

**SENATE (with Board representation)**

**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UREC)**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2012**

Present: Dr R Chapman (Chair)  
Mr S Beer; Dr J Cobb; Dr E Craig; Dr D Lilleker; Dr G Roushan;

In Attendance: Ms Julia Hastings Taylor (Secretary); G Rayment (Committee Clerk).

Apologies: Prof M Bennett; Mr J Francis; Mr D Gobbett; Dr M Hind.

**1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (5 October 2011)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

**1.1 Matters Arising**

Matters arising had been actioned or were dealt with under other agenda items (below).

**2. RDU UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW**

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed the new Committee Secretary Julia Hastings Taylor, who had been appointed to the Research Development Unit (RDU) and would lead on matters of research governance. Following on from the discussions at the previous meeting, a document setting out draft terms of reference for a University Ethics Review had been produced and submitted to Senate for consideration and approval. The review would be overseen by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Internationalisation) and would cover all circumstances where research ethics were a consideration. This would include reviewing the role of the Committee and School Ethics Representatives, with a view to strengthening accountability and compliance and improving the ethical review process. The review would be undertaken in three phases, with its final report being submitted to Senate in Spring/Summer 2012.
- 2.2 The Secretary had already met with each of the School Ethics Representatives and these initial discussions had helped to inform the draft Terms of Reference. The review would be broad in its scope and would be conducted in an inclusive and consultative way. Members were invited to comment and it was suggested that further one-to-one discussions would then take place outside of committee.
- 2.3 In summing up the previous discussions, the Chair reiterated that any increased demands on the Committee (for example, through an increased role in monitoring compliance) would have to be accompanied by appropriate levels of resources and delegated authority. The Members had also expressed a preference that the Committee Chair be independent of the University. Members also emphasised that there was wide variation between the requirements and cultures of different Schools. For example, in some Schools research ethics was viewed chiefly as a concern for research projects involving human participants and not, therefore, such a priority issue for other projects. It was suggested that the profile and levels of engagement with School Ethics Representatives needed to be increased. This might be achieved through additional investment in professional training.

- 2.4 Members noted the overlap between research ethics issues and wider issues of research governance. For example, the ongoing consideration of data storage issues (and related insurance issues). There was broad agreement that any processes put in place must be proportionate to the risk involved. It was also important that the infrastructure did not act as a disincentive to considering more cutting edge, higher risk projects.
- 2.5 The Chair thanked members for their input and, subject to any changes arising from the review, the Committee was scheduled to meet again in May. On this point it was suggested that the review might consider the frequency of UREC meetings and whether it should meet more often.

**ACTION:** Subject to approval by Senate, the RDU review of research ethics would be undertaken and report to the Senate in Spring/Summer 2012. School Ethics Representatives would be among those consulted on the review and the Secretary would contact them individually.

**ACTION BY:** Secretary

### 3. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOL ETHICS REPRESENTATIVES

- 3.1 There were no matters raised by School Ethics Representatives.

### 4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 There was no other business.

#### Dates of future meetings

Wednesday, 30 May 2012	12.30 – 14.00	Committee
Wednesday, 3 October 2012	12.30 – 14.00	Committee
Wednesday, 6 March 2013	12.30 – 14.00	Committee
Wednesday, 12 June 2013	12.30 – 14.00	Committee

Geoffrey Rayment  
Committee Clerk  
UREC-1112-004 Minutes 8 February 2012