

International Journal of Research & Method in Education

CALL FOR PAPERS

'Ethical Research, Academic Freedom and the Role of Ethics Committees and Review Procedures in Educational Research'

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The aim of this special edition, to be published in Autumn 2010, is to re-present and reflect educational researchers' lived experiences – positive and problematic - of ethical review guidelines and procedures.

Within social sciences, and in education in particular, ethics committees which address potential and/or actual ethical research issues and dilemmas are not new. This is not surprising given that few, if any, researchers are not committed to doing all they can to ensure that their work does not harm those who are, in any way, touched by it. Ethics review bodies do offer a means of opening up plans to wider view and authoritative discussion, thus acting as a further safeguard. However, recently and increasingly, concerns have been expressed about the form these committees are taking, and about the growth of their power, influence and scope. By some, they are viewed as acting in a manner that is antithetical to both ethical research practice and the exercise of academic freedom.

It has been suggested that ethics committees are not simply concerned with addressing ethical matters, but now have a tendency to act as gatekeepers. Their chief concern, the avoidance of controversy and litigation. This is, perhaps, almost an inevitable consequence of living within a 'risk' culture where individuals, institutions and organisations seek to manage risk, even when perceived and imagined risks far outweigh the real likelihood of that which is feared, actually happening. In such a culture, ethical review committees, their procedures and the discourses they have developed and promulgated both determine what constitutes ethical research and what ethical researchers do. They can create an 'illusion' of ethical practice and can work to limit, control and even stop particular research from being carried out and particular areas of enquiry being explored, with inevitable consequences for the exercise of academic freedom.

We are seeking papers which detail experientially based stories dealing with, *inter alia*:

- dissatisfactions with criteria against which research proposals, designs and, by extension, researchers themselves are judged to be ethical;
- problems encountered in obtaining ethical clearance;
- changes (of any kind) that have been required in order to be allowed to proceed, and how these are believed to have affected the ensuing research either positively or negatively;
- cases where ethical issues and difficulties arose, despite permission to undertake the research having been granted;
- the benefits perceived to accrue from more stringent and closer control of research practice consequent on ethical review procedures.

Notes for Prospective Authors:

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere. A guide for authors along with other relevant information can be found on the Journal's homepage, <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/IJRME>

Important Dates for Prospective Authors:

Expressions of Interest and Abstracts to Editors by: 30th May 2009
First Manuscript Submissions by: 31st August 2009
Final Manuscript by: 1st June 2010

Manuscript Submission:

Submissions should be made online at the ***International Journal of Research & Method in Education*** Manuscript Central site: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cwse>.

New system users should create an account and upload their manuscript via their 'Author Centre'.

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