

University Research Ethics Committee

(a sub-committee of Research Committee)

Terms of reference

The Committee reports to the Research Committee and is responsible for:

1. the ongoing review of the University's Research Ethics Policy, including providing guidance on its interpretation and oversight and review of policies and guidelines on good research conduct and the principles of research integrity;
2. ensuring institutional adherence to the Research Ethics Policy and the University's associated procedures, including:
 - (i) oversight and accrediting the delegated ethics review arrangements in place within the University (Faculty Research Ethics Committees – FRECs);
 - (ii) monitoring the FREC arrangements, receiving regular termly reports on numbers and types of ethical approvals and institutional sponsorship;
 - (iii) providing guidance on cases of uncertainty raised by FRECs;
 - (iv) in the event of receiving complaints or appeals against decisions made by FRECs instigating procedures for the matter to be investigated and if appropriate overruling decisions made by the FRECs, suspending the approval process for that proposal or suspending the research activity in question;
 - (v) undertaking quality assurance reviews to demonstrate robust procedures;
 - (vi) agreeing additional arrangements in relation to the FRECs as necessary.
3. Promoting awareness and understanding of ethical issues and good conduct in research throughout the University.
4. Providing advice on any ethical matters relating to research that are referred to it from within the University. This may include arranging or conducting ethics reviews on an exceptional basis to deal with special circumstances which cannot be dealt with by FRECs, e.g. where specific confidentiality requirements apply.
5. Keeping abreast of externally-driven developments, policies and regulations concerning research ethics and research integrity ensuring that the University meets all necessary requirements.
6. On an annual basis provide a report to Research Committee following an assessment of the Committee's own performance and efficiency with any recommendations for change as necessary

Committee Composition

(*ex officio*)

Head of Governance Services
Chairs of Faculty Research Ethics Committees
Safety, Health and Wellbeing Officer
Director of Research, Enterprise and Innovation
Head of Research Services

(appointed)

a senior and experienced researcher nominated by Research Committee (Chair)
a research student
a contract researcher
senior academic with a clinical background

(co-opted)

lay person with appropriate knowledge

(in attendance)

Research Support and Systems Manager (secretary)
Research Integrity and Governance Officer (or Research Ethics Officer)

Procedure

Chairs will be appointed for three years, renewable once.

Committee members will be appointed for two years, renewable twice.

No appointed member will serve for more than six years.

The appointment of appointed and co-opted members shall be ratified by the Chair of Research Committee.

The membership will include at least one male and one female member.

UREC may temporarily co-opt members of FRECs in exceptional circumstances.

The Committee will meet four times per year.

Six Committee members shall constitute a quorum.

Quality assurance reviews could include sampling of cases not reviewed by the full FREC, additional requests and investigations.