

# STFC ETHICS POLICY

## 1. Purpose of this ethics policy

Ethics shape the way we view the world, how we behave in it and how the world views us. The purpose of this policy (which should be taken to include the Annexes) is to provide a framework for STFC staff to use when assessing the many and sometimes significant decisions they have to make. This policy supports the consideration of ethical issues as a valid and necessary part of those decisions. This policy also highlights to those individuals and organisations which STFC interacts with that ethical considerations form part of STFC's decision-making processes and is intended to engender confidence in what STFC does and how it does it.

## 2. What do ethics mean to STFC?

For the purposes of this policy and for STFC, ethics means the moral framework under which we operate. It includes acting in a responsible and respectful way within the organisation and making decisions that demonstrate that the interests of the public, partners, our staff, the environment and society have been considered and are of importance to the work carried out by STFC.

## 3. STFC Core Values

Users of this policy will note that it is intended to supplement and support the implementation of STFC's Core Values (see <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/2432.aspx>):

These Core Values describe the basic principles STFC aims to aspire to in the way it behaves and in the work it carries out and this policy is intended to build on these principles which are as follows:

- **Excellence** – we will strive to be among the best in everything we do, from our science and technology to our support services and business processes
- **Collaboration** – we will work cooperatively in partnership with others to achieve the best result possible
- **Inspiration** – we will produce ideas and performance that excite and motivate others
- **Trust** – we will be honest and open in our dealings with others, sharing our knowledge for the benefit of others and following through on our promises and commitments
- **Transparency** – we will strive to make our processes and communications clear and simple so that we are understood
- **Respect** – we will treat others with courtesy and value the differences between people

Essentially, in everything it does, STFC aims to be excellent, collaborative and inspirational, and to achieve this it works with trust, transparency and respect.

## 4. What does the policy cover?

The policy clarifies the way in which STFC will aspire to act during the work carried out by the organisation in the UK and overseas.

The policy aims to:

- Give clear expectations for behaviour where this is not covered by policies, processes and principles that are already in place elsewhere in STFC's governance structure;
- Give guidance on how and when ethical issues should be considered; and

- Provide a resolution process for making decisions where ethical issues need further consideration.

It is to be noted the ethical implications of research funded by STFC grants are covered by the RCUK Good Research Code of Conduct which can be found [here](#) on the RCUK webpages.

## **5. Who does it apply to?**

This policy applies to all staff acting on behalf of STFC (on or offsite) and parties undertaking research on our behalf or in collaboration with us on any of our sites.

STFC expects the parties it engages with to respect this policy and STFC reserves the right to discontinue its relationships based on this.

## **6. Where does this apply in STFC?**

There are five (broad) categories of principles which this policy is intended to cover although these categories are not exhaustive and should be regarded as guidance only.

### 1. In the work carried out by STFC

This section extends to but is not limited to the scientific and technological work carried out by STFC internally and in collaboration with third parties.

- Operate with propriety and regularity in all its transactions.
- Conduct business in an open, transparent, honest and trustworthy manner.
- Communicate decisions openly and transparently.
- STFC and staff are expected to observe the highest standards of conduct and follow the Seven Principles of Public Life'
- Continue to adhere to existing procedures for managing conflict of interest for all staff involved in decision making processes.
- Continue to adhere to existing rules and standards that staff are expected to follow with regard to the giving of gifts and hospitality
- Operate and act in accordance with STFC's Legal Policy.

### 2. In undertaking research

This section addresses specific issues relating to ethical research conduct not addressed in other sections of this document.

- STFC is committed to ensuring its research is carried out to a high standard and that its staff complies with the RCUK Good Research Code of Conduct.
- Consider the consequences of undertaking the research or the outcome of the research in accordance with this policy, for example environmental impact, potential use of technologies and safety.
- Where appropriate seek ethical approval or ensure that ethical approval has been sought.
- Ensure that ethical consideration of potential funders is undertaken before agreeing to receive funding.
- Consider the possibility of public ethical concern when undertaking any new project or research programme and whether such concern should influence STFC's involvement or its communications.

