



Museum of London Archaeology Research Ethics Standards and Guidelines

Version 2, June 2014

1. General Principles

- 1.1 MOLA staff must only participate in work that conforms to accepted ethical standards and which they are competent to perform. When in doubt they should seek assistance and advice from their colleagues or peers.
- 1.2 Research methods and results should be open to scrutiny by colleagues and by the profession and public at large. Non-release of research data may also be necessary for a limited period in the case of contracted research.
- 1.3 If data of a confidential nature are obtained, confidentiality must be observed and researchers must not use such information for their own personal advantage or that of a third party.
- 1.4 It is the intent of this policy to promote the highest possible standards and to discourage misconduct and fraud.
- 1.5 MOLA encourages the open presentation and discussion of results, with an emphasis upon peer review.
- 1.6 Researchers have an obligation to achieve and maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty in the conduct of their research.
- 1.7 Researchers must be aware of and adhere to ethical principles of justice and veracity, and of respect for people and their privacy and avoidance of harm to them.
- 1.8 Research must comply with MOLA policies and with any and all relevant legislation.
- 1.9 All MOLA staff are responsible for the monitoring of adherence to these guidelines.

2. Data Storage and Retention

- 2.1 Data should be maintained in perpetuity for extensions of the original investigation or for re-assessment due to academic differences of opinion or interpretation.
- 2.2 To address controversies that may arise including precedence of discovery, or allegations of misconduct, data should be retained long enough to meet legal requirements.
- 2.3 Original data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form that is as near as practicable to their original format.
- 2.4 Data management must comply with relevant privacy protocols and data protection.
- 2.5 Supplementary data that is identified in published work will be lodged with the site archive for the relevant excavation.
- 2.6 Original data or copies, including field notes, are to be lodged with MOLA and with the site archives for the relevant excavation(s) in accordance with the requirements of the receiving archive.
- 2.7 Data referred to in publications must be available for discussion. Where confidentiality provisions apply, it is necessary for data to be kept in a way that reference to them by third parties can occur without breaching such confidentiality.



- 2.8 Confidentiality agreements to protect intellectual property rights may be agreed between the institution, the researcher and a sponsor of the research. Where such agreements limit free publication and discussion, limitations and restrictions must be explicitly agreed, and, where appropriate, they should be noted in publications.
- 2.9 It is the obligation of the researcher to enquire with relevant parties whether confidentiality agreements apply and of the leaders of research groups to inform researchers of their obligations with respect to these provisions. All confidentiality agreements should be approved at an early stage by the Chief Executive, or a nominated representative.
- 2.10 Researchers are responsible for ensuring appropriate security for any confidential material. Where computing systems are accessible through networks, particular attention to security of confidential data is required.

3. Authorship

- 3.1 Minimum requirements for authorship are substantial participation in a research program, where any of the following conditions are met:
 - conception and design of the research program
 - major acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data
 - drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- 3.2 Authorship requires that the person has given final approval of the version to be published. An author's role in a research output must be sufficient for that person to take public responsibility for at least that part of the output in that person's area of expertise.
- 3.3 No person who should be an author, consistent with this definition, must be excluded as an author without his or her permission in writing.
- 3.4 Authorship of research output must be discussed between participants at an early stage in a project, and reviewed whenever there are changes in participation. Disputes regarding authorship prior to submission of manuscripts for publication are to be brought to the Director of Research and Education for mediation, and if unresolved, are to be dealt with as outlined below.
- 3.5 When there is more than one co-author of a research output, one co-author (by agreement amongst the authors) should be nominated as executive author and should take responsibility for record keeping.
- 3.6 Where the research is published, including electronically, all co-authors of a publication must acknowledge their authorship in writing prior to its submission for publication. Electronic (email) communication from a co-author is acceptable as proof of agreement.
- 3.7 Authors must ensure that others who have contributed to the work are recognised in the research output. Individuals and organisations providing facilities should also be acknowledged. Publications must include information on and acknowledgement of the sources of financial support for the research.



4. Publication

- 4.1 Publication of multiple research papers/works based on the same data is not generally acceptable except where new or significantly different aspects of a study are explored. In these cases there should be full cross-referencing of previous published works.
- 4.2 An author who submits substantially similar work to more than one publisher must disclose this to the publishers at the time of submission.
- 4.3 Research findings must not be reported in the public media (including the internet) without the prior written agreement of the MOLA communications team. Ideally research should first be presented to an audience of experts by publication (or acceptance for publication) in a peer-reviewed journal or at a conference or seminar.
- 4.4 Where there is private reporting of research that has not yet been exposed to open peer-review scrutiny, especially when it is reported to prospective financial supporters, researchers have an obligation to explain fully the status of the work and the peer-review mechanisms to which it will be subjected.
- 4.5 Deliberate inclusion of inaccurate or misleading information relating to any aspect of research activity (including publications, funding, awards, co-authorship) in curriculum vitae, grant applications, job applications or public statements, or the failure to provide relevant information, is a form of research misconduct.
- 4.6 All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that published reports, statistics and public statements about research activities and performance are complete, accurate and unambiguous.

5. Supervision of researchers

- 5.1 There will be a specific, responsible and appropriate supervisor appointed for each external researcher.
- 5.2 Each external researcher should be advised by his/her supervisor of these guidelines and other relevant material on applicable government and institutional guidelines for the conduct of research, requirements for confidentiality, and health and safety matters and given copies of all relevant documents which should be signed for.
- 5.3 The supervisor must ensure, as far as possible, that these guidelines are adhered to and raise any issues with the Director of Research and Education.

6. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest

- 6.1 MOLA staff must disclose any potential conflict of interest to leaders of research teams and to editors of journals, to the readers of published work, and to external bodies from which funds are sought.

7. Research misconduct

- 7.1 Research misconduct is considered to include any fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practice that deviates from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting or reporting research. It includes the misleading ascription of authorship, the listing of authors without their permission, attributing work to



others who have not in fact contributed to the research, and the lack of appropriate acknowledgment of work primarily produced by a research associate. A researcher or reviewer shall not act with intent to deceive, or in disregard for the truth.

7.2 Examples of research misconduct include but are not limited to the following:

- Plagiarism i.e. the presentation of the documented words or ideas of another as his or her own
- Breach of any duty of confidentiality associated with the review of any manuscript or grant application
- Intentional omission of a reference to the relevant published work of others for the purpose of inferring personal discovery of new information
- Taking or materially damaging the research-related property of another, including without limitation the apparatus, writings, data, hardware, software, or any other substance or device used or produced in the conduct of research
- Stating or presenting a material or significant falsehood
- Omitting a fact so that what is stated or presented as a whole, states or presents a material or significant falsehood

8. Allegations of misconduct

8.1 Allegations against external researchers will be investigated internally and passed to the institution to which the researchers are affiliated for full investigation and subsequent disciplinary action as appropriate.

8.2 Any external researcher found to have committed an offence of research misconduct will be automatically barred from further access to the collections and data held by MOLA.