

Involving research communities in drafting new Guidelines for Research Ethics in SSH

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The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) is an independent advisory body responsible for developing guidelines for research ethics in Norway. The first edition of NESH's guidelines was published in 1993, and revised editions were published in 1999, 2006 and 2016.

Involving research communities is crucial when developing new guidelines. A revised draft was circulated for public consultation in the autumn of 2020. NESH received input from more than 60 researchers, research institutions, and other research actors. A working group reviewed the comments and authored draft formulations, which in turn have been thoroughly discussed and approved of by all NESH members.

In the 2021-edition, NESH emphasise and clarify the fundamental norms of research ethics. The purpose is to highlight the guidelines as an independent source of ethical reflection and continued discussion in the research community. NESH also highlights that research increasingly is under pressure, and different actors - including commissioners, funders, and collaborating partners - are jointly responsible for ensuring compliance with research ethics. Furthermore, the distinction between ethics and law is underscored to clarify the legal basis for the investigation of scientific misconduct and for dealing with personal data.

The publication consist of fifty guidelines organized in five parts (A–E):

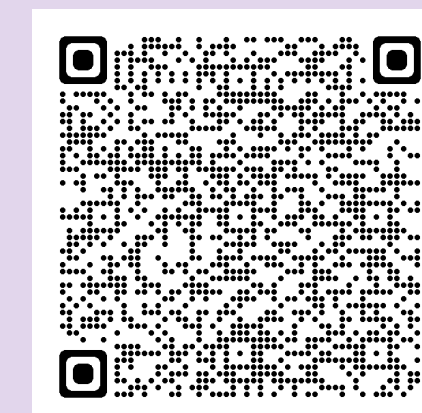
A) The research community
Researchers have a shared responsibility to each other in the research community. They should behave truthfully, treat each other with respect and recognise each other's contributions in projects and publications. Researchers have a collective responsibility to promote the values and norms of research in their teaching, supervision, dissemination and publication.

B) Research participants
Researchers have responsibilities towards all persons involved in og affected by research. They should respect human dignity and consider their personal integrity, safety, and well-being. Research participants should be informed and provide their consent to participate in research.

C) Groups and institutions
Weak and vulnerable groups may be in special need of protection, and specific attention may be required in research across cultures or on cultural heritage. Public offices and private organisations have a joint responsibility to ensure that their participation in research is in accordance with recognised norms of research ethics.

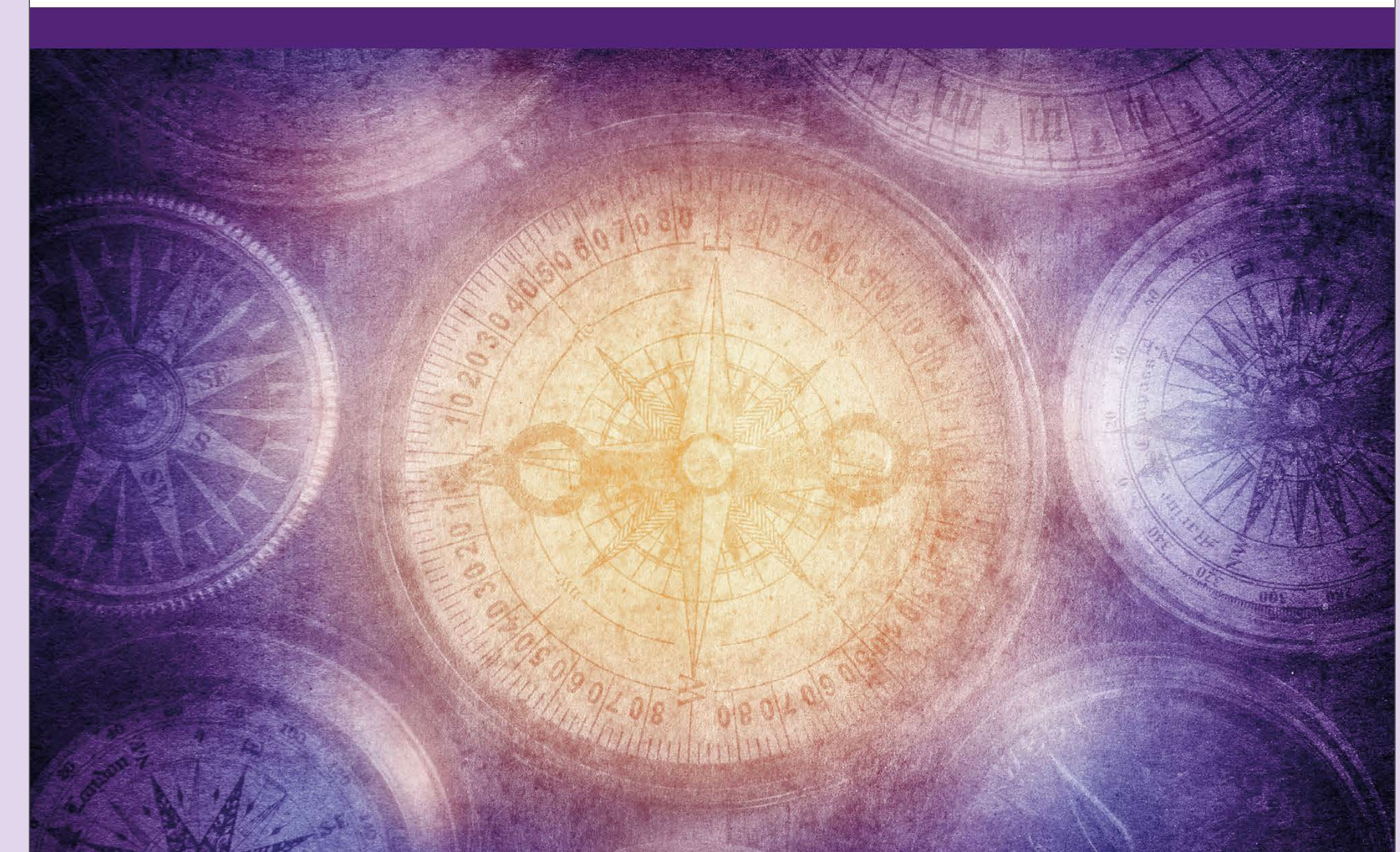
D) Commissioners, funders, and collaborators
Researchers and research institutions have obligations towards commissioners, funders and collaborators. Similarly, other research actors have obligations towards researchers and research institutions. Research ethics balances the norms of openness and independence against demands for social utility and relevance.

E) Dissemination of research
Researchers and research institutions have a responsibility to disseminate scientific results, methods, and attitudes from their own and others' research to society at large. Dissemination of research includes dialogue across disciplines, interaction with different actors in society, and the researchers' participation in public debates.



The Norwegian
National Research Ethics
Committees

**Guidelines for research ethics in the
social sciences and the humanities**



www.researchethics.no

The guidelines are advisory and are intended to contribute to developing ethical judgement and reflection, clarifying ethical dilemmas, promoting responsible research and preventing misconduct. They elaborate on various different considerations and obligations, and they specify the responsibility of researchers, research institutions, and other research actors. In research projects, the guidelines should be considered throughout the entire process – from planning and execution to publication and dissemination.

The guidelines are developed by researchers, in collaboration with researchers, and are intended to aid researchers. They have been developed over a period of time, and they are based on input from different actors concerning their experiences and challenges. The guidelines are a codification of the research community's own values and norms, seeking to ensure academic freedom, responsibility, and integrity in research. The guidelines also apply to other research-based activities, such as teaching, dissemination of research, and institutional management.