

Terms of Reference for Faculty Research Ethics Committees

Principles

- 1) The Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs) will report to the University Research Ethics and Integrity Committee (UREIC). They will work to the University's Research Ethics Policy and ultimately to the UREIC terms of reference.
- 2) The FRECs are responsible for making decisions on whether research projects in the faculties meet the University's ethical standards and requirements as set out in the University's Research Ethics Policy and Code of Practice.
- 3) More specifically, the remit of the FRECs is to provide guidance to postgraduate research students (PhD) and staff on ethical issues with regards to research. The FRECs are responsible for reviewing and approving ethics applications submitted by staff and postgraduate research students. The FRECs will also review applications which will not be reviewed by an NHS research ethics committee.
- 4) The FRECs have no responsibility for reviewing and approving applications by undergraduate and taught postgraduate students (e.g., all Masters students, including Masters by Research). This responsibility falls to Heads of Departments or delegated departmental members of staff.
- 5) The FREC Chair will be a member of UREIC. The Chair will provide annual reports to UREIC on any ethical issues, decisions made and any recommendations for changes to University policy and procedure. The annual reports to UREIC should be a short written report in the first meeting of the academic year.
- 6) The FRECs have final approval powers.

Membership and meetings

- 7) Membership of the FRECs will be multidisciplinary, consider diversity and include at least one external (lay) member not affiliated to Lancaster University. Membership will be as follows:
 - The Chair and Deputy Chair from the relevant faculty(ies);
 - Normally at least one member from the staff of each department in the faculties, but at least two colleagues for a large department with high numbers of applications;
 - One or two lay members;
 - At least one research student representative per faculty.
- 8) The recommended workload allocation is 30% the Chair, 15% for Deputy Chair and 80-100 hours for ordinary members. As ethical approval is a key component of the university's research activity, departments are expected to assign staff to serve on committees without financial compensation.

- 9) The Chair and Deputy Chair will ordinarily be recruited from the FREC membership, as considerable expertise is needed in reviewing ethics applications for these roles. If there is more than one suitable candidate, a panel will be convened to shortlist and appoint a new FREC Chair/Deputy Chair. Normally the Chair of UREIC would lead the recruitment panel of a FREC Chair. In the case of a Deputy Chair the panel will ordinarily comprise of the FREC Chair, the FREC Secretary and a Chair/Deputy Chair of one of the other FRECs.
- 10) The Chair and Deputy Chair will serve for 3 years and can be reappointed once. They will not ordinarily serve more than 6 years in total across both roles of Chair/Deputy Chair.
- 11) Ordinary members will serve for a term of 3 years, renewable twice by mutual agreement.
- 12) All FREC members will not normally serve for more than 9 years (across any FREC role) except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of UREIC. Exceptional circumstances include family-related or long-term sickness absences or sabbaticals.
- 13) The appointment of appointed and co-opted members shall be ratified by the Chair of UREIC.
- 14) Quoracy of the FRECs at all meetings requires the presence of Chair or Deputy Chair, the committee Secretary (or alternative if unavailable) and members with sufficient expertise to assess the type and quantity of proposals at each meeting. The attendance of a lay member whilst important is not essential as long as the lay member has received the meeting papers and has had the opportunity to comment on agenda items, if they wish to. In case they have identified issues that they wish the committee to discuss, they will put these in writing to the Chair/Deputy Chair or Secretary who will bring them to the attention of the Committee so that they can be discussed at the committee meeting. Furthermore, all documentation will be made available to all committee members to comment on if they wish, should they not be present at the meeting.
- 15) The FRECs will normally meet at least quarterly throughout the year.