### 3. In STFC's Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) impact

This section addresses how STFC will undertake its activities in a manner that promotes a safe and healthy working environment for staff working on and off STFC sites, and considers environmental impact of the work it undertakes.

- Provision of suitable and safe work place; the STFC safety policy can be viewed <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/SHE/Policy/21068.aspx>)
- STFC is fully committed to ensuring high standards of environment management throughout our organisation and the goals of STFC cannot be achieved without such standards. STFC Environmental Policy can be viewed here: <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/SHE/Resources/pdf/EnvironmentPolicy.pdf>
- Consider the impact of STFC's programme on the natural environment.

#### 4. In the treatment of employees

This section is included to show how STFC considers ethics in the way it treats its staff and also to promote ethical considerations in the way staff treat one another.

- Manage its staff fairly with inclusive and transparent policies designed to promote and integrate diversity.
- Encourage the lifetime learning and development of employees through providing suitable training opportunities.
- Provide clear and fair terms of employment.
- Ensure that everyone treats others with dignity and respect and that staff are protected from discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Encourage its staff to express any personal beliefs which may be impinged by working on any proposed project and give respect to such beliefs.

#### 5. In how STFC is responsible to the community and society

This section refers to how STFC will consider the wider impact of its actions on society and how it proposes to deal with potential ethical issues concerning the community as a result of its work.

- STFC must be socially responsible in its business dealings and recognise society's concerns and needs.
- STFC should seek to minimise any harmful social effects of its decisions and actions whilst giving due consideration to the likely financial implications of these actions.
- STFC intends to use resources efficiently, economically and effectively, avoiding waste and extravagance.
- STFC will respect and consider the cultural differences within the international communities it collaborates with.
- STFC will operate a system of transparency and accountability to all interested parties to engender public confidence.

#### **7. Decision making process (see Annex 1)**

STFC staff carry responsibility for ensuring compliance with the ethical standards laid out above.

##### How can parties ensure they achieve this?

STFC staff should report any concerns over ethics-related issues to their Line Managers irrespective of whether it is work that they are directly involved in or not and equally whether it is work that STFC is directly involved in or not.

Where the Line Manager believes the issue is significant they should raise this with their Line Manager, who will often be Senior Line Manager to the party originally faced with the question.

The Senior Line Manager must then take responsibility for evaluating each issue on its own facts and carefully consider all implications of the proposed work including but not limited to benefits, cost and risk.

Where the issue in question is particularly difficult, or raises novel or contentious issues, and the Senior Line Manager feels unable to make a decision, then he/she shall refer the matter to the STFC Ethics Committee to guide the issue through a review process and following evaluation provide constructive advice on how to proceed.

It should be noted that even where a particular matter may be subject to ethical scrutiny or approval by another outside body, this does not necessarily preclude it from being reviewed further under this policy. That outside body's scrutiny may, however, provide guidance to STFC in its own review process.

***STFC emphasises that where there are reasons which may preclude an individual from following the above process for reporting concerns, they are encouraged to contact a member of the human resources team.***

## **8. The Ethics Committee**

In pursuance of the objectives contained in this policy STFC shall set up and co-ordinate the operation of an 'Ethics Committee'. The Ethics Committee shall act in an advisory capacity on such issues that arise under this policy and be responsible for overseeing such matters.

The Ethics Committee shall be responsible to STFC's Executive Board of Directors.

The Ethics Committee shall have at least seven members. It shall be chaired by a member of Council, as appointed from time to time. Four members should all be from different departments within STFC. There should be one lay member, one academic member, and one member shall be a (non-staff) member of STFC Council. Where the Committee has to consider particularly significant issues, other expertise may be co-opted on to the committee or a smaller committee established to consider a specific issue. A quorum of 5 members is required.

The terms of reference of the Ethics Committee shall be as follows:

- To ensure that the ethical standards of STFC are met, in both research and commercial activities.
- To consider cases where there might be potential involvement in unethical practice and to offer guidance and advice on those cases
- To provide guidance in cases where ethical concerns are raised by staff members.
- To remain aware of national and international requirements for ethical review and to disseminate these appropriately across STFC.
- To report annually to STFC's Executive Board on the business undertaken by the Committee.
- To investigate any external complaint regarding unethical practice and report upon the same (as may be considered necessary).
- To review the procedures and standards set out in this policy at least once every three years (or more often as may be considered necessary).

