

SENATE AND UNIVERSITY BOARD

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2009

Present: Rev Dr D Hart (Chair)
Dr J Cobb; Dr C Dickson; Mr D Gobbett; Dr P Johnstone; Dr I Hanson;
Mr M Hind; Dr D Lilleker; Dr Gelareh Roushan; Dr Barbara Newland

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

Apologies: Prof J Fletcher; Mr J Francis; Mr N Richardson.

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (25 FEBRUARY 2009)

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record, subject to checking the attendance list and members titles.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Human Tissue Authority Licence

The Secretary & Registrar had agreed that funding from Registry budgets would be available to cover the cost of the Human Tissues Authority Licence required by the School of Conservation Sciences, and any related recurring fees. The Dean had been informed of this and asked to proceed with the application as required.

Other Matters Arising were discussed under other agenda items (below).

4. REVISED DRAFT BU RESEARCH ETHICS CODE OF PRACTICE

Dr Dickson introduced this item and highlighted the particular issues which had been raised in respect on the draft BU Research Ethics Code of Practice and sought members views on possible resolutions (see separate table accompanying the draft code).

4.1 Vulnerable Participant Consent

Concerns had been raised regarding the involvement of vulnerable participants, although it was noted that the text as drafted was consistent with the policies employed by other Universities. It was agreed to leave this text as drafted, but to monitor the issue (and any practical implications) carefully.

4.2 Externally approved projects and insurance

The Committee approved the solution proposed in the document (i.e. review process as per research transferred into BU from another institution.).

4.3 Beneficence & Non-Maleficence

The Committee discussed what might constitute appropriate qualifications and experience in conducting research. Dr Johnstone suggested that it might be

- sensible to refer to the UKRIO Code of Practice for conducting research for wording. Failing that, it was agreed that the wording, as drafted, would remain. **CD**
- 4.4 Research Participants (i)**
It was agreed that members would, where possible, submit examples of public notices seeking participants, so that an appropriate example could be included in the Code of Practice. **Members**
- 4.5 Research Participants (ii)**
The question was raised as to whether the Code of Practice may have an unanticipated consequence for students required to complete questionnaire-based coursework. It was agreed that, on balance, this would not be a practical concern and it was agreed to leave the draft text un-amended.
- 4.6 Informed consent**
The Committee discussed at length the requirement to store and back-up research data. It was proposed that such data could be stored electronically on the shared network drive (including scanned copies of consent forms) with access restricted to named individuals. This would result in the data being incorporated into the University's routine data back-up procedures. It was agreed to carry out some investigative work to explore the procedures used by other Universities. It was also agreed to check whether there were any relevant requirements placed upon the University by its insurers. **CD**
- 4.7 Data Protection Act**
The Committee discussed examples of how methods such as data coding were used to protect participants confidentiality. It was agreed that the current draft's general wording was required to ensure that processes were sufficiently rigorous and to meet audit requirements, without placing prescriptive or inflexible burdens on schools.
- 4.8 Non-Permitted Sources of Funding (paras 8.1 to 8.3)**
It was agreed to add additional wording to clarify the publication of data in instances where there might be issues arising from the need to obtain IP protection before publication, for example to protect commercial interests. **CD**
- The Committee discussed whether this section of the draft code should be extended to other issues beyond just tobacco. It was agreed that there were specific reasons for highlighting tobacco as an example, but that the draft code should ensure that schools should also consider the broader definition of research ethics (para 2.2), and that this should be added to the Ethics Check List included in the draft. **CD**
- 5. ETHICAL RELATIONSHIPS**
This was discussed under Item 4 above.
- 6. ETHICS WEBPAGES**
Due to lack of time, it was agreed that this presentation would be carried over to the next meeting.
- 7. ETHICAL APPROVALS**
Confidential
- 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place at 12.30pm on Wednesday 25 November 2009.

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:.....