



Senate

Paper Title	Executive Summary – Ethics of Research Committee
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the report.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	
Questions for Senate to consider	
Regulatory/statutory reference points	
Strategy and risk	
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	
Authors	Mantalena Sotiriadou, Research Ethics Facilitator
Sponsor	

QUEEN MARY ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Meeting – 3rd March 2021

Main Items Discussed

1. Generic review process

The University's process for applying for ethical approval was designed around the concept of a researcher applying for clearance of an individual research project. While this is still appropriate for most of the University's research, in some research areas it is common to undertake groups of low-risk research studies involving human participants and their data that are very similar in terms of their topic and methodology (for example a cohort of PGT or UG students undertaking the same type of study).

A two-stage procedure was approved by the Committee in which applications for QMERC generic approval are invited from cognate groups of researchers who will be conducting the same type of low-risk research and using the same broad methods and procedures. The application will detail not only the types of research, conducted by whom, but also the local procedures for devolved ethical review at School, department or module level. Further to the over-arching generic approval, individual researchers (staff and students) will complete a reduced research ethics application form which will be considered by the School Research Ethics Committee to confirm compliance with the specifics of the generic approval, confirm each study is low-risk and identify and mitigate the ethical issues.

2. Member Training

In order to support our members in their personal development and expertise, a standard item has been added to the Agenda for each Panel meeting to ensure discussion of relevant training needs and upcoming events.

3. Membership Update

QMERC welcomed new Review Panel members; Dr Haidar Hassan and Dr Kerry Holden, from the Blizard Institute and the School of Geography respectively.

4. Ethics Review Panels

The Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee delegates the review of research applications (not including low-risk studies) to its seven Review Panels, which consist of cross-Faculty members.

The Committee proposed that each School or Institute appoint a leader of the devolved School Research Ethics Committee (DSREC) review process. These leaders would be responsible for the operation and oversight of the local devolved review process and ideally become a member of the central QMERC Review Panels and contribute to shaping the overall research ethics approach. The QMERC Chairs and the JRMO Research Ethics team will agree with the Heads of Schools/Institutes an expansion of the available pool of Panel members. They will also work to ensure that this important and time-demanding role is recognised appropriately within the workload management of the Schools/Institutes.

The QMERC Chairs and the JRMO Research Ethics team are embarking on an advertising campaign expanding the Committee's lay membership.

5. Embedding a culture of research ethics

The Committee agreed that to further support the development of good research practice and embed a culture of research ethics, the QMERC Chairs and the JRMO Research Ethics team will strengthen communication with research-active academics and education leads by setting up a series of meetings at Faculty level. The JRMO Research Ethics team will continue to work to ensure that all researchers are aware of the policies and processes relating to ethical approval.

6. Recent Workload Metrics

Month	Applications received	Applications approved	Amendments received	Amendments approved
November 2020	57	41	3	2
December 2020	48	30	2	2
January 2021	56	30	5	5
February 2021	29	25	3	3
March 2021	47	47	4	7
April 2021	79	52	1	7

Mantelena Sotiriadou, Research Ethics Facilitator – 3rd June 2021