The Committee may agree an expedited review where, for example, the ethical issues carry only a minimal risk or the ethical issues raised are similar to issues where the activity has previously been approved.

The Committee will meet as often as is reasonably necessary but in any event not less than once a year.

The Committee shall provide an annual summary of its activities and report such summary for Council.

## **9. Guidelines for staff on ethical issues**

STFC staff are expected to apply 'common sense' when highlighting projects with associated ethical issues; but seeking advice and erring on the side of caution are advised.

STFC has compiled a list of the sources (Annex 2) it believes are relevant in understanding the question of ethics. It is to be noted that this is not an exhaustive list and individuals are encouraged to consider the relevant codes and policies that govern specific activities.

#### **10. Ethics checklist framework for staff**

There are many important questions to be asked when ethical issues arise which STFC takes steps to ensure its staff are aware.

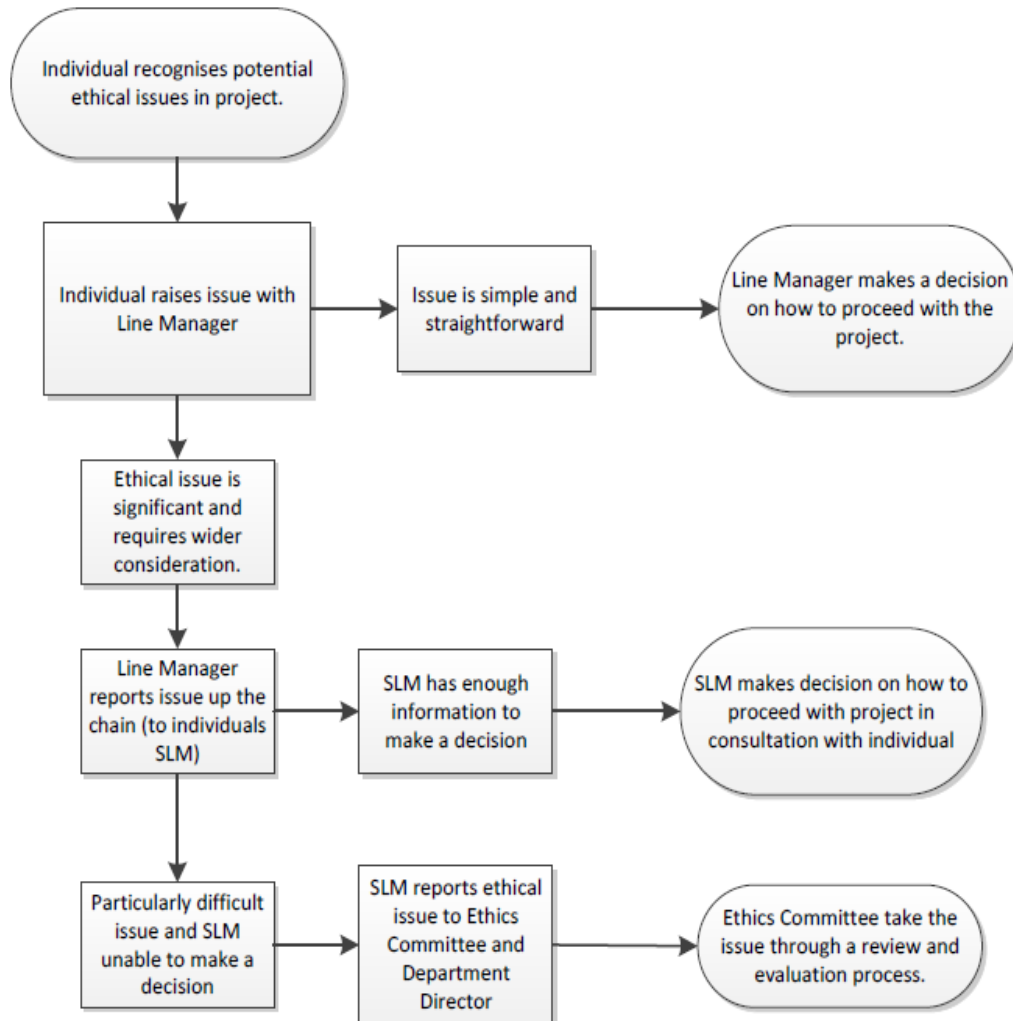
STFC wishes to highlight the fact that any ethical issues to which it needs to consider will in all circumstances be underpinned by legal compliance.

