



Member Code of Conduct

British Educational Research Association

Company Limited by Guarantee

Company Number 08284220, Registered Charity Number 1150237

Updated September 2018

1. Introduction

BERA is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, in accordance with high ethical and legal standards, and with respect for each other and those with whom we do business. As set out in the introduction to BERA's *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, BERA unequivocally recognises and celebrates the diversity of approaches in educational research, and promotes respect for all those who engage with it: researchers and participants, academics and professional practitioners, commissioning bodies, and those who read and utilise the research.

- 1.1 The BERA Member Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour and professionalism expected of all members.
- 1.2 BERA is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. As such it is governed by the regulations put in place by both Companies House and Charities Commission.
- 1.3 BERA sees it as vital that it should be a safe and trusted environment. As part of this, BERA Council, as the charity Trustees are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to protect staff, volunteers and those connected with the activities of the charity, from harm. Safeguarding is also a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of size, type or income, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.
- 1.4 BERA staff, as employees of UCL IOE are bound by UCL HR policies and procedures and therefore this Code refers to BERA members only. The Finance & Operations Committee oversees staffing and HR policies.
- 1.5 BERA members should agree to adhere to this code for the duration of an individual's subscription. A member who is found to be in breach of this code of conduct may have their membership revoked by BERA Council.
- 1.6 BERA as an organisation may be judged by the conduct of individual members, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), SIG Convenors, committee members, and Council members. All members should conduct themselves in such a way that reflects the vision, aims and values of BERA.

2. Responsibilities of BERA members

This code covers matters undertaken by BERA members whilst on BERA business, including at BERA events or interacting on BERA activities.

- 2.1 BERA Members must treat others with respect. Members must not encourage or participate in bullying or intimidation of other members or of BERA professional staff

whilst on BERA business, including the appropriate use of language in all communications, for example email.

- 2.2 BERA members will act honestly in all dealings with other members whilst on BERA business, and with the BERA Office. Members must not misrepresent or withhold information from the BERA office related to BERA services, events, projects and initiatives.
- 2.3 BERA Members shall adhere to all aspects of applicable equality laws and regulations and shall not improperly discriminate against any person, BERA member or otherwise.
- 2.4 Any academic work including articles submitted to BERA Journals, papers for conferences or other events and other material should follow where appropriate the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research or their equivalent. BERA members should adhere to the spirit and underlying principles within the Ethical Guidelines and apply them with integrity in their research activities so that their actions can be seen to be ethical, justifiable and sound.
- 2.5 All BERA Journals are signed up to follow the COPE Code of Conduct for Journal Editors.
- 2.6 Members should ensure that any work undertaken under the BERA name does not bring BERA into disrepute or threaten BERA's legal and charitable obligations.
- 2.7 Anyone holding an official position in BERA (i.e. SIG Convenors, office holders or committee members) is expected to comply with BERA's policies and procedures, as set out in the BERA 'Handbook' available on the website. Failure to do so may result in removal from that office.
- 2.8 The BERA name and logo belongs to the association and should not be used by individual members unless the member has received permission from the BERA Office.
- 2.9 BERA members should use their membership benefits appropriately and should safeguard the benefits of their membership, and not transfer these benefits, such as their website password, to others.
- 2.10 No data obtained through holding a position in BERA may be used or shared without the express permission of the BERA Office. Handling of any data must be compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and BERA's own Data Protection Policy.
- 2.11 If a member of BERA should know of, or become aware of, any breach of this Code of Conduct by another member they should notify BERA.
- 2.12 Any complaint that a member has breached the standards contained within this Code of Conduct shall be dealt with in accordance with the BERA complaints procedure.

3. Responsibilities of Trustees

- 3.1 In addition, there is a separate Trustee role description and person specification that should be referred to. This aims to ensure that all Trustees conduct themselves in an open, transparent, objective accountable manner, acting with integrity at all times.
- 3.2 Trustees have a general duty to act with probity and prudence in the best interest of BERA as a whole. They should not act in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, their friends or the organisation they come from. As well as avoiding actual impropriety, they should also avoid any appearance of improper behaviour such as accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement in respect of their position within BERA. Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared.
- 3.3 Trustees should make every effort to attend all meetings regularly, ensuring they prepare for and contribute appropriately and follow through on any agreed actions. Failure to do so may result in removal from office under the terms of the Procedure for filling Council vacancies detailed in the BERA Handbook.
- 3.4 Trustees should ensure that confidential information and material, including material about individuals is handled appropriately. In addition, they should be as open as possible about their decisions and the actions that they take.

4. BERA Complaints Policy and Procedure

Charity trustees, staff and members can sometimes disagree with each other over decisions about the charity. A serious disagreement within a charity may cause the charity problems and damage its reputation. This policy aims to set out a mechanism for resolving any disputes.

- 4.1 A BERA member may file a complaint if dissatisfied with an aspect of behaviour or service rendered by another BERA member whilst on BERA business.
- 4.2 In the event that a complaint is made against a member, that member must co-operate fully with any investigation of that complaint.
- 4.3 BERA professional staff are employed by UCL IOE. As such, they are subject to UCL IOE HR policies and procedures. These are monitored and reviewed by the Finance and Operations Committee. Any complaint against a BERA staff member must therefore be dealt with under the staff's employers' terms and conditions. If any member wishes to make a complaint about a member of BERA staff, that should be addressed in the first instance to the Executive Director who will ensure that it is dealt with through the employers' HR policies and procedures. If it is about the Executive Director, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee.
- 4.4 In the first instance, informal means should be used to resolve any dispute. This should include mediation services if appropriate. If however, this is not possible the procedure set out below should be followed.
- 4.5 Comments provided verbally will not be considered a formal complaint unless also delivered in writing. Complaints should be sent in writing via email or hard copy to the Executive Director or to the Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee.
- 4.6 Complaints should include a detailed description of the circumstances surrounding the complaint, along with any relevant documentation.
- 4.7 BERA will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and request any necessary information in writing. Complaints will be reviewed in the first instance by the Executive Director or by the Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee and an initial response will be issued in writing within one calendar month.
- 4.8 A complaint can be escalated by the Executive Director. This would involve establishing an independent investigative panel who will have decision-making authority in the matter. This panel would be convened on a case-by-case by the Executive Director and normally consist of current or former office holders in BERA with no direct connection to the members involved. The Executive Director will write to the complainant/s and the subject/s of the complaint to set out the composition of the panel and give them a chance to object to any particular member with supporting evidence.

- 4.9 At the start of the investigative panel's work, they should decide whether anyone should be suspended from holding a role or carrying out a function in BERA while the matter is under investigation.
- 4.10 The investigative panel will then carry out their investigation in a timely manner with support from the Executive Director. At the conclusion of the investigation, the panel may decide that:
- No further action is necessary;
 - A written warning is issued;
 - An individual is removed from a position of responsibility or suspended for a period of time;
 - The behaviour should be referred to an individual's host institution or other relevant organisation/ body;
 - Council be asked to revoke someone's membership of BERA.
- 4.11 Once the investigative panel reach a decision, any decision is final and there are no further internal appeals.
- 4.12 Should a complaint be upheld against a member BERA Council reserves the right to terminate their membership.