

A research integrity check-list in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences (medical research excluded) for research conducted in cooperation with companies

When conducting research in partnership with commercial interests, it is the researcher's responsibility to safeguard research integrity. Companies do not necessarily have this kind of competence so the researcher needs to ensure that the ethical issues involved in research are raised in discussions.

Research groups and companies may have very different assumptions, practices and areas of expertise which affect the integrity of research. It is therefore important that these are discussed openly.

This check-list is based on the document *A research ethics check-list in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences (medical research excluded) for research conducted in cooperation with companies* by the University of Helsinki. It was drawn up by the Ethical Review Board in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences with the legal services offered by Research Services at the University of Helsinki.

Have at least the following issues been addressed?

Preliminary ethical review

- Does the research require a preliminary ethical review? It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that a statement is requested from an ethical review board where necessary.

Ethical guidelines and principles

- Has the research group reviewed at least the following guidelines and principles with the partner company and have both the research group and the company undertaken to follow them?
- Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland (the RCR guidelines, 2012)
 - Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences and proposals for ethical review (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, 2009)
- It is also recommended that both parties familiarise themselves with the following guidelines containing instructions that support collaboration:
- The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017), Revised ed. ALLEA: Berlin
 - Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (2013) World Conference on Research Integrity WCRI: Montreal, Canada

- Have any conflicts of interest between the researcher and the company been clarified? Have they been reported to the university?

Content and nature of cooperation

- Is the cooperation related to product development, scientific research or both?
In collaboration, the scientific contribution should be demonstrable unless it is agreed with the company that no research will be conducted during the cooperation.

Ownership, utilisation and publication of findings

- Have research findings, how the parties may use the research findings and ownership of the research findings been defined?
- Has agreement been reached on how the research findings are to be published?
It is advisable to agree on the people who will participate in writing scientific publications and their contributions at the start.

Data management

- Has an appropriate data management plan been drawn up for the project?

Participation from the point of view of research subjects

- Has the amount of compensation for research subjects been determined and does the payment of compensation preserve the voluntary nature of participation or does it create pressure to participate? Compensation may always be paid for expenses incurred by research subjects, as may compensation for time and effort (monetary compensation or an equivalent product or service). It is the duty of the researcher to ensure that the provision of compensation does not cause any pressure to participate in the research.
- Have the participant groups recruited for the research been selected on ethical grounds? And who benefits from the research?
- Have the risks to the research subjects been evaluated?
- Could the research cause harm or injury to research subjects?
- Have the risks been minimised?
- It is the researcher's responsibility to evaluate the impact of the research from the point of view of the research subjects but the company has information on the product or service so the evaluation of any risks or harm should be carried out jointly.

Research agreement

- Has a research agreement been entered into with the company?

Division and definition of responsibilities

- Has it been clearly agreed what the research institution on the one hand and the company on the other are responsible for (duties, risks and harm, funding, etc.)?

Schedule

- Does the agreement show the date on which the research or commission will commence and has the end of the research/commission been clearly defined with a date, achievement of aims or other such factors?

Payments

- If money is to be transferred between the company and the research institution, have the payment schedule and the amounts to be paid been clearly defined?

Contact details

- Have the official contact details of the parties to the agreement been checked?