

SENATE AND UNIVERSITY BOARD

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2009

Present: Rev Dr D Hart (Chair)
Dr J Cobb; Dr C Dickson (for Dr Johnstone); Prof J Fletcher; Dr D Gobbett; Dr I Hanson; Dr M Hind; Mr NDG Richardson

In Attendance: Prof J Parker; Prof D Osselton;
G Rayment (Committee Clerk).

Apologies: Dr P Johnstone; Dr D Lilleker.

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (2nd JULY 2008)

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Human Tissue Authority Licence

It was clarified that the School of Conservation Sciences required a Licence in respect of Human Tissue storage, in accordance with advice from the Human Tissue Licensing Authority (HTA). The Dean of the School had agreed in principle to proceeding with the application. However, the question remained as to whether a licence was required for the University as a whole, or just for Conservation Sciences. According to advice from the HTA the cost would be in the region of £5,300 and this was expected to be a recurring, annual fee. The Secretary & Registrar would seek advice on this issue and CD would consult with Dr Johnstone on whether the resources would be available in CRE to take this forward, should an application be required for the whole university.

CD/S&R

4. ETHICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH SPONSORS

It was confirmed that Dr Johnstone's service was taking forward the development of this policy for the University. This would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, to report on progress in more detail.

CD/PJ

5. RESEARCH ETHICS CODE OF PRACTICE

The draft had been re-circulated and it was clear from the detailed comments received that each school had very different requirements in terms of the Code. It was agreed that, rather than attempt to produce a 'one size fits all' code, a more slim-line overarching document would be produced (based on the work already done), which would set out the broad philosophy of the University in terms of its Research Ethics policy. Schools would then be free to free to work within this model to produce their own detailed codes if required, or bring existing policies in

line with the overarching policy. Subject to resources being available, a final draft would be presented to the next meeting.

CD

6. THE MENTAL CAPACITY ACT

Prof Parker introduced his paper, which described the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act and possible implications for research involving those lacking mental capacity. The paper also set out considerations for Research Ethics Committees (REC). Whilst RECs cannot approve such research (this is the role of the National Social Care Research Ethics Committee from 3 April), they can scrutinise the ethics of such proposals and review them against the criteria for scrutiny set up by the Act. RECs can also play a part in developing novel and creative ways of conducting such research and in considering what alternatives might exist to using people who lack mental capacity.

The Department of Health is currently updating its guidance on the issue which was expected to be published in a month or so, and would be circulated to the Committee. It was agreed that, although this formed a relatively small subset of research, all schools needed to be aware of this legislation. The pro-forma currently used by the School of Conservation Sciences to inform students of all research requirements would be updated to cover these issues and circulated to the Committee (via the Secretary).

IH/Sec

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Application for Ethical Approval

Confidential

7.3 Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) Review of Research Ethic Framework consultation.

CD alerted the Committee to this consultation exercise and requested members' comments on the draft document. In particular the 3 key questions highlighted by the ESRC:

- i) Have there been any key developments in the last three years within social science, or within research more generally, that need to be more explicitly addressed within the Research Ethics Framework?
- ii) In your experience, is all social science research being reviewed on a consistent basis or is ESRC funded or submitted research treated differently?
- iii) Are you broadly content that the delegated authorities and management procedures associated with research ethics within ROs/ Universities are clear and that delegation and decision making is properly, diligently and equitably exercised?

The deadline for the consultation exercise was 27 February 2009. It was agreed that CD would circulate details by e-mail and members would give their responses as a matter of urgency.

CD/Members

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will now take place on **Thursday, 25 June 2009 at 12.30pm** not 13th May as originally planned. The Committee Clerk would e-mail members with details.

GR

Geoffrey Rayment
Committee Clerk
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Approved as a true and accurate record:

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Rev Dr David Hart (Chair)

Date:.....