

SENATE

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UREC)

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2012

Present: Dr R Chapman (Chair); Mr S Beer; Mr I Carter; Dr J Cobb; Dr Elizabeth Craig; D Gobbett; Dr M Hind; Dr D Lilleker; Dr G Roushan.

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

Apologies: None

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (11 June 2012)

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

1.1 Matters Arising

1.1.1 The online research ethical approval process had been demonstrated to Committee members. Feedback was positive and suggestions were being incorporated. J H-T to discuss under Agenda item 2.

1.1.2 All other Matters Arising were covered under Agenda items.

2. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW (including revised Terms of Reference)

2.1 The University Research Ethics Review had now been considered by other relevant groups and had being brought back to the Committee for approval. All amendments that had been received had either been implemented or reasons given as to why they had not been included. Once approved by the Committee, it would go before the Senate for approval on 24 October 2012. The Secretary thanked members for their input.

2.2 It was hoped that the soft launch of the online ethical approval process, which had been originally scheduled for 1 November 2012, would be brought forward although confirmation of this was still being sought. It was also expected that the full launch, scheduled for 1 March 2013, would be brought forward to 1 January 2013. The Committee would be kept informed on the exact dates of these launches.

2.3 Following the soft launch, 57 PhD students, together with a group of students from the School of Tourism, would test the facility and Julia Hastings Taylor had requested feedback on whether her assistance would be required on facilitating the use of the system. Suggestions for further volunteers to participate in the beta testing were also sought.

ACTION:

Feedback to be forwarded to Julia Hastings Taylor on the need for her input into the use of the online ethical approval process along with suggestions for other participants for the beta testing process.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: School Ethics Representatives.

2.4 After discussion it was agreed that in connection with completion of the NHS component when relevant, the responsibility would be with the University to ensure compliance and

not rest with the Committee. The Secretary, with advice from Dr Hind, would include text on this point in the new Research Code of Practice.

2.5 It was also agreed that although the online ethical approval process would be the default facility, it was recognised that the internal review process would still be relevant on occasions.

2.6 It was noted that in connection with the Selection Process for UREC Members, the first sentence of point 5.1.5 of the Research Ethics Review should be amended to read:

“It is proposed that the external Independent Chair should be appointed by the Chair of the Senate and the University Board independent members should be appointed by the Chair of the BU Board.”

ACTION:

Amend point 5.1.5 of the Research Ethics Review to take into account the amendment to the Selection Process for UREC Members.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Julia Hastings Taylor, Secretary

2.7 The Chair thanked Julia Hastings Taylor for her excellent work in connection with the Research Ethics Review and the online ethical approval process.

2.8 It was noted that the agenda for future meetings would be composed of three separate parts: Administrative and related issues; School-specific activities, and finally, CPD training or information awareness sessions.

2.9 It was agreed that the recommended 12 monthly review of UREC membership (5.1.4) would be at the discretion of the relevant Schools but that if there was an issue concerning membership, it would be considered by the Committee.

2.10 The Chair informed the Committee that he would remain in place until the completion of the March 2013 meeting when a review of the Chair's position and that of the committee membership would take place. At that meeting, consideration would also be given to the 3 year maximum tenure.

ACTION:

To discuss membership, as above, at the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Clerk to place on next agenda.

2.11 Dissemination of the Review would await its approval by the Senate at its meeting on 24 October 2012. The Committee approved the Research Ethics Review Report and amended Terms of Reference for recommendation to Senate, subject to the amendments noted above.

3. SPECIAL ETHICS PANEL: OUTCOMES FROM MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2012 (Confidential)

3.1 The Chair explained that the need for the formation of the Special Ethics Panel, which was a sub-committee of UREC and whose membership included four UREC members along with the relevant Deputy Deans, was to investigate a formal complaint made into the conduct of a student's PhD and to consider relevant actions to be taken.
[confidential]

3.2 [confidential]

3.3 [confidential].

- 3.4 [confidential]
- 3.5 [confidential]
- 3.6 [confidential]
- 3.7 Following discussion on what actions should be taken should the student fail to comply with decisions agreed, it was noted that the University's policies and procedures in respect of academic offences or staff disciplinary action would apply as appropriate.
- 3.8 Following discussion on the inclusion of ethical protocol in the induction of staff, it was noted that the University was procuring an ethics e-module that all new staff and PGR students would be required to complete and which would be closely monitored to ensure that they did. Should completion not take place, disciplinary action might result as it was agreed that the University must be seen to be going through the process of due diligence. It was estimated that all relevant staff and students would have completed this mandatory training module within approximately 6 months of it being introduced.
- 3.9 It was agreed that UREC might also consider issuing guidelines on the use of Social Media within research and it was noted that consideration would be given to those adhered to by the London School of Economics. It was agreed that two members of UREC would consider these guidelines and put forward a proposal to the Committee at its next meeting. It was agreed that the guidelines should include a statement that should protocols not be adhered to, the infringement would be a matter for disciplinary action. The Chair reaffirmed that notwithstanding the need for guidelines on the use of social media, the lack of guidelines in no way excused the breach of ethics which occurred in this case, which was clearly beyond reasonable doubt.

ACTION:

To consider the introduction of guidelines on the use of social media in research, taking into consideration those published by the London School of Economics.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Julia Hastings Taylor/Dr Gelareh Roushan

- 3.10 The Committee approved the recommendations of the Special Panel and the draft letters, subject to the amendments above and it was agreed to notify members once letters had been issued.

ACTION:

Committee Members to be notified once letters had been issued.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY: Julia Hastings Taylor

4. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOL ETHICS REPRESENTATIVES

- 4.1 Dr Craig asked for guidance on a proposed UG project within the School of Applied Sciences concerning the use of pheromones. It was agreed that consent was required from the participants, but that the scientific validity of the project was a more pressing concern. Dr Hind agreed to forward template documentation to assist Dr Craig.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Dates of future meetings:

Wednesday, 6 March 2013	12.30 – 14.00	Committee
Wednesday, 12 June 2013	12.30 – 14.00	Committee