

The Early Textiles Study Group

Guidance on Ethics for ETSG members

This is intended as a guide to sources of information on the kinds of ethical issues that our members are likely to encounter. It does not constitute legal advice.

1. The law

(a) Intellectual property

Intellectual property refers to anything you write, make or produce.

Any author/illustrator/creator automatically owns the copyright for the products of their labour.

An exception may occur if an employment contract has been signed that cedes rights to the employer. Those who are self-employed automatically retain all their original rights.

Copyright prevents people from copying your work, distributing copies of it, making an adaptation of your work, or putting it on the internet without your permission.

The UK government's review of current legislation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/intellectual-property-an-overview>

Practical advice on how this works in the academic environment can be found in:

Joint Guidelines on Copyright and Academic Research: Guidelines for researchers and publishers in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Published jointly by the British Academy and the Publishers Association in 2008. <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/joint-guidelines-copyright-and-academic-research-guidelines-researchers-and-publishers/>

(b) The Equality Act

Our members need to be aware of the law in regard to discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

A list of protected characteristics, with helpful examples, can be found at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/division/3/2/1>

2. Rules and regulations

There are written rules for those applying for grants or engaging with publishers.

(a) Applying for grants

Most funding bodies require the following.

The applicant must respect the rules of research integrity and:

- Avoid plagiarism of the ideas or works of others

- Declare conflicts of interest

- Acknowledge prior research in the field of study

- Declare previous grants and awards

- Avoid discriminatory practices

The peer reviewer must act with honesty and selflessness and:

- Uphold research integrity

- Declare any conflict of interest

- Identify published areas of research not in the application

Identify parallel research projects
Avoid discriminatory practices

Several of the major funding bodies in UK fall under the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) umbrella. Grant applicants to these funds are required to sign up to UKRI concordats. See especially: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/research-integrity/>

(b) Publishing

Individual publishing houses have their own publication guidelines and contractual requirements. Most commonly, these will stipulate time-limited embargoes on web publication of authors' papers and limitations on the number of PDFs allowed into circulation. They will also require authors to take responsibility for obtaining copyright permission for illustrations within their written work.

(c) Uploading to web

Papers should not be uploaded to the web unless you are either the copyright-holder, or have permission from the copyright holder. Authors must ensure that appropriate permissions have been obtained for any illustrative materials.

3. Good conduct

(a) Principled behaviour

The Nolan Principles are intended for people in public office, but represent sound guidance on ethical behaviour in general. They consist of simple statements concerning selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

(b) Peer review

The same principles as those described in section 2a apply. Note also that there is a move to make peer review in academic research and publication more transparent and accountable. Many of us who are experienced peer-reviewers already waive our right to confidentiality.

(c) Dealing with human remains

Many archaeologists and museum curators have to deal with human remains, which must be treated with respect, sampled with care and eventually re-buried. The Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England, <https://apabe.archaeologyuk.org/>, with associated links and downloads, is a useful resource on ethical, legal and scientific considerations.

**The Chair and Committee of ETSG
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