

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2008**

Present: Rev Dr D Hart (Chair)
Dr J Cobb, Mr D Gobbett, Prof J Fletcher, Mr G Forbes, Mr M Hind, Dr I
Hanson, Ms J Hanson, Dr P Johnstone, Dr J Kiely, Dr D Lilliker, Dr A
Ladkin, and Dr G Roushan

Mr Forbes acted as the Committee Secretary

ACTION**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER**

1.1 The minutes were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

2 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 With reference to minute 3.1, the secretary reported that he had drawn the attention of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) to the Committee's view that consideration would be needed as to whether there were businesses and organisations with whom the University should not wish to have research contacts.

2.2 With reference to minute 4.2, it was noted that the secretary would shortly be contacting Conservation Science as part of the review of the Code of Practice. The other actions listed in the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda for this meeting.

3. RESEARCH ETHICS PROCESS FLOW CHARTS

3.1 The Chair thanked Dr J Cobb for redrafting the process flow diagrams. It was explained by the secretary that it would be normal for the appeal panel to make the final decision in respect of appeals relating to ethical matters and that this was consistent with normal University procedure for dealing with appeals.

4 RESEARCH ETHICS CODE OF PRACTICE

4.1 The Committee noted that the code of practice had been considered in detail up to section 16 and it was agreed to continue from that point. It was reported by Mr M Hind that sections 16-19 would need further updating to include reference to the Human Tissues Act of 2004. The Committee considered whether it was necessary for the code of practice to contain detailed reference to the provisions of the legislation and it was agreed that there should be a general statement of principles with a link to the website dealing with the details. It was explained that the HTA website contained a lot of information that was not directly related to research ethics so it would be necessary to focus staff attention on the relevant areas. In addition it was noted that the School of Conservation Science was responsible for research involving human and animal remains and that the code of practice would need to give guidance to staff about relevant ethical issues and approval. It was agreed that a working group consisting of Mr I Hind, Mr I Hanson, and the secretary meet with relevant members of staff to consider what guidance should be given and submit proposals to the next meeting.

GF,MH,IH

- 4.2 It was reported that School of Conservation Science was currently permitted access to skeletal remains because it had a joint licence shared with the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic. It was agreed that it would be prudent to check that all activities requiring official approval were properly licensed and that in the light of the expansion of research at the University it was still appropriate to share a license with a partner institution. This matter would also be considered by the working group set up in minute 4.1 above.
- 4.3 The Committee considered sections 20-22 dealing with confidentiality, data protection and storage of documents and made alterations/recommendation for change as shown below.
In section 21.2 there should be reference to the importance of regular backing up of data held by researchers.
In section 21.2 the words national policy making should be changed to public policy making.
In section 21.2 b the Committee questioned whether the normal expectation that research data should be kept for 5 years was correct.
In the section entitled 23 (to be changed to 22) it was agreed that further explanation would be required of the statement that 'Personal data can be processed for purposes other than that for which they were originally obtained' since this appeared to undermine the guidance about the more limited use of data normally given in consent forms.
- 4.4 The Committee considered the appendices attached to the code of practice and made the comments shown below.
Appendix 1 should be updated to show NHS Recs rather than LRECs.
Appendix 2 should be amended to show a title of Ethics Guidance and updated to show new departmental names and NHS designations. The footnote should be deleted.
Appendix 3 was now redundant in the light of the introduction of the upgraded flowcharts and should be deleted.
Appendix 4 (Useful Websites) should be checked to ensure that the links still work.
Appendix 5 listing NHS research ethics committees should be replaced by a weblink to the NHS website.
The glossary should be updated to show the latest BU department titles.

5 **RESEARCH ETHICS INITIAL REVIEW FORM AND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS QUESTIONNAIRE**

- 5.1 The Committee considered the review form and human participants questionnaire and agreed that the Working Group set up to consider the forms should meet again to look at merging the initial review form with the participants questionnaire and further simplification of the final document.
- 5.2 The Committee considered whether all students involved in conducting surveys as part of taught programmes should be expected to complete an ethics review form. The secretary explained that the intention had been that where a group of students were conducting the same project as a piece of coursework it would only be necessary to complete the form once along with any risk analysis. Some members expressed the view that students within a group might be conducting slightly different surveys and there was concern at the inclusion of work placement projects which, at least in the case of the Business School, already gave advice about ethical review. One possibility to be considered was whether surveys and project work conducted by taught programme students could really be defined as research. It was agreed that the working group

GF, JF, DL

would meet again and give further consideration to this matter.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the University Research Ethics Committee would be on 12th March at 2.15pm in the 5th Floor Committee room of Poole House.