Specifically work which involves animals, live tissue, human beings, personal data etc. is subject to statutory regulation as well as general ethical considerations.

**This policy is owned by Executive Board and shall be reviewed by the Ethics Committee.**

**ANNEX 1**

**Fig 1: Procedural Flowchart.**



## **ANNEX 2-EXISTING RELEVANT POLICIES CURRENT SOURCES OF ETHICAL POLICY**

### **1. Governance Manual (main source)**

This is the primary source of principles, policies and operating rules for STFC and is intended to provide an authoritative framework for the conduct of STFC business. It covers internal standards and procedures- STFC's Remit/STFC as an Organisation and STFC's Operational Framework.

[http://www.stfc.ac.uk/files/1786/1786\\_res\\_1.pdf](http://www.stfc.ac.uk/files/1786/1786_res_1.pdf)

### **2. Royal Charter**

This provides for a basic outline of STFC's objectives as a RC including to promote and support high quality research etc. <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/1787.aspx>

### **3. Management Statement and associated Financial Memorandum**

This provides the broad framework in which STFC will operate focusing on strategy and includes many points which could be considered as relating to "ethics" e.g:

- a) *Conditions of Employment*,
- b) *STFC Values and Mission Statement*- STFC aims to be 'excellent', 'collaborative' and 'inspirational' through working with 'trust' 'transparency' and 'respect',
- c) the *Service First Statement* which lays down certain standards in relation to grant, studentship and fellowship applications, correspondence, complaints, consulting users and providing information
- d) *Standards in Public Life* (the 7 principles arising from the Nolan Committee "Standards in Public Life and contained in the Governance Manual clause 3.5.4).

Management statement: [http://www.stfc.ac.uk/files/560/560\\_res\\_2.pdf](http://www.stfc.ac.uk/files/560/560_res_2.pdf)

Financial memorandum: [http://www.stfc.ac.uk/files/560/560\\_res\\_1.pdf](http://www.stfc.ac.uk/files/560/560_res_1.pdf)

STFC values statement: <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/2432.aspx>

Seven Principles: [http://public-standards.gov.uk/About/The\\_7\\_Principles.html](http://public-standards.gov.uk/About/The_7_Principles.html)

### **4. RCUK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research**

This contains clear guidance on ethics *specifically in respect of research* ie what is considered unacceptable conduct in research and how to deal with it. This is discussed and referenced earlier in the policy.

This RCUK document is directed at "Research Organisations" (ROs) which includes the Research Councils themselves.

### **5. STFC Conditions Of Employment Memoranda**

These can be found here by staff

<http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Pages/default.aspx?Page=1>

Equality and Diversity Policy

[http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Documents/STFC\\_CEM\\_03.pdf](http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Documents/STFC_CEM_03.pdf)

Those most relevant to ethics are CEM 8A which can be accessed by staff here, this includes STFC's Harassment Policy [http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Documents/STFC\\_CEM\\_08A.pdf](http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Documents/STFC_CEM_08A.pdf)

### **6. Whistleblowing**

Details of STFC's whistleblowing policy can be found in paragraph 2 of CEM 8A above and at Appendix A to CEM8A. [http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Documents/STFC\\_CEM\\_08A.pdf](http://staff.stfc.ac.uk/people/CEM/Documents/STFC_CEM_08A.pdf)

### **7. STFC Safety, Health and Environment Policies (SHE)**

SHE Policy 16, Biological Safety, in part implements statutory regulations about the use of biological samples and the carrying out of genetic modification processes etc.

[www.stfc.ac.uk/SHE/Codes/21002.aspx](http://www.stfc.ac.uk/SHE/Codes/21002.aspx)

**If you are not a member of STFC staff and have a query regarding any of its policies or procedures or wish to access any of these please contact STFC directly.**