

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the sixty-eighth meeting of the University Research Ethics Committee, held 22 May 2014

Present: David Anderson-Ford (Chair), Peter Hobson (Deputy Chair), Sheila Bannerman, Susan Broadhurst, Federico Ferretti, Richard Godfrey, Derek Healy, Misha Hebel, Koen Matthys, Clare Williams, James Wood

Visitor Damilola Macaulay

Apologies: Laurence Brooks, Joan Gandy, Andrew George, Kate Hone, Geoff Rodgers, Mary Pat Sullivan, Mary Liddell (Secretary)

Reserved (FOI) Release date

566. Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest in relation to item 5 (AREC Framework) on the agenda.

Action:

567. Minutes

The minutes of the sixty-seventh meeting held on 27 March 2014 were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED as a true record.

Action:

568. Matters arising

568.1. Standard Operating Procedures (559.3)

The Committee reviewed the draft SOP. The following comments were made:

Section 2: The Chair highlighted that some procedures ran in parallel with some Research Integrity principles, for example, research misconduct procedures.

Section 7.1.3: It was suggested that the time period stated for reporting of serious adverse events should be radically shortened. The Committee agreed in principle, and a shorter timeframe would be proposed at the next meeting.

Section 8.2: The record retention timeframe was noted. The Chair observed that a number of HEIs were now extending retention periods to, for example, 10 years. It was agreed that the Committee may wish to review the current period at a later date.

Section 10: The Chair highlighted that a comprehensive definition of Research had been included in the document.

It was noted that the Standard Operating Procedures currently implied that UREC and SREC terms of reference should be consulted prior to reading this document. It was agreed that a link to the Terms of Reference would be provided.

The Working Group commended the Chair and the Secretary on their good effort.

The Committee ACCEPTED the Draft SOP with changes.

**Action: DA-F,
Sec'y**

568.2. Research Integrity

The Chair provided an update on the draft Research Integrity Code. He informed the Committee that the Code had been presented to the Executive Board of the University, and that the draft code and its accompanying appendices had been well received.

The Research Integrity Code would be circulated to Committee members in due course.

**Action: DA-F,
Sec'y**

568.3. Transformational change programme (562)

The Chair informed the Committee the UREC Transformational Change briefing paper had been approved at the Executive Board of the University. The Chair noted the suggestion that any application from an Institute should be submitted to the PI's College/Department Research Ethics Committee, was rejected by the Executive Board. The Committee would return to this matter at its next meeting.

The Chair informed the Committee that following the appointment of the Deans of Colleges, implementation would commence. The current structure would be kept in place until December.

**Action: DA-F/
Sec'y**

568.4. Review of external applications (564.3)

Following an enquiry by an external member at a previous meeting as to 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 informed the committee that he had met with the Insurance Officer, who had confirmed that public indemnity covered external members. In addition to this, a form was to be sent out to external members which would enquire about matters which could affect the University's insurance coverage over the previous year. A request was made for documentary evidence proving indemnity which the Chair agreed to send out, accompanied by the form.

**Action: DA-F/
Sec'y**

569. Report from the Animal Research Ethics Sub-Committee

The Health, Safety and Environmental Officer on behalf of the Animal Research Ethics Sub-Committee provided a briefing on the activities of the Sub-Committee.

The Animal Research Ethics Sub-Committee was currently reviewing their policies and procedures alongside Home Office requirements to ensure all processes were compliant. There was a new appointee currently being trained.

Action:

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

The Chair of the Human Tissue Act Compliance Sub-Committee provided a briefing on the activities of the Sub-Committee.

The Chair of the Human Tissue Act Compliance Sub-Committee informed the Committee that they were currently preparing for an Audit, although it had not been confirmed if/when this would be taking place.

Action:

571. AREC Framework (559.2)

The Chair provided an introduction to the AREC framework. The findings of the Working Group were presented to the Committee. The Committee was informed that the UREC framework was measured against the four principles of governance contained in the AREC document, and scrutinised in the context of the UREC documentation available at the time the Group met.

The following points were made in response to the findings:

Independence: By way of clarification, the Chair stated that the principle of independence referred to the Brunel Ethics Committee not the University Research Ethics Committee. The Chair expatiated, asserting that the independence of the UREC was maintained externally by the presence of external members, and maintained internally by ensuring the UREC retained as much independence as possible from other University Committees, with the exception of Council.

Competence (a): The Chair confirmed the UREC have had Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for a number of years but admitted it was not up to the required standard and not available at the time the Group met. The Chair informed the Committee that he and the Secretary had been working on the SOP and confirmed the updated SOP was available on the intranet. In response to the example provided by the Working Group, the Chair confirmed and directed the Committee to the Research Ethics Appeals document, which was also available on the intranet.

Competence (b): The Chair was hopeful that TxP would provide a solution to this on-going issue. Within the proposed TxP structure, members of senior management would be placed within Colleges and some would have Research Integrity and Research Ethics responsibilities as well as having the duty to disseminate guidance, and be responsible for staff development and appraisal.

Training: The necessity of formal training for Committee members was reiterated and it was suggested computer-based training would suffice. The Deputy Chair informed the Committee that training was readily available for interested Committee members, and went on to state he had attended a one-day course when he joined the UREC. The Chair agreed with the Deputy Chair that training was available through Staff Development, etc., however, the composition of the UREC (primary members and alternate members) posed a difficulty. He stated more could be done to encourage Committee members to attend training sessions.

The Committee ACCEPTED the report.

Action: DA-F

572. Any other business

572.1. Investigational studies/medical intervention

The Chair informed the Committee that the definition of medical interventions had been sent out to those to whom it was relevant.

Action:

572.2. UKRIO self-assessment tool

The Chair informed the Committee about the self- assessment tool, to which the UREC was expected to contribute, although it was not the primary role of the Committee.

Action:

572.3. Electronic applications

The Chair informed the Committee about an offer to set up an overarching system for electronic applications. Previous enquiry had indicated that the cost of set-up, together with running costs, might be prohibitive. That said, the Chair suggested a working group be set up to discuss the usefulness of the system. The Chair would also like to invite a representative from the company to address the working group.

**Action: DA-F,
Sec'y**

573. Meeting dates

24 July 2014

Meeting dates for 2014/15:

25 September 2014

27 November 2014

22 January 2015

26 March 2015

28 May 2015

23 July 2015

Action: ALL

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE – MAY 2014 – ACTION SHEET

Minute	Item	Action	Action by
5681.	Standard Operating Procedures	Propose adverse events reporting timeframe	DA-F
		Add link to TOR	ML
568.2	Research integrity	Circulate RI Code to Committee	DA-F/ML
568.3	Transformational change programme	Meet with College Deans	DA-F/ML
568.4	Review of external applications	Provide documentary evidence	DA-F
		Circulate documentary evidence and form to externals	ML
571	AREC Framework	Implement recommendations	DA-F
572.3	Electronic applications	Set up demo	DA-F/ML