should be documented with clear arguments for the reached assessment. The document should also contain formulations that good research practice and research ethical considerations will be followed per what is customary within the respective main area, and in line with the research ethical guidelines as stated in the above-mentioned document. Further, it should be stated that materials gathered within a project that has not been assessed by the Ethics Review Authority will be stored securely.

Note that documentation of projects not to be ethically reviewed primarily apply where a researcher initially has considered that the research could be compliant to an ethical review, although later concluded that such is not the case. When no ethical review is considered in the beginning of the research, there is therefore no need for such documentation.

### **Costs and routines for applications to the Ethical Review Authority**

The Ethical Review Authority will charge a fee for an ethical review of a research project. The review is conducted following the authority's registration of payment. Externally financed projects must upon applying for research funds locate an ethical review post within their budget, including any eventual applications for changes. Details of payment for an ethical review are to be sent to the finance officer of the department and the expense approved by the Head of Department. Within grant research, these expenses are normally taken from the of the individual expenses.

- 1) Contact the Head of the Department for an approval of the Ethical Review.

- 2) Register the application with the Ethical Review Authority, and state the following reference: 120/Your name.
- 3) You will receive an email with log-in specifics, confirmation, and payment details from the Ethical Review Authority.
- 4) The payment basis for the Ethical Review payment is to be sent to the economists of the concerned department. To locate this information, you need to log in with the Ethics Review Authority as shown below. The invoice will be processed as soon as possible, although it could take up to two weeks before it is paid.

You may pay your own expenses and register a case in Primula for a prompter payment. Register the expense according to the usual routines. Ask your economist, Marie Jonsson Ewerbring (JMK), or Anna Åberg (Cinema and Fashion) for the project number.



Etikprövningsmyndigheten

Startside Information **Ansökningar** Frågor och svar Meddelanden 1 Per Daniel Andreas ...

Avgiften för ansökan, som är 5000 kronor, ska omgående betalas in enligt nedan:

- Inbetalning sker till bankgironummer 406-1107
- Vid inbetalning ska OCR-nummer 2022032820138 anges som referens.
- Inga andra bokstäver eller siffror får anges i raden för referens.

Först när ärendet kompletterats enligt ovan kommer vi att påbörja handläggningen.

Ansökan har blivit signerad, mottagen och väntar på betalning.

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Normally the Ethical Review Authority should come to a decision within 60 days of a complete application submission and the fee having been received.

## Regarding the application

The research principal (Forskningshuvudmannen) is the natural, or legal person, in whose business the research is carried out. For example, a university, a municipality, a region, an authority or a private company.

An authorized representative (Behörig företrädare) is e.g., the Head of Department, Head of Unit, or Head of Operations. An application for an Ethical Review must be signed by an authorized representative for the research principal and the responsible researcher.

Responsible Researcher (Ansvarig forskare) The responsible researcher holds an overall accountability for the research. This researcher is the contact person for the authority, and also the person the research subjects can turn to with questions. The researcher must have adequate scientific competence and is accountable to ensure that other participants carrying out the project have enough scientific and clinical competence. Only one person can be the responsible researcher for the project even though other principal researchers are participants.

The main rule is that the responsible researcher must have completed a dissertation within in the relevant field. However, it is not a requirement by law to hold a doctorate degree. Even those lacking sufficient competence can act as the responsible researcher. If so, there must be an additional researcher who has the needed competence, and whom exerts active supervision over the research. In such a case, the competence of the latter researcher should be revised, and a CV handed in along with the application.

For doctoral students at IMS, the main supervisor is the responsible researcher, alt, the person who actively supervises the project.

## **Language concerns**

Ethical Review application forms, and all attachments, should be filled in in Swedish. To facilitate researchers who are in Sweden, or hold ambitions to conduct research here and do not have Swedish as a native tongue, there are English-translated forms on the authority's homepage.<sup>14</sup> However, note that these forms are merely for informative purposes. The English forms cannot be submitted as valid applications. For doctoral students at IMS who do not have Swedish as their native tongue, supervisors can help review language and translation.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.government.se/government-agencies/the-swedish-ethics-review-authorityetikprovningsmyndigheten/>