

## Research Ethics Sub-Committee: Terms of Reference



### **Purpose**

The Research Ethics Sub-Committee (RESC) is accountable to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and exists to protect research participants and promote the continuation of ethical research practice and standards across the University.

RESC has the authority to steer, through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, the work of Faculty Boards in relation to research ethics. Faculty Research Ethics Committees report directly to RESC on matters concerning individual cases.

### **Membership**

Chair nominated by the VC

Deputy Chair

Two members from each Faculty Research Ethics Committee, to include the Chair, as designated officer

At least one person trained in safeguarding

Two people not employed by UWE, preferably one of whom is medically qualified

A member of the Graduate School Sub-Committee

A postgraduate research student

### **In attendance**

Research Governance Manager

Committee Officer

Members “in attendance” do not have voting rights. The Chair has discretion to determine whether and how many post-holders or other individuals may attend a meeting in a non-voting capacity.

The membership can include up to two co-opted members with voting rights. Co-opted members are appointed by the Committee in consultation with the Chair. Co-opted members have voting rights.

### **Responsibility**

The RESC is responsible for:

- The development and review of policy, procedures and guidelines for ethical review of all research involving human participants, their data or tissue, conducted by staff and students;
- Advising researchers and faculties on the ethical conduct of research, disseminating information on the proper ethical conduct of research and providing an avenue for the spread of good ethical practice;
- Monitoring and auditing the ethical conduct of research conducted by staff, students and researchers;
- Seeking clarification from external expert bodies, as necessary, on matters of ethical review policy and practice, and advise on and where necessary comply with external

- regulations and/or guidance on the ethical conduct of research;
- Providing support to the researcher where circumstances might otherwise challenge their academic freedom, or intellectual property rights, or put the researcher in emotional, psychological or physical danger;
- Identifying and where appropriate assist with the provision of training and ethical review for members of RESC and FRECs;
- Approving, with advice from the University's Executive, the formation of FRECs where appropriate and in line with this scheme, including the membership, terms of reference and procedures, to conduct business on behalf of the RESC, ensuring that people taking part in research conducted by staff and students of the University are afforded appropriate ethical protection;
- Receiving and commenting on annual reports of FRECs;
- Considering and providing advice on difficult or controversial ethical issues raised with FRECs and subsequently referred to RESC;
- Receiving, considering and giving ethical approval for research where:
  - It is not appropriate for the application to be delegated to a FREC;
  - The applicant does not have a home faculty;
  - A FREC refers the application to RESC for additional advice;
  - The applicant is proposing research that is University wide;
  - The applicant is external to UWE but seeks access to UWE students, staff or premises.
- Liaising with the Human Tissue Sub-Committee on matters relating to the use of human tissue in research and with the Animal Welfare and Ethics Sub-Committee in relation to research involving animals and animal by-products;
- Ensuring active consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the conduct of its business;
- Ensuring any task-and-finish groups or special interest groups it creates can discharge their functions, having Terms of Reference with clear responsibilities and delegated authorities;
- Evaluating annually its performance and that of any groups it creates to ensure academic governance arrangements enhance institutional performance and add value.

### **Accountability**

The RESC is accountable to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on matters relating to the ethical protection of human participants in research and reports to it on:

- Proposals for new policies and frameworks within its area of competence;
- Proposals for changes to its terms of reference, membership or priorities or to those of any sub-groups established to support delivery of its terms of reference;
- Any matters or priority areas referred to it for action by the Chair of RKEC.

RESC provides an annual assurance report to RKEC, through which it demonstrates how it has fulfilled its Terms of Reference and assesses its own effectiveness and that of its Sub-Committees. The requirements for the report will be specified by RKEC.

**Administration**

The RESC will meet a minimum of four times a year. The duration of meetings will be no longer than three hours. The Quorum for meetings is one-third of members eligible to attend.

Representative members who are nominated to represent a particular constituency will be rotated annually.

Co-opted members will serve a maximum three-year term.

A committee officer will be identified to support the Chair in the effective and efficient conduct of the Committee's business.

**Review**

The Terms of Reference for the RESC will be reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant, decision-making structures are effective and it can effectively discharge its duties. As part of the review consideration should be given to how the Committee can improve and better integrate practices which support equality, diversity and inclusivity.