

Ethical Review Policy

*Excellence • Passion • Integrity • Valuing Others •
Supportiveness • Teamwork*

Our Mission

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

Our Values

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

Sparsholt College Group

The Sparsholt College Group includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. Policies apply to each part of the Sparsholt College Group unless specified otherwise.

The Ethical Review Policy was approved by the Board of Governors in July 2024 and supersedes previous versions.

Originator:	Vice Principal & Dean of Higher Education
Located:	College Group websites College Group intranet
Due for review:	May for July 2027

ETHICAL REVIEW POLICY

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ETHICAL REVIEW POLICY

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Ethical Review Policy is to provide a framework for professional practice on ethical review issues as they arise in commercial and academic research, animal husbandry and welfare activities at Sparsholt College Group (“the College”). Primary responsibility for ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to ethical review issues lies with the Ethics and Research Standards Group (ERSG) and the Ethical Review Committee. The remit of these groups is to cover all ethical and welfare matters relating to both the zoo licence, as well as domestic animals housed within the College, and including any research undertaken by both FE and HE students.
- 1.2 Ethical considerations apply to every activity in the College, and, in particular, to research, to the maintenance of professional standards, to communication within the College and to external relationships and transactions. Most ethical judgements result from a process of debate in which various principles and considerations contribute to the final outcome. Some of these stem from the values of the College. Others originate outside the College: for example, some subject communities draw their self-identity in part from the professional ethical codes of their discipline, as promulgated by their professional associations or accrediting bodies. Other aspects are constrained by legislation such as that on disclosure of information, equality and diversity, health and safety and the use of animals in research.
- 1.3 The College is committed to rational enquiry and debate through which are determined the standards that are applied in judging actions to be acceptable. Ethical consideration attempts to identify good, desirable or acceptable conduct and to provide reasons for these conclusions. Ethical debate will therefore involve discussion of what is right and wrong in particular contexts, and how we make positive or negative evaluations of our own actions and those of others.

2 Definitions

- 2.1. **‘Ethics’** is a branch of philosophy that involves systematising, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct, often addressing disputes of moral diversity. Sparsholt College has a range of policies that seek to provide an ethical framework for interactions between staff, students and the public. This Ethical Review Policy has a particular focus on ethics involving teaching, research by staff and students and the ethical use of animals.
- 2.2 The College has two sub-committees/groups that will consider ethics involving teaching, research by staff and students and the ethical use of animals: the Ethics and Research Standards Group and the Ethical Review Committee.
- 2.3 **The Ethics and Research Standards Group (ERSG)** considers the principles outlined in this document and takes an overview of the appropriateness and ethical conduct of staff and student research projects. All student and staff research

projects, including research activities taking place as part of classroom activities, for example feed trials, must be approved by the ERSG. The College does not currently hold a Home Office licence for animal research, although the College is not averse to applying for a licence if an appropriate research project is proposed.

2.3.1 ERSG Constitution:

Chair appointed by the Dean of HE

HE representative

FE representative

AHWRC¹ collection manager,

ARCC² representative

Independent representative,

AMC³ keeper and

Zoo vet

Meetings will be quorate with a 40% of core membership

- 2.4 **The Ethical Review Committee (ERC)** was established primarily to address issues concerning the animals covered by the College's zoo licence (the Animal Health & Welfare Research Centre (AHWRC) and Aquatic Research & Conservation Centre (ARCC)), but also has in its terms of reference the remit to advise on any research projects involving animals covered by the zoo licence. It also functions as a forum for the sharing of information on ethical issues, and for offering advice and guidance.

2.4.1 ERC Constitution:

Chair: Elected annually from the staff membership below:

Assistant Principal for Animal Management

Assistant Principal for Higher Education or nominee AHWRC

Curator / Collection Managers

Veterinary Advisor

Higher Education staff representative

Further Education staff representative

Veterinary Nursing staff representative

Animal Management Centre technician representative

Aquatics staff representative

A lay person unaffiliated to the College

Meetings will be quorate with 40% of members in attendance.

¹ Animal Health and Welfare Research Centre

² Aquatic Research & Conservation Centre

³ Animal Management Centre

3 The Policy

- 3.1 All members of the College community (governors, staff and students) have the right to raise ethical considerations.
- 3.2 All staff, students, and researchers at all levels must include consideration of ethical matters in their work and projects.
- 3.3 All research activities undertaken by staff and students of the College and by others in collaboration with us, require ethical review. The significant guiding values in research ethics are respect for all participants, the welfare of animals and the integrity of the researcher.
- 3.4 Ethical issues, for instance relating to probity, security, confidentiality and adherence to external professional codes (for example regarding the care and use of animals) should be discussed as a part of staff development and regularly included in general communications by managers.
- 3.5 The Ethical Review Committee and the Ethics and Research Standards Group must each meet at regular intervals, at a minimum once termly, and have a mechanism for review of urgent or short-notice cases.

4 Implementation

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the ERSG to provide clear guidance to staff and students regarding ethics in research. Further, it is the responsibility of the ERSG to approve all student and staff research projects, including research activities taking place as part of classroom activities, for example feed trials. The work of the ERSG will be informed by the references listed at paragraph 5.
- 4.2 An annual report of the ERSG will be received and reviewed by the SLT (Strategic Leadership Team).
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the ERC to provide clear guidance to staff and students regarding the ethical care and use of animals covered under the College's zoo licence (the Animal Health & Welfare Research Centre and Aquatic Research & Conservation Centre). The annual report will be included in the reporting process for the zoo licence.
- 4.4 It is the responsibility of all students, staff and the College management to support the work of the ERSG and ERC in implementing an ethical framework for all activities of the College.

5 Associated Documents

- Terms of reference, Ethics and Research Standards group
- Terms of Reference, Ethical Review Committee

Relevant External sources of advice and guidance:

- UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) <http://www.ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/>
- Home Office Guidelines on research and testing using animals <https://www.gov.uk/research-and-testing-using-animals>
- British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) <http://www.biaza.org.uk/research/>
- International Society for Equine Science – human research ethics committee <http://www.equitation-science.com/ethics-committee>
- Natural England framework for Science, Research and Evidence <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/32028?category=11001>
- The Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB) <http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/ethics/guidelines.php>

6 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 6.1 The Ethical Review Policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Chair of the Ethics & Research Standards Group and reviewed three-yearly.