

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER 2007**

Present: Rev Dr D Hart (Chair)
Dr J Cobb, Mr D Gobbett, Prof J Fletcher, Mr G Forbes, Dr P Johnstone

Apologies: Prof N Petford, Dr E Carr, Dr I Hanson, Ms J Hanson, 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 14TH JUNE

1.1 The minutes were confirmed as a true record of the meeting subject to the surname Helmsley being changed to Hanson in minute 2.2.

2 MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that all actions arising from the last meeting were included in the current meeting agenda.

3. RESEARCH ETHICS PROCESS

3.1 The Committee agreed that further consideration would need to be given at a higher policy level as to whether there were businesses and organisations with whom the University should not wish to have research contacts. It was noted that many research funding councils would not support research sponsored by certain businesses or other organisations: a good example of this is the refusal of support where research sponsorship has been provided by tobacco companies. In addition it was noted that there was a need for particular sensitivity regarding research using vulnerable people and live animals, though this area could be addressed in the Code of Practice. The secretary would draw the Committee's discussion to the attention of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

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3.2 The committee considered the three draft review process diagrams attached to the agenda. It was agreed that further work would be needed before the diagrams could be published to a wider audience. Dr J Cobb kindly agreed to assist with the redrafting of the process diagrams and the main changes are set out in minutes 3.3 and 3.4

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3.3 It was decided that the diagrams should additionally specify the requirement that review should continue after completion of the initial ethical review form in every case where it is decided that the research may have problematic moral consequences.

3.4 The diagrams should be amended to clearly show the decision pathways open to Schools when conducting ethical review. The Schools would be required to make one of the following decisions:

- either consider and approve a project with or without recommendations relating to the treatment of ethical issues;
- reject it outright;
- pass it to the UREC for consideration if there were outstanding ethical issues on which the School required a decision. The UREC would then be empowered to make a final decision or pass the matter back to the School with advice.

In the event of rejection at School or UREC level the researcher would have the right of appeal to an appeal panel. The Secretary explained that no research ethics appeal regulations had been drafted, but that it was likely that the regulations would be similar to those adopted for other aspects of University life.

4 RESEARCH ETHICS CODE OF PRACTICE

- 4.1 The Committee considered the Code of Practice in detail and made comments as shown below regarding paragraphs 1-7 (all para numbers refer to those used in the draft produced for the 21st November meeting).
 In para 1.1 line 5 the words 'and the' should be deleted.
 In para 2.1 line 5 the words (including its aims) should be added after the word inception.
 The reference to Boyer (1990) in 2.2 (b) should relate to a reference at the end of the code.
 2.3 a) and b) should be renumbered e) and f) and para 3 should be renumbered.
 The word researchers should be used throughout the document to include principal or senior researchers.
 In para 5.1 a) line 2 is amended to read '...researchers, and their supervisors where applicable, who must be aware of ethical issues and abide by the standards required by relevant bodies.'
 In para 5.1 b) line 2 to read '...lies with the University when it employs the researchers or some of the researchers or uses registered students when...'
 In para 5.2 line 4 is amended to read '...against the researcher/s and their supervisors where appropriate or the University ...'
 In para 7.2 line to include '...or research with problematic moral consequences' after the word tissue.
- 4.2 It was agreed that the Secretary would consult staff in the School of Conservation Science about the ethical issues concerning experimentation with animals as well as the AMRC website.
 In Para 8.4 line 1 the words 'consideration and approval' are to be replaced with 'implementation of the process is the...' and in line 5 UREC to be replaced by School Research Committee.
- 4.3 Para 8.5 is to be amended to clarify that the School is responsible for ethical review and may pass responsibility for the final decision to the UREC only where there are outstanding unresolved issues. The researchers have the right to appeal against the decision made at School level and the appeal will be dealt with in accordance with University regulations. Minutes should be kept confirming that ethical review has taken place and recording key arguments and decisions in detail. In the event that the project needs urgent approval of a funding body then it will be possible for the application to the funding body to be submitted whilst waiting for ethical approval from Bournemouth University, provided that is acceptable to the funding body. Research may not commence until ethical approval has been granted.

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- 4.3 In para 9.2 the second sentence to be amended to read 'The relevant researcher should contact the Secretary of the UREC with evidence of former approval and the terms on which this approval has been granted. It will be important for the researcher to be able to show that the originating institution's approval is consistent with University policy and this Code of Practice.'
- 4.4 In para 11.3 replace 'obtained' with 'obtaining'.
In para 12.3 renumber sections in line 4-5 and renumber paras in section 12. Section 12.5 to be amended to allow for the possibility of 'demonstrable consent' by non-vulnerable subjects where a researcher can justify that written consent would not be appropriate. Except for para 14.11 paras 14.5 to 14.12 may be included with 12 and cross referenced.
- 4.5 It was agreed that the remainder of the documents would be reviewed at an additional meeting to be arranged by the Secretary.

5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The Committee agreed that the staff development session held on 2nd November had been successful and the content and discussions at the session had informed consideration of the process and the Code of Practice. Once the ethical governance review process had been agreed it would be necessary for the preparation and delivery of training to School participants before University wide implementation of the new policy.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the University Research Ethics Committee would be on 16th January at 2.15pm in the 5th Floor Committee room of Poole House.