

Table 1. Comparison of ethical research advice, UK professional bodies (categorised according to underlying principle)

Principle	ESRC (2015)	BERA (2011)	BPS (2010)
<i>Respect for participant autonomy</i>	Research participants should take part voluntarily, free from any coercion or undue influence, and their rights, dignity and (when possible) autonomy should be respected and appropriately protected. (ESRC, 2015:4)	Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant difference. (BERA, 2011, §9)	Adherence to the concept of moral rights is an essential component of respect for the dignity of persons. Rights to privacy, self-determination, personal liberty and natural justice are of particular importance to psychologists, and they have a responsibility to protect and promote these rights in their research activities. (BPS, 2010:8)
<i>Avoid harm / minimise risk</i>	Research should be worthwhile and provide value that outweighs any risk or harm. Researchers should aim to maximise the benefit of the research and minimise potential risk of harm to participants and researchers. All potential risk and harm should be mitigated by robust precautions. (ESRC, 2015:4)	Researchers must recognize that participants may experience distress or discomfort in the research process and must take all necessary steps to reduce the sense of intrusion and to put them at their ease. They must desist immediately from any actions, ensuing from the research process, that cause emotional or other harm. (BERA, 2011, §20)	Harm to research participants must be avoided. Where risks arise as an unavoidable and integral element of the research, robust risk assessment and management protocols should be developed and complied with. Normally, the risk of harm must be no greater than that encountered in ordinary life, i.e. participants should not be exposed to risks greater than or additional to those to which they are exposed in their normal lifestyles. (BPS, 2010:11)
<i>Full disclosure</i>	Research staff and participants should be given appropriate	Researchers who judge that the effect of the agreements they have	This Code expects all psychologists to seek to supply as

	information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved. (ESRC, 2015:4)	made with participants, on confidentiality and anonymity, will allow the continuation of illegal behaviour, which has come to light in the course of the research, must carefully consider making disclosure to the appropriate authorities. (BERA, 2011, §29)	full information as possible to those taking part in their research, recognising that if providing all of that information at the start of a person's participation may not be possible for methodological reasons [...] If a proposed research study involves deception, it should be designed in such a way that it protects the dignity and autonomy of the participants. (BPS, 2010:24)
<i>Privacy and Data Security</i>	Individual research participant and group preferences regarding anonymity should be respected and participant requirements concerning the confidential nature of information and personal data should be respected. (ESRC, 2015:4)	The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data is considered the norm for the conduct of research. [...] Researchers must comply with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998) and any subsequent similar acts. (BERA, 2011, §26)	All records of consent, including audio-recordings, should be stored in the same secure conditions as research data, with due regard to the confidentiality and anonymity protocols of the research which will often involve the storage of personal identity data in a location separate from the linked data. (BPS, 2010:20)
<i>Integrity</i>	Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure recognised standards of integrity are met, and quality and transparency are assured. (ESRC, 2015:4)	Subject to any limitations imposed by agreements to protect confidentiality and anonymity, researchers must make their data and methods amenable to reasonable external scrutiny. The assessment of the quality of the	Research should be designed, reviewed and conducted in a way that ensures its quality, integrity and contribution to the development of knowledge and understanding. Research that is judged within a research

		evidence supporting any inferences is an especially important feature of any research and must be open to scrutiny. (BERA, 2011, §46)	community to be poorly designed or conducted wastes resources and devalues the contribution of the participants. At worst it can lead to misleading information being promulgated and can have the potential to cause harm. (BPS, 2010:9)
<i>Independence</i>	The independence of research should be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality should be explicit. (ESRC, 2015:4)	The right of researchers independently to publish the findings of their research [is] linked to the obligation on researchers to ensure that their findings are placed in the public domain and within reasonable reach of educational practitioners and policy makers, parents, pupils and the wider public. (BERA, 2011, §40)	The ethics review process should be independent of the research itself [...] this principle highlights the need to avoid conflicts of interest between researchers and those reviewing the ethics protocol, and between reviewers and organisational governance structures. (BPS, 2010:27)
<i>Informed Consent</i>	Informed consent entails giving sufficient information about the research and ensuring that there is no explicit or implicit coercion ... so that prospective participants can make an informed and free decision on their possible involvement [...] The consent forms should be signed off by the research participants to indicate consent. (ESRC, 2015:4)	Researchers must take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported. Social networking and other on-line activities,	The consent of participants in research, whatever their age or competence, should always be sought, by means appropriate to their age and competence level. For children under 16 years of age and for other persons where capacity to consent may be impaired the additional consent of parents or

		including their video-based environments, present challenges for consideration of consent issues and the participants must be clearly informed that their participation and interactions are being monitored and analysed for research. (BERA, 2011, §11)	those with legal responsibility for the individual should normally also be sought. (BPS, 2010:16)
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