UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the fifty-ninth meeting of the University Research Ethics Committee, held 04 October 2012

Present: David Anderson-Ford (Chair), Peter Hobson (Deputy Chair), Laurence Brooks, Rory Deane, Federico Ferretti, Ahmad Ghoneim, Richard Godfrey, Ashraf Khir, John MacMillan, Mary Pat Sullivan, Jim Wood, Zidong Wang, Mary Liddell (Secretary)

Apologies: Sheila Bannerman, Joan Gandy

Reserved (FOI)   Release date

493.   Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest with regard to item 8 on the agenda.

Action:

494.   Minutes

The minutes of the fifty-eighth meeting held on 19 July 2012 were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED as a true record.

Action:

495.   Matters arising

495.1. Electronic submission system for research ethics (488.1)

The Secretary reported that she would develop a mock-up of the SharePoint page for this process and consult with Web Services Technical Manager in the Computer Centre regarding the workflow.

Action: ML

495.2. Papers before Council (488.2)

The Chair reported that document updates were in progress.

Action: DA-F, ML

495.3. Review of SRECs (488.4)

The Chair reported that he would contact the review team and liaise with School Research Ethics Officers and administrators this month.

Action: DA-F

495.4. Annual Report to Council and Senate (488.6)

The Secretary reported that she had spoken to the Secretary to Council regarding the apparent requirement for review of applications by the Health & Safety Committee. There had been no change intended to the review process; researchers whose applications required a health and safety risk assessment would liaise with the Health & Safety Officer as before.

Action:

495.5. Legal risks to University and researcher (488.7)

The Chair reported that document updates were in progress.

Action: DA-F, ML

495.6. School reports to UREC (488.8)

The Chair reminded the Committee that this item referred to a proposed change in the pro-forma for School reports, which would require the SRECs to indicate the number of proposals approved and rejected by type of application (expedited or full application).

The Committee AGREED to the proposed change. The Secretary would amend the pro-forma.

Action: ML

495.7. Consultation on fertility and human tissue regulators (490)

The Chair reported that a response to this consultation had been drafted by the Designated Individual and was submitted to the Department of Health.

Action:

495.8. Universities UK concordat to support research integrity (491)

The Chair reported that many of the Universities represented at AREC had signed up to this concordat and asked for a recommendation from the Committee to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Committee AGREED that the University should sign up to the concordat and requested the Chair notify the Vice-Chancellor accordingly.

Action: DA-F, ML

496.   Use of social media and other technologies for research

Dr Brooks provided an overview of social media technologies, and posed a question for the Committee, namely, how ethical was it to capture items in the public domain for use in research, some of which might involve users in other countries, and items in other languages? He pointed out that the Open University had conducted a survey on the subject and had published a handbook of social media (http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/567271/Handbook-of-social-media-for-researchers-and-supervisors.html).

The following points were raised during discussion:

- Ethical considerations might well be the same as for any other case, but there was an issue regarding consent

- When people signed up to social media sites, terms and conditions were rarely read beforehand; did those terms and conditions mention the possibility that posts on the social media site might be used for research?

- There was quite a lot of literature coming out in law on this subject, but the issue was not straightforward

- There were research ethics and legal (especially copyright and intellectual property) dimensions to consider in relation to the use of social media in research

- The Deputy Chair reported that FRRICT were looking at this issue and had published some papers (http://responsible-innovation.org.uk/frriict/)

- Some organisations and collaborative groups had explicit guidelines regarding what could be posted on social media in relation to specific research projects

- Oxford and Cambridge had a framework on this issue.

The Committee AGREED that there was a need to proactively issue guidelines in this area. A working group was formed to develop a presentation or the next meeting.

Action: DA-F, LB, PH, RD

497. Revision of research misconduct procedure

The Secretary reported that, following two years use of the Procedure for the Investigation of Research Misconduct, changes were required. She requested a small working group be formed to review the procedure. The representatives from the Brunel Business School and the School of Health Sciences and Social Care (SHSSC) agreed to make up the working group.

Action: ML, AG, MPS

498. External webpage for UREC

The Secretary presented a mock-up of a proposed external webpage for the Committee, and the proposed text for the Overview section.

The Committee APPROVED the format for the webpage. The Overview text was APPROVED with some modifications.

Action: ML

RESERVED BUSINESS 499

500.   Remaining agenda items

Items 9 and 10 would be dealt with at the meeting on 22 November.

Action:

501.   Meeting dates

22 November 2012
24 January 2013
21 March 2013
23 May 2013
18 July 2013

All meetings would be held in WB A102, unless otherwise noted on the agenda. All meetings start at 1000.

ML 05/10/12

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE – OCTOBER 2012 – ACTION SHEET

Minute	Item	Action	Action by
495.1	Electronic submission system for research ethics	Develop mock-up of SharePoint page	ML
		Consult Web Services Technical Manager regarding workflow	ML
495.2	Papers before Council	Update documents	DA-F, ML
495.3	Review of SRECs	Contact review team	DA-F
		Liaise with REOs and SREC administrators	DA-F
495.5	Legal risks to University and researcher	Update documents	DA-F, ML
495.6	School reports to UREC	Modify pro-forma	ML
495.8	UUK concordat to support research integrity	Notify VC of UREC recommendation	DA-F, ML
496	Use of social media and other technologies for research	Prepare presentation for November meeting	DA-F, LB, PH, RD
497	Revision of research misconduct procedure	Revise document	ML, AG, MPS
498	External webpage for UREC	Insert overview text	ML