
Title: Faculty Ethics Committees: Terms of Reference

From: Martina Prude, Research Governance Office

Date: 24th October 2013

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1 To be responsible for keeping under review and monitoring the implementation of the University Ethics Policy and the Faculty operation of the University ethical review system, ERGO (Ethics and Research Governance Online).
- 1.2 To sustain a Faculty-wide awareness of ethics and research governance issues (e.g. Data Retention guidance).
- 1.3 To set the Faculty strategy for ensuring appropriate ethical review and where appropriate approval of studies in accordance with the University Ethics Policy including appointment of sub-committee(s), delegation of review to a subset of Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC) members and/or expedited review.
- 1.4 To assist with the development of policies and guidelines for the University and other Faculties in relation to ethical and research governance issues.
- 1.5 To advise Faculty researchers on procedures related to ethical issues, including concerns relating to a particular study.
- 1.6 To adjudicate upon ethical matters or refer them to the University Ethics Committee for decision.

2. Reporting:

- 2.1 Through the chair to the University Ethics Committee by way of an 'Annual Report', presented at the 1st meeting of each academic year.
- 2.2 Through the chair, Associate Dean (Research) and Faculty Research and Enterprise Committee (or equivalent) to the Dean
- 2.2 Through the chair to any other relevant Faculty committee according to specific Faculty requirements e.g. Health and Safety, Education Committee etc.

3. Liaison:

- 3.1 With Research and Innovation Services
- 3.2 With the Research Governance Office

4. Meetings:

- 4.1 At least once per semester - defined as a "Full Meeting", to review specific/complex matters and to monitor reviews and decisions and policies and processes adopted in the Faculty and propose required training.

5. Membership

- 5.1 A minimum of 6 members including the Chair and a Lay Member.

- 5.2 Chair – to be appointed by the faculty Dean. They should be and a senior, appropriate academic with extensive research experience, who has an interest in ethical issues and who has preferably served a minimum of 1 year on the FEC.
- 5.3 Representation on the committee should cross the various faculty disciplines and provide sufficient expertise to review projects.
- 5.4 The Chair appoints the FEC members and may also co-opt additional members to ensure appropriate expertise for matters not within the usual discipline experience of the members
- 5.5 A student member.
- 5.5 At least 1 Lay Member, who can be sought through advertisement, or nomination and who is appointed by the Chair.

6. Term of Service

- 6.1 Normally all members (including lay members) will serve for a term of 2 years in the first instance, with the option of up to two renewals.
- 6.2 The chair, with the agreement of the committee, the Associate Dean (Research) and relevant Head of Department can terminate the appointment of a committee member if it is felt they are no longer able to contribute adequate time or expertise to the meetings; typically if they have not attended more than 2 meetings in any year (without good reason).

7. Quorum

- 7.1 For the Full Meeting this shall be at least 5 members, including the chair and 1 Lay Member
- 7.2 If a physical meeting is not 'quorate' and or significant members cannot attend (e.g. the Lay Member) the chair needs to satisfy them self that adequate consultation and feedback has been received in order to ratify decisions where necessary.

8. Lay Members

- 8.1 The definition of a lay member is someone who has no recent direct involvement with the University i.e. individuals who have not studied at, been employed by, or held offices with the University in the last three years. The eligibility criteria for lay members of UEC and the FECs, are:
 - Be independent of the University;
 - be able to understand the key issues in research ethics;
 - be able to comprehend the contents of research ethics applications (especially human participant research);
 - be able to act independently and impartially, and to behave ethically and responsibly;
 - be able to contribute to the work of the Faculty Ethics Committee;
 - to live within a reasonable geographic proximity of the University (maximum 30 miles), and be able to attend meetings during the working day, up to six times a year.
- 8.2 Lay members may be selected and appointed using nominations or responses to advert. Those involved in the process would be Chair of the UEC or the FEC, the Head of the Research Governance (HRG) Office and a representative

from Human Resources. The process for selection and appointment of lay members is as follows:

- Nominations will be sought and/or advertisements placed in suitable outlets.
- Applications will be reviewed by the chair and HRG to ensure eligibility criteria are met (as above).
- Short-listed applicants invited for interview with appropriate Chair, HRG and representative from HR.
- Successful candidates will receive a letter of appointment from the Chair of UEC, setting out the conditions of the appointment (e.g. requirement for an honorary contract with the UoS, adherence to policies and procedures, duty of confidentiality etc.)

8.3 Lay members will be offered an annual honorarium on £200, (pro rata for proportion of a year served) payable in arrears at the beginning of the University financial year for their attendance and involvement with the University or Faculty Ethics Committee; they will also be reimbursed for reasonable expenses e.g. travel and carer/childcare costs.

8.4 Lay members will also be included in any training provided for members of the Committees.

8.5 The Faculty will be responsible for meeting all costs associated with FEC training, Lay Member expenses and their Honorarium

9. Function of the FEC

9.1 To work with the University Ethics Committee and other Faculty Ethics Committees as appropriate on policy, guidelines, and training for FEC members and any other matters related to ethical issues.

9.2 In accordance with the University Ethics Policy, to consider the ethical implications of research involving human subjects, their data or tissue to be conducted by members of staff and/or students of the Faculty

9.3 To review projects and provide feedback in a timely fashion, ideally within 2 weeks of submission and provide approval within 2 weeks of receiving further information if required.

9.4 To review projects (submitted through the ERGO system) for the faculty, or by request from other faculties as appropriate.

9.5 To monitor the review of lower risk projects by delegated members of the FEC or Faculty submitted through the ERGO, or by request from other faculties as appropriate that have not been, or will not be ethically reviewed elsewhere.

9.6 To review proposals for research to be conducted by members of staff or students of the Faculty in an overseas location where no equivalent infrastructure or approvals system exists, or if the committee has concerns about any specific ethical issues.

9.7 To ensure that members of the FEC and relevant members of the Faculty have adequate support to attend appropriate training in research governance and ethical matters.

9.8 To facilitate appeals regarding ethical approval of studies where necessary, as outlined in the University Ethics Policy.

9.9 To monitor the committee's own system for review and their decision making processes each semester

Approved by the University Ethics Committee 24th October 2013