

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of the University Research Ethics Committee, held 24 November 2011

Present: David Anderson-Ford (Chair), Sheila Bannerman, Brian Betts, Philip Cull, Barry Edwards, Federico Ferretti, Joan Gandy, Ahmad Ghoneim, Koen Matthys, Timothy Milewa, Zidong Wang, James Wood, Mary Liddell (Secretary)

Apologies: Laurence Brooks, Senthila Quirke, Christine Piper, Mary Pat Sullivan

Reserved (FOI) Release date

458. Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest at item 5 on the agenda (Amended expedited review form for SHSSC).

Action:

459. Minutes

The minutes of the fifty-third meeting held on 29 September 2011 were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED as a true record.

Action:

460. Matters arising

460.1. Electronic submission system for research ethics (453.1)

The representative from the School of Information Systems, Computing and Maths (SISCM) reported that he and the previous Chair of that School's Research Ethics Committee had visited the Brunel Business School to see how the system of electronic submission worked on u-Link. In the opinion of the SISCM representatives, the system was not automatic enough (forms still had to be downloaded, filled out and then uploaded), and would require a substantial amount of modification before it could be rolled out to other Schools.

There was also uncertainty regarding the operation of the system on the new e-learning platform.

It was suggested that it might be possible to consider using a SharePoint site for this purpose.

The Chair reported that a pilot project was underway between NRES and four universities on use of the IRAS platform for online submission of research ethics application forms. He would report further on this at the next meeting.

Action:

460.2. Research ethics training programme (453.3)

The Chair reported that the programme in October had been well-received. A number of participants indicated that they would have liked some practical sessions, and this would be provided for the programme on **16 February**.

The Chair requested volunteers to help present the February programme. Three members volunteered. A meeting would be held at a date closer to 16 February to finalise arrangements for the presentations.

**Action: AG,
JG,
KM**

460.3. Papers before Council (453.4)

Two papers submitted by the Committee were considered at the Council meeting on 23 November. The University's Ethical Framework (as drafted several years ago) was endorsed, provided the mission statement was updated to reflect the statement currently in the University's Strategic Plan. The Chair reported that he had agreed that the UREC would ensure the Framework was posted on the University's website (internally and externally) and that the Committee would deal with issues raised in relation to the Framework.

The paper relating to research outside the EU, where a particular type of visa might be required, was approved by Senate on 15 November. This was also approved by Council, with minor amendments to the wording. As requested by Council, applications for research ethics approval in which a researcher proposed to conduct research without applying for a required visa would have to be approved by the UREC.

Action: ML

460.4. FOI requests for research data (455)

Two sessions have been scheduled for Committee members to receive training in FOI (05 December and 11 January). Members were encouraged to notify the Secretary to indicate which session they would attend.

Action: ALL

461. Amended expedited review form for SHSSC

As the Chair had declared an interest in this item, the Chair was assumed by the Chair of the Human Tissue Act Compliance Sub-committee.

The SREC in the School of Health Sciences and Social Care had decided to amend the expedited review form to focus its attention on projects involving medium or high risk. The aim was to streamline the approval process and make it more timely. This would involve more oversight by supervisors in relation to their students' applications for research ethics approval.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- The review requirements between medium risk and high risk projects were very similar;
- The Committee was not sure that the effort involved in review would really be reduced, as historically, there did not seem to be that many low-risk projects;
- It was suggested that a category of risk be added to deal with projects conducted with ordinary schoolchildren;
- The Committee felt that the questions on page 4 of the proposed form should appear earlier on, to ensure that researchers could more quickly see an indication that a full application form would be required;
- It would be useful to specify which types of research would be likely to be considered medium- or high-risk.

The Committee AGREED that the placement of the questions currently shown on page 4 of the revised form be made a condition and the form resubmitted. Chair's action would be taken by the Chair of the Human Tissue Act Compliance Sub-Committee.

Mr. Anderson-Ford resumed the Chair.

Action: DA-F

462. Any other business

462.1. ESRC Framework inspections

The Chair reported that the University sector could expect to undergo reviews by the ESRC regarding adoption of the ESRC Research Ethics Framework.

Action:

462.2. RER

The Chair reported that the Research Ethics Review will now be published by Sage, which means it will be available internationally.

Action:

462.3. Revised Codes of Ethics

The Chair reported that both the British Psychological Society (www.bps.org.uk) and the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (www.theasa.org) had published revised Codes of Ethics. The Chair commended these to the Committee.

Action:

463. Meeting dates

26 January 2012

29 March 2012

24 May 2012

26 July 2012

All meetings start at 1000.

ML/26/11/11