Queen Mary
University of London

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	An updated Terms of Reference and membership list will be reported to Senate at its next meeting.
Questions for Senate to consider	
Regulatory/statutory reference points	
Strategy and risk	
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	
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Sponsor	

QUEEN MARY ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Meeting – 14 July 2021

Main Items Discussed

Research ethics application 'software as a solution' system

The administration of research ethics applications at the University is managed by the Research Ethics team (consisting of two Research Ethics Facilitators and the Research Support & Development Manager), which is situated in the Joint Research Management Office. The team relies on the use of paper-based application forms to capture information about studies involving human participants, their personal data or human tissue, and it reports data using Excel technology.

Several issues are experienced using the above system: only a small group of individuals can access the data; data is manually entered into Excel so very time consuming; reporting to the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC main committee) and other committees QMERC reports to, requires extensive manipulation; new staff require extensive training when joining the team; alerts to support researchers meet their reporting obligations are difficult to set up.

To streamline the review of applications for ethical approval, to ensure that reporting is comprehensive, transparent and timesaving at every stage, and to assure good research governance across the University, the Committee and the Research Ethics team are in search of a software solution.

After receiving approval by ITSB in July 2021 for the implementation of an online system to administer Queen Mary research ethics applications, the Committee is working with the Procurement team to explore available solution options. The business call for research ethics management system went out to formal tender in August 2021 and it is expected that the key stakeholder evaluations of responses and software demos will be completed by October 2021.

Generic review process

In March 2021, a two-stage procedure was approved by the Committee in which applications for QMERC generic approval are invited from groups of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students who will be conducting low-risk research. The QMERC July meeting extended the scope to include a group of low-risk staff and postgraduate student-led studies. The generic 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 will complete a reduced research ethics application form which will be considered by the Devolved 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.

Since March 2021, generic approval applications have been received from the School of Geography, the Department of Psychology and the School of Business and Management. Expressions of interest to apply for generic approval has been made by other Departments, for example Global Public Health, History, Linguistics and the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science.

The Research Ethics team and the Committee will continue to support colleagues with obtaining generic approval as per the proposal approved by QMERC in March & July 2021.

QMERC Panel members recruitment

Since the QMERC main meeting in July 2021, the QMERC Chairs and the JRMO Research Ethics team embarked on an advertising campaign to expand the Committee's internal and lay membership.

The position of QMERC Panel member has been advertised to QMUL alumni to seek members of the public to join one of its Review Panels in a voluntary capacity as Lay Members. Lay Members, coming from a variety of backgrounds and fields of work, fulfil a vital role on Research Ethics Committees. They bring a societal perspective to the consideration of research and offer new or different ways of thinking about ethical issues from an independent standpoint external to the organisation. The Committee has received fourteen high-quality lay member applications and the interview and appointment process is expected to be completed in October 2021. Also, since July 2021, the position of QMERC Panel member has been successfully advertised internally. Approximately ten internal Queen Mary staff have been recruited and trained by the Research Ethics Facilitators.

Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The UK Research Integrity Office has published a new edition of its self-assessment tool for the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. This tool has been developed to help institutions identify areas of their research practices, systems and policies, researcher development and monitoring that may need to be revised in order to adhere to the requirements and recommendations of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The self-assessment tool will be discussed at the next main Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee meeting, which will be held on 10th November 2021, with a view to identify ways that this might be embedded in existing activities in order to fulfil the Concordat's aim of improving research integrity.

Metrics for 01 June 2021 to 30 September 2021

The report below provides a summary of the applications for QMERC ethical approval received and approved between 01 June 2021 and 30 September 2021.

Low risk applications received	94
Low risk applications approved	69
Panel review applications received	17
Panel review applications approved	4
QMERC applications received	2
QMERC applications approved	1
Amendments received	16
Amendments approved	11
TOTAL APPLICATIONS IN 4-MONTH REPORTING PERIOD	129
TOTAL REJECTED	1 (since given Approval with Conditions)

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