RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ToR September 2026

Terms of Reference

1 The Research Ethics Committee is responsible to the Higher Education Academic Board for general issues relating to research ethics in the College.

2 The Research Ethics Committee's terms of reference are to:

(a) promote the application of ethical standards in research carried out by students studying Higher Education qualifications at the College and research carried out by College staff using the BERA (2024) standards if no others apply;

(b) oversee the implementation in the College of the research activities according to relevant awarding or regulatory body guidance and associated research authorisation and local approval processes;

(c) provide information, guidance, and developmental opportunities relating to research ethics to researchers, research supervisors, and other interested parties;

(d) consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) or the Higher Education Academic Board.

Delegated Authority

3 The Research Ethics Committee has authority to:

(a) consider for approval research projects:

(i) projects that potentially involve substantial and / or complex ethical issues referred to it by an ethics reader;

(ii) where the consent of an external body or person(s) or internal gatekeeper permission is required;

(iii) where it is a requirement for funding by an external body;

(iv) where a member of staff wishes to use College students for research, the Committee chair will approve the project.

(b) require staff to attend a meeting of the Committee when their research proposals, or other matters relating to the ethics of their students' research, are being discussed;

(c) monitor compliance of ethical approval processes in the College by receipt and consideration of appropriate reports

(d) The functions of the Research Ethics Committee will not normally be delegated.

Reporting Line

4 Meetings of the Research Ethics Committee will be reported to the next meeting of the Higher Education Academic Board.

Membership Profile

5 Research Ethics Committee should not normally exceed 7 members and must include:

(a) The Chair, who shall be a member of SLT appointed by the Higher Education Academic Board
(b) Nominated Readers from Curriculum Areas in which HE research is being carried out;
(c) HE Manager;
(d) ;
(e) Co-optees as appropriate;
(f) HE Administrator.

Each member of the committee, apart from the Chair, HE Manager SQCO and Administrator, will be allocated to Higher Education programmes to act as Ethics Lead for that programme and provide a link between the team teaching the programme and the committee.

The Committee will only be quorate if 4 members attend including the Chair or an agreed deputy.

Current Membership

(a) The Chair – Victoria Lindberg
(b) Readers as allocated for each meeting
(c) HE Manager – Rose Guy
(d) None
(e) Lynne Mountford (administration)

Terms of office

6 Three years for members in category a) and b); c), d) and f) as part of job role.

Meeting frequency

7 HE Manager and HE Administrator will meet early in the Academic Year to confirm the systems to be used and to ensure they are communicated to the relevant teams. They will set a schedule of meetings to agree the student's proposals before they start work. Meetings shall be cancelled at least 24 hours before they are scheduled if there are no applications for consideration

Exceptional Circumstances

8 If ethical approval is required for a proposal, and a meeting cannot be called within an appropriate time, the Chair, one practitioner representative and Senior Quality and Compliance Officer shall meet, and the Chair shall make the final decision.

Approval of staff projects

9 Director of Quality of Educationshall meet with the member of staff who shall submit an ethical approval form, or proof of ethical approval from another HEI, for consideration. Once DoQoE is convinced of the ethical validity of the proposal, it shall be passed to the Chair for final approval.