

9. Research involving sensitive information

Section 8 “Prevent Duty” outlines one kind of sensitive information that University researchers may work with. However, it is acknowledged that researchers may work with other types of sensitive information, either online or in paper format, that could be misconstrued by observers as dubious, suspicious or even illegal and could therefore attract allegations of possible wrongdoing (e.g. where a researcher needs to view pornography, details of child abuse and other crimes etc.).

Furthermore, the University’s web filters may restrict access to materials that are linked to such research involving sensitive information e.g. webpages relating to pornography or illegal terrorist groups (called “proscribed organisations”), gambling, hate speech/crime and other illegal activities. However, the University supports legitimate research into these issues.

It is therefore important that the Research Ethics Online process identifies, at the earliest opportunity, that the research may require access to this kind of material so that this is logged officially and that arrangements can be made, via the University’s Website Filtering Policy and Review Process (sometimes known as a “whitelisting procedure”), for individuals who have received ethical approval for their research, to access otherwise restricted materials.

Secure Storage of Sensitive Research Information

Researchers using sensitive information should adhere to the guidance outlined in Section 13: Secure Storage of Data.