



The National Archives

Code of Conduct

Research at The National Archives

The National Archives' vision has three main strands:

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone

Its work is underpinned and enhanced by research initiated and undertaken by The National Archives staff; commissioned by The National Archives, or developed and delivered with partner institutions. Research is normally in the fields of history, information science, information technology and the preservation of physical and digital records.

The National Archives wishes to set out a code of conduct relating to research. It reflects the principles of the RESPECT project (Code of Professional Conduct in Socio-Economic Research), which seeks to ensure respect for research ethics, intellectual property, confidentiality, professional qualifications, professional standards and for research users.

- Researchers should adopt an unbiased attitude to their research, ensuring that the selection and formulation of their research questions, and the design of their research, does not presume or determine the outcome, and does not preclude particular findings. Data should not be knowingly fabricated, or manipulated inappropriately.
- Research findings should be reported accurately, comprehensively and without distortion. There should be a clear differentiation between fact, interpretation, personal opinion, theories and hypotheses.
- The whole research process should be transparent to colleagues, peers, clients and any potential users.
- Authorship should be reserved for those who have made a significant intellectual contribution to the research project or scholarly work. Where there has been a collaboration, the participating researchers should agree on how to acknowledge authorship. The responsibility for the content of any publication rests with the listed authors.

- Researchers should ensure that they do not infringe the copyrights of others and should be aware of how copyright and other intellectual property rights affect their work. Where material has been drawn from the work of others, this must be clearly identified, acknowledged and attributed to the original author.
- Other forms of assistance – for example, financial help or access to materials – should be acknowledged appropriately.
- Researchers should report any conflict of interest (personal, academic or commercial) that arises in the course of their work.
- Researchers must comply with data protection legislation, and ensure that confidentiality of the individual is observed.
- Researchers should present their qualifications and credentials accurately and honestly. Researchers should be aware of their limitations, and not undertake work that they are not qualified to carry out.
- Researchers will observe fully the ethical and legal requirements of the repositories and collections they use in the course of their work.

The National Archives expects its staff, contractors and partners to observe this code. The National Archives has a clear complaints procedure, and any complaints or expressions of concern relating to the conduct of research carried out under its auspices would be dealt with through this mechanism. Any ethical difficulties should be referred to the Executive Team for decision.

The National Archives also subscribes to the International Council on Archives' Code of Ethics, which establishes high standards of conduct for the archival profession.

NB. Document due for revision, following the issue of RCUK Policy Statement and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct