
Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 16 October 2013, 12:30, PG141

Present: Mr J Stevens (Chair); Dr K Appleton; Mr S Beer; Mrs S Collins; Dr V Culpin; Mr D Gobbett; Prof V Hundley; Ms E Jack; Dr I Jones; Dr D Lilleker; Dr S McKeown (on behalf of Dr G Roushan); Dr C Osborne; Prof H Schutkowski.

In Attendance: Mrs J Hastings Taylor (Secretary/Clerk); Prof I MacRury (Head of Research & Knowledge Exchange, Media School, for Item 6).

Not in attendance: Dr M Hind; Dr C Hodges; Dr G Roushan; Dr N Speith.

1 Welcome

Mr J Stevens welcomed members to the meeting. As this was his first UREC meeting, he first introduced himself and went through his biography (Item 3). He then asked UREC members to do the same; each member introduced themselves and stated their role within the University as well as their background and experience with research ethics.

2 Minutes from previous meeting (12 June 2013)

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising

2.2 Update Report on Special Inquiry (minute 1.1.3): An update report was distributed to UREC members regarding this matter (Item 4).

2.3 Raise awareness regarding research ethics e-module (minute 5.2): Sufficient awareness had been raised throughout the summer resulting in an 83% completion rate across the University. The e-module was further discussed as part of Item 10.

2.4 Including a reference to the requirement for ethical approval within the APF process (minute 8.4): Mrs J Hastings Taylor clarified that at the last UREC meeting, Dr D Lilleker raised concerns regarding the APF Quality Approval form and the suggestion on this that ethical approval should be gained prior to funding submissions; however, it was agreed that this would cause a great deal of extra work. Mrs J Hastings Taylor confirmed that a tick box had been added to the APF Quality Approval form to state 'I understand that acceptance of any award is subject to ethical approval via the online ethics checklist'. Dr D Lilleker made further comment that the APF training and form should highlight that ethical aspects of the project should be considered when approval is sought.

2.5 PDF formatting within the Online Ethics Checklist (minute 9.2): Mrs J Hastings Taylor informed UREC of the new ethics checklist function which allows attachments to be added as part of the checklist which is then sent straight to the supervisor/ ethics representative and addresses formatting issues. This issue is now resolved.

3 Biography: John Stevens

3.1 Mr J Stevens went through his biography in detail at the beginning of the meeting (Item 1).

4 Update Report: HSC/MS Complaint Update

4.1 Dr C Osborne provided UREC with an update on the HSC/MS complaint. She began with a brief overview of the issue and reassured the members that the required actions had been taken, to include the blog being removed. The thesis in question has not yet been submitted and measures are in place to ensure the submitted thesis is compliant with the Committee's requirements.

5 Research Ethics Restructure Proposal

- 5.1 Dr C Osborne presented a paper approved by URKEC on a restructure of the School Research Ethics approval process into three distinct Ethics Panels. She emphasised that the detail of how the process will work will be established by the three Ethics Panel Chairs and invited UREC to be involved in the new structure. Dr C Osborne asked for comments on the paper and concerns by UREC were raised.
- 5.2 Dr D Lilleker stated that the critical aspects of school based advice on processes would be missed in the new structure such as that which he offers. He did state that this could be given by a mentor or possibly the DDRE.
- 5.3 Dr K Appleton expressed concern that researchers wouldn't be clear on which Ethics Panel to apply to due to the crossover between the discipline-based Ethics Panels. Dr C Osborne clarified that the researcher would be able to approach the Ethics Panel Chairs or Ethics Panel Member to decide which is the best fit. Additionally, it is anticipated the Ethics Panels will have the option to cross-refer applications to another Ethics Panel if it thinks another is more appropriate; however, as Dr C Osborne noted, this detail is yet to be decided and would be clarified when the process is designed having taken the comments of UREC into consideration.
- 5.4 Several members raised concerns as to the time that would be taken to turn approvals around. Dr K Appleton noted that she didn't want the new process to be a barrier if the turnaround time was too long. Mr S Beer stated that he often approves ethics checklists within 24 hours when requested, in particular for proposals working with businesses. Dr C Osborne confirmed the timings of the Ethics Panels would be determined when the process is designed.
- 5.5 Prof V Hundley asked for clarity around the term 'above minimal risk' as the paper states if a proposal is above minimal risk it will be sent for Ethics Panel approval. Dr C Osborne stated this would be based on best practice and defined by the Ethics Panel Chairs as a collective.
- 5.6 Prof V Hundley also raised concerns that the Ethics Panel membership should not be based on grade hierarchy as many members of staff of lower grades are more experienced. Dr C Osborne stated that while the Chair would be a senior member of staff, membership would not be limited to those in senior positions. Prof V Hundley highlighted that the Terms of Reference should be amended to reflect this.
- 5.7 Several members raised the issue of time again with concern as to UG and PGT reviews. Mrs J Hastings Taylor and Dr C Osborne reassured UREC that UG and PGT could have their supervisor review their checklist as is currently the case and if it was above minimal risk only then would it go to an Ethics Panel for review.
- 5.8 Concerns were raised by Dr K Appleton as to how supervisors and those in the school would know when a student has gained ethical approval for a project. Mrs J Hastings Taylor stated that students will still select their School on the checklist and a mechanism could be built with IT to alert the supervisor that approval has been given. Those who need access to completed lists in the School can retain these.
- 5.9 Mr J Stevens questioned the rationale behind three Ethics Panels as opposed to another number. Dr C Osborne noted that the University is not wedded to three Ethics Panels. This simply came about because most research undertaken at BU can fit into all three Ethics Panels, but it was highlighted that there may be scope to explore a different number of Ethics Panels and/or different Ethics Panel titles and invited UREC members to discuss this further.
- 5.10 Dr D Lilleker raised an issue that Media School students undertake a dissertation within four

months and if they require Ethics Panel sign off this could impact on their ability to do this. Psychology and HSC had similar concerns. Ms E Jack noted that this could impact on the student experience.

- 5.11 Prof V Hundley raised the issue as to how monitoring will be undertaken, for instance if an academic/ student completes the checklist to state that their research does not involve vulnerable patients when it in fact does.
- 5.12 The issue of poor supervision was raised and that projects could be easily signed off. Prof H Schutkowski raised that education is needed and this is a supervisory issue, not one linked to the proposed new process. Dr C Osborne highlighted that this is an issue in the current system which demonstrates the need to have this addressed as it is a wider issue.
- 5.13 Mr S Beer raised concerns that poorly trained supervisors may be less easily identifiable in the restructured process. He also raised the issue that the amount of proposals requiring full review may be increased fivefold by the restructure and stated that there is too much cross over between the proposed Ethics Panels.
- 5.14 Dr V Culpin commented that moving to three Ethics Panels from the six School-based Committees is not the solution. She noted that there is too much cross-over between the proposed Ethics Panels and is not convinced the proposed restructure will address the issue at hand; to effectively address the issue would mean there is only one committee. Dr C Osborne noted that the current School-based processes are different and this proposal will help to solve the inconsistency because the Ethics Panel Chairs will agree on the process for the University. Mr D Gobbett commented that the aim is to minimise process and maximise efficiency; however, the proposed process won't fix these problems. He also expressed concern about timeliness and questioned whether the proposed restructure is fit for purpose as he was not convinced and suggested a re-think.
- 5.15 The members were asked to clarify whether they fundamentally disagreed on the principle of the restructure and the answer was yes.
- 5.16 Dr I Jones stated an additional three Ethics Panels which are topic based would be confusing for staff as there are already differing research themes, Units of Assessment, research groups, etc.
- 5.17 Mrs S Collins stated that a user friendly system is needed which has consistency and is robust. She highlighted the University's drive to obtain more PGRs, which means more research will be undertaken and if any ethical issues arise which lead to legal action, an investigation would be launched into how similar systems operate in other institutions. Mrs S Collins highlighted that as other leaders in the field are making a move to a cross school structure then this should be aimed for.
- 5.18 Mr S Beer stated he wished to have brought to UREC all the complaints regarding ethics in order to highlight the value of the new structure and the need for this.
- 5.19 Mr J Stevens asked Dr C Osborne to provide a list for the next meeting of the number of complaints or percentage of risk against the number of projects approved. Dr C Osborne highlighted that the number of complaints can be irrespective, the severity of one can be significant. Mr J Stevens also requested figures on how many proposals would go through the Ethics Panels.
- 5.20 Mr J Stevens highlighted that if peers are implementing ethics restructures similar to this than we should as well as it is important to remain in line with best practice in the industry. He also noted the discrepancy in the current timelines for approval and how this needs to be consistent.
- 5.21 Dr V Culpin suggested the Ethics Panels are restructured around types of participants (i.e.

vulnerable) rather than the discipline-based approach. Prof V Hundley noted this would be difficult in her discipline as a pregnant woman is only considered vulnerable at a certain point in her pregnancy.

- 5.22 Mr S Beer expressed his shock to receive the restructure proposal seeing as School Ethics Representative recently agreed to remain in post for a further three years during the June 2013 UREC meeting, based on the existing system that had only recently been approved by Senate. He noted this is a substantial change and it was unexpected.
- 5.23 Mr J Stevens stated there are concerns around about timeliness and bureaucracy and he had concerns that what was described as the issues was not addressed by a restructure. He noted that the process needs to meet the needs of the researchers and that UREC needs to influence the process and design. Dr C Osborne stated that UREC and other stakeholders would have significant influence in the process and design of the restructure and that the proposal was more a strategic outline rather than detailing specific processes.
- 5.24 Mr J Stevens summarised to say UREC would not support or approve the restructure as the rationale had not been given but acknowledged that as peers are restructuring ethics committees, this should be explored further. He stated the paper had not built the case for best practice and in order to ensure the process will meet our needs, further information is needed before support or approval would be given.

ACTION: Compile a list of the number of complaints or percentage of risk against the number of projects approved. Provide an estimate of the number of proposals that would go through the Ethics Panels on a monthly basis.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Dr C Osborne & Mrs J Hastings Taylor

6 Journalism and Research Ethics

- 6.1 Due to the length of time spent discussing the Research Ethics Restructure Proposal, it was decided to introduce the final item on the agenda at this time to ensure the presenter was not unnecessarily delayed.
- 6.2 Prof I MacRury introduced the "Research Ethics Supplementary Guide: For Reference by Researchers Undertaking Journalism and media Production Projects," which is a supplement to the Research Ethics Code of Practice for journalism and broadcast research. The supplementary guide is a compilation of excerpts from the Press Complaints Commission's Ethics Guide, OFCOM's Broadcasting Code, BBC's Editorial Guidelines and NUJ Code of Conduct. He explained that the supplementary guide was created due to the lack of specificity around professional journalism and research ethics. Prof I MacRury explained that a tick box has been included on the Online Ethics Checklist requiring journalism and broadcast researchers to indicate they have read the supplementary guide. This will ensure a paper trail exists, which captures the researcher's knowledge and understanding of professional code of ethical conduct in journalism and broadcast research.
- 6.3 Prof I MacRury stated that BU is not the only university that has come up against the issue around journalism ethics and research ethics. He explained that the working group who developed the supplementary guide reviewed multiple other university processes to ensure best practice.
- 6.4 Mrs S Collins commented that the supplementary guide is an excellent document and a good amalgamation of professional codes of best practice regarding journalism ethics.

7 Revised Research Ethics Code of Practice

- 7.1 Mrs J Hastings Taylor presented the revised RECP for UREC approval. The last version was written in 2009 and the updated version includes best practice from other universities,

funding bodies and other key organisations that are credited at the end of the document. The new version is also aligned with the misconduct policy for the first time and also encompasses the restructure of the ethics committees into Ethics Panels in terms of process.

- 7.2 Mrs S Collins commented that she would send Mrs J Hastings Taylor some clarity from a legal perspective around some of the wording, and used 12.4 as an example. Mr J Stevens asked Mrs S Collins whether examples were helpful in the document and she was supportive of having these included as they are within the RECP.
- 7.3 Mrs J Hastings Taylor noted that the revised RECP is scheduled for dissemination in January but in line with comments on the restructure paper this is yet to be determined.
- 7.4 Dr D Lilleker stated that UREC could not approve the RECP due to the aspects referring to the restructure. Dr C Osborne emphasised that the content irrespective of the processes in there could be assessed. Mrs J Hastings Taylor stated the RECP was created prior to the restructure and that the changes made to the document to encompass these were minimal. Dr D Lilleker and Mr S Beer noted that the version without the restructure should have been sent for review and the RECP was not signed off. Mr J Stevens requested feedback on the RECP be sent to Mrs J Hastings Taylor by email.
- 7.5 Mr D Gobbett asked for clarity between the role of UREC and RKEO's role in relation to Par 2.1.

