Queen Mary
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Senate

Paper Title	**Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC)**
Outcome requested	To **note** the executive summary report of the QMERC meeting on 29 November 2024 and action taken since.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	
Questions for Senate to consider	N/A
Regulatory/statutory reference points	N/A
Strategy and risk	N/A
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	QMERC Senate
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Sponsor	Professor Andrew Livingston, Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)

QUEEN MARY ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Meeting – 29 November 2024

High-Risk Application

Study title:	Digital Al-Andalus: Radical Perspectives Of and Through Al-Andalus
Reference number:	QME 23.0202
Study type:	Staff project, School of Languages, Linguistics and Film (LLF)

The study is summarised below and was reviewed at QMERC Main Committee on 29th November 2023. The reason QMERC have requested Senate notification is due to the high-risk security-sensitive study; the concerns for the safety of the researcher; and the complex legal and ethical issues and potential reputational risk it poses for Queen Mary.

The study examines the digital mediatisation of Al-Andalus, and the connection of the eight-century Muslim rule (711-1492) over the Iberian Peninsula with contemporary radical reactionary groups. The aim is to use Al-Andalus and its associated narratives of Convivencia and Reconquista to provide new insights into historical legacies that speak about online cultural confrontation and digital citizenship.

The researcher aims to identify existent and emerging narratives of Al-Andalus online, examine radical groups and the melding of historical episodes in online discourses and theorise on digital media through multilingual online discourses of groups with shared aims and using the same historical event.

The following teams have been contacted to ensure that the legal and ethical aspects are duly considered, planned, prepared and risks identified and wherever possible mitigated.

- Queen Mary legal team: regarding issues of legality and notifying security services.
- Data Protection and IT security

We have advised the appropriate measures that should be put in place to ensure this is appropriately risk assessed and notified to the correct bodies ahead of time.

Main Items Discussed & Relevant Action Since

Terms of reference

There have been updates in terminology and additional information to reflect how QMERC currently runs. The Chair is no longer nominated by Council. There are now seven panels. Panel members can now observe QMERC Main Committee meetings. PhD students are welcome as non-reviewing panel members.

Chair's Succession Planning, Recognition and Expansion

Securing strong leadership

As mentioned in the October report Dr Helen Jenner is stepping down as Chair of QMERC at the end of 2024. Recruitment for a successor will be in collaboration with Dr Jenner. A proposal to recruit Faculty Research Ethics Leads within QMERC was introduced. The role would involve engaging and communicating with Faculty senior management such as Directors of Research & Education, to improve the research processes and to maximise communication and providing direct updates to QMERC Main Committee.

Devolved School Research Ethics Committees (DSRECs)

The DSREC Sub-Committee – whose dual function is to review the incoming applications from new DSRECs and to serve as a forum for debate among the Chairs and Deputies of our now n=12 operational DSRECs - met in February 2024. The

subject of the February Sub-Committee was a discussion around next steps to onboard DSRECs to the online application system. The audit schedule for the next year and an update on the progress of support and recognition for ethical review work. It was agreed that a wider discussion on AI and ethics was needed. Dylan Morrissey alerted members to an upcoming talk at Queen Mary "AI Ethics Terminology: An Interdisciplinary Glossary" which aims to delve into the ethical discourse surrounding technology, particularly focusing on the complexity and interpretation of terminology used in AI ethics.

Current Panel Membership

We have good membership level from a wide range of departments and expertise.

Ethical Breaches Procedure: Appendix 1 Information Gathering

In response to the increase in number of ethics breaches reported to QMERC the breaches procedure and processes were duly considered. The appendix seeks to detail the process of information gathering, investigation and considerations of the QMERC Chairs. Each ethical breach is considered on its own merits. To be able to reach recommendations on possible sanctions the QMERC Chairs ask that the Research Ethics team act as main liaison with relevant parties which can include the student, supervisor, DSREC, Principal Investigator, Head of School. The Research Ethics team are working with the Head of Appeal, Complaint & conduct Office in Student Administration to align processes.

Metrics for 1 October 2023 to 31 January 2024

The report below provides a summary of the applications for QMERC ethical approval received and approved between **1 October 2023 to 31 January 2024.**

	Received	Approved
Panel review apps	23	12

Low risk apps	43	35
QMERC apps	1	1
Amendments	6	4
Block (Generic) applications	1	0
DSREC set up applications	0	0
Transfer apps	6	1
International	3	2
Total	83	55

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