

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the sixty-seventh meeting of the University Research Ethics Committee, held 27 March 2014

Present: David Anderson-Ford (Chair), Sheila Bannerman, Susan Broadhurst, Jan Fidrmuc, Jon Ford, Joan Gandy, Andrew George, Jurgita Malinauskaite, Natasha Slutskaia, Mary Pat Sullivan, Jim Wood

Visitors: Damilola Macaulay

Apologies: Laurence Brooks, CODH, Federico Ferretti, Derek Healy, Peter Hobson (Deputy Chair), Kate Hone, Ashraf Khir, NACWO and Home Office Liaison Officer, Geoff Rodgers

Reserved (FOI) Release date

557. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Action:

558. Minutes

The minutes of the sixty-sixth meeting held on 23 January 2014 were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED as a true record.

Action:

559. Matters arising

559.1. Visa requirements (551.1)

The Chair reviewed the history of the visa requirements issue. He indicated that the latest decision by Council had effectively closed the door to possible exceptions to conducting research outside the UK without obtaining the required visa.

Action:

559.2. AREC Framework (551.2)

The Chair requested volunteers for a working group which would apply the AREC framework to the UREC.

**Action: JF, JM,
JW**

559.3. Standard operating procedures (551.3)

There was no further progress on this item.

Action: ML

559.4. Research integrity (551.5)

The Chair reviewed the progress of the Research Integrity working group. A Code had been drafted and was ready to be reviewed by relevant groups in the University.

Action:

560. Report from the Animal Research Ethics Sub-Committee

In the absence of the Chair of the Animal Research Ethics Sub-Committee, there was no report.

Action:

561. Report from the Human Tissue Act Compliance Sub-Committee

In the absence of the Chair of the Human Tissue Act Compliance Sub-Committee, there was no report.

Action:

562. Transformational change programme (554)

The Chair presented a paper to the Committee, and invited comments on the recommendations.

Recommendation 1 stated that the UREC should be directly accountable to Council, with a reporting line to the Executive Board via the Research Strategy Committee (RSC). It was suggested that there might be occasions when 'reporting to' the RSC would be insufficient to obtain a desired result. It was further suggested that cross-representation between the UREC and the RSC would resolve this.

The Committee **AGREED** that the UREC should be directly accountable to Council, with a reporting line to the Executive Board via the RSC, and with cross-representation between the UREC and the RSC.

Recommendation 2a was that the management of each College should decide how to constitute their system of research ethics review, with approval by the UREC. The Committee **AGREED** to this recommendation.

Recommendation 2b was that each College should designate at least one Research Ethics Officer (REO) and alternate for each department. These REOs would represent the College on the UREC. During the discussion, it was noted that the requirement for all REOs to be members of the UREC could potentially result in an overlarge Committee, and that there were departments which were unlikely to conduct any research using human participants, their data or their tissues.

The Committee **AGREED** that each **College** should designate 2 REOs and alternates. The REOs and the College Dean or his/her delegated alternate, would represent the Colleges on the UREC. In addition, one **student** (either undergraduate or postgraduate) from each College should also be a member of the UREC. Additionally, it was **AGREED** to recommend that, to ensure there were no gaps between the implementation of the TxP and the revised composition of the UREC, the current UREC members should remain in place until Christmas 2014.

Recommendation 3 stated that a) one member of the UREC would be designated to ensure the Theme Leaders in the Environment, Health & Societies Institute were kept informed of research ethics matters; and b) that applications for research ethics approval from the EH&S Institute would be submitted directly to the UREC.

It was pointed out during the discussion that each member of an Institute would also be a member of a College, and that one of the aims of the TxP was to encourage research across Institutes.

The Committee AGREED to strike recommendation 3, and instead document that any application from an Institute should be submitted to the PI's College/Department/Division Research Ethics Committee, as appropriate.

The Committee also AGREED that any applications for research ethics approval from BEEC would be submitted directly to the UREC.

REOs were asked to review the draft on the last page of the paper describing the roles and responsibilities of the REO, and provide comments to the Secretary.

**Action: DA-F,
REOs**

563. Annual report to Council and Senate

The Committee APPROVED the draft of the Annual Report to Council and Senate.

Action: ML

564. Any other business

564.1. Definition of 'clinical trial' for insurance purposes

The Chair reported that there was a difference of opinion between the insurance broker and the University concerning the definition of a clinical trial for the purpose of obtaining liability insurance. He requested the Committee's assistance in finding a suitable definition to suggest.

Action: ALL

564.2. Vaccinations for hepatitis B and C

The Chair reported that an issue was raised at the last Health & Safety Committee meeting regarding who should pay for vaccinations for hepatitis B and C for researchers who might be exposed to blood. He asked if the Committee thought a specific question should be added to the Application Form to determine if researchers who would be drawing or exposed to blood had been vaccinated.

The Committee AGREED that this was a health & safety issue, but REOs should ensure that researchers in their Schools are aware of the requirement for such vaccinations if projects involve blood.

Action: REOs

564.3. Review of external applications

The question was raised regarding whether external members of the Committee would be indemnified by the University when reviewing applications submitted under contract to the University by external organisations. The Chair indicated that his understanding was that they would be indemnified, but he would check with the insurance officer.

Action: DA-F

565. Meeting dates

22 May 2014

24 July 2014

All meetings would start at 1000 and be held in WBB 102 unless otherwise noted.

ML:31/03/2014