ACTION: Send all comments to Mrs J Hastings Taylor.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: UREC members

8 Revised Academic Research Misconduct Policy and Communications Plan

- 8.1 Mrs J Hastings Taylor discussed this during her overview of the Revised Research Ethics Code of Practice (Item 7).

9 Obtaining Acceptance of Sponsorship from Bournemouth University: Standard Operating Procedures

- 9.1 Dr C Osborne introduced this document and explained that it is a new procedure to ensure the University is content to act as sponsor for research projects involving the NHS. She noted that the majority of NHS-related projects are sponsored by the NHS or a third-party, but this document sets out BU's SOPs for accepting sponsorship in instances where the NHS or third-party is not the sponsor.

10 Update: Research Ethics E-Module

- 10.1 Mrs J Hastings Taylor reported at the deadline for completion, the completion rate was 83% and thanked the DDREs in their efforts with this; in particular the School of Tourism and the School of Applied Sciences.
- 10.2 The completion rate of the e-module is currently at 87% with less than 100 staff yet to complete. Prof V Hundley requested a list of those who had not completed from her school so she could follow this up. Mrs J Hastings Taylor highlighted that she has been sending these to the DDREs but would be happy to share further and asked the other School Ethics Representative if they would find this helpful and the consensus was yes.

ACTION: Send an updated list of those who have yet to complete the e-module to each School Ethics Representative.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Mrs J Hastings Taylor

11 Membership: Recruiting Student and Externals

- 11.1 Mr J Stevens opened the floor to suggestions on how to best recruit a student and two external lay members to the Committee, as per the Terms of Reference. Mr S Beer commented that the recruitment of a student should be relatively easy; however, he suggested that the Committee advertise externally for the lay members and ensure a selection process is in place. Prof V Hundley commented that the advertisement could be placed through her professional networks.
- 11.2 It was decided that the external lay members would be recruited by the Committee members via their professional networks and the student would be recruited via the Graduate School, preferably a first year PGR to ensure continuity for several years.

ACTION: Develop an advertisement for the recruitment of two external lay members and one PGR first year student. The external lay member advertisement will be distributed by the Committee members via their professional networks and the student advertisement will be distributed via the Graduate School.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Mrs J Hastings Taylor

12 AECC/BU Ethical Agreement

- 12.1 Mrs J Hastings Taylor raised an issue that a journal contacted BU as it wished to publish an article by David Newell, AECC (which is accredited by BU for its courses) and wanted to ensure it had gained ethical approval as the author stated that BU oversees the AECC ethical approval process. She highlighted that AECC do have a rigorous ethical approval process but BU does not have a formal agreement with them for this and asked if UREC felt this was desirable, subject to Legal Services acceptance, that their ethical approval processes fall under the same auspices as BU's processes.
- 12.2 Mr S Beer stated this sounded a reasonable suggestion but questioned how this would be monitored and whether there is a need for us to supervise the college in their approvals. He also raised the issue of whether this would then be replicated for other FE colleges we work with.
- 12.3 Mr J Stevens asked what the benefit of creating an agreement would be and Mrs J Hastings Taylor stated this would be useful as she often receives enquiries from journals requesting evidence of ethical approval. Mr J Stevens asked whether BU would be 'rubber stamping' the AECC ethical approval process by establishing an agreement and if so how would their standards be monitored. Mrs S Collins commented that Legal Services would most likely have concerns about this. She also noted that if BU validates the AECC degrees then an agreement on how research is conducted must be in place and we should monitor this as any complaints could end in litigation.

ACTION: Liaise with Legal Services regarding BU's agreement with AECC and report back.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Mrs J Hastings Taylor

13 Other Matters Raised by School Ethics Representatives

- 13.1 Dr S McKeown raised an issue that an undergraduate student in the Business School would be undertaking a law dissertation on the legal regulation of pornography. She requested any advice from UREC members on best practice going forward. Several members agreed that so long as there was adequate support for the student and no requirement to view pornography as part of the research, that there wouldn't be any major ethical concerns.

14 Reports from School Committees

14.1 Prof V Hundley and Ms E Jack presented the RG2 report for the School of Health and Social Care. Prof V Hundley noted that the RG2 process requires a significant amount of administrative time and commented that administrative support for the proposed Ethics Panels will be necessary to ensure the workload doesn't become unbearable for the Ethics Panel Members.

15 Any other business

15.1 There was no other business.

16 Date of next meeting:

16.1 Wednesday 12 February 2014, 12.30, Room PG142