



College Research Ethics Committees: Terms of Reference

Purpose

College Research Ethics Committees (CRECs) are accountable for the overall operation and management of research ethics within the College, including the management of the College Scrutineer Pools.

Membership

Membership will not exceed 8 members including the Chair

Chair appointed jointly by the College Dean (Research and Enterprise) and the University Ethics and Integrity Committee Chair

Deputy Chair

One person per School with significant personal track record of high integrity research [two per School for CBL]

At least one person not employed by UWE

Dean (Research and Enterprise) - optional attendance

In attendance

Committee Officer

University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC) Chair (standing invitation)

Head of the Research Governance and Ethics Team (standing invitation)

The Chair may from time to time invite other members to be in attendance, where the Meeting business requires it.

Responsibility

College Research Ethics Committees are responsible for:

- Encouraging a culture within the College which recognises the central importance of ethical considerations in the design and performance of research;
- Disseminating guidelines produced by the University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC) on the proper conduct of research investigations in order to promote good ethical practice;
- Overseeing the operation of the College Scrutineer Pool, including:
 - Considering a monthly dashboard of processing times (at each meeting, and by correspondence between meetings) such that any issues can be addressed in a timely manner
 - Ensuring that the Pool is appropriately populated (in terms of numbers and expertise)
 - Ensuring that Pool Members have completed mandatory ethics and scrutineer training (based on reports from the Research Ethics team)

- Contributing to UEIC research ethics guidance, such as the Handbook and other guidance which may be developed from time to time.
- Participating as requested in annual UEIC research ethics audits.
- Identifying and advising UEIC of appropriate training on ethical review for members of CREC and Scrutineering Pools, and taking part in the development and delivery of UEIC ethics training events;
- Advising on and, where necessary, complying with external regulations and/or guidance on the ethical conduct of research with particular reference to the research culture within the College;
- Reporting to UEIC and College RKEC via the Annual Assurance Report, or more frequently if required;
- Considering ethics cases which need a full CREC discussion, and where appropriate referring cases to UEIC for decision. Referral to UEIC for a review will be in exceptional circumstances only;
- Considering specific areas of ethics risk or any matters or priority areas referred to it for consideration or action by the Chair of UEIC or CRKEC;
- Developing/monitoring action plans to tackle issues which arise within its remit;
- Ensuring active consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the conduct of its business and in its annual review of its own performance;
- Evaluating annually its own performance to ensure academic governance arrangements enhance institutional performance and add value, in the context of UWE's Mission and Strategy;

Accountability

College Research Ethics Committees are accountable to the relevant College Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (CRKEC) and to UEIC in relation to research ethics policy and practice report to them on:

- The operation and management of research ethics in the College;
- Suggestions of issues which should be considered at University level;
- Proposals for changes to its terms of reference, membership or priorities.

Assurance

Each CREC provides an annual assurance report to UEIC and the relevant CRKEC, through which it demonstrates how it has fulfilled its Terms of Reference and assesses its own effectiveness and that of the College Scrutineering Pool. The requirements for the report will be specified by UEIC, in consultation with Academic Governance.

Administration

College Research Ethics Committees will meet a maximum of four times a year. The duration of meetings will be no longer than two hours. The Quorum for meetings is one-third of members eligible to attend.

A committee officer will be drawn from the research ethics team to support the Chair in the effective and efficient conduct of the Committee's business.

Review

The Terms of Reference for CRECs will be reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant, decision-making structures are effective and CRECs can effectively discharge their duties.

Term of Office

Tenure for the Chair and Deputy Chair is normally for three years. Re-appointment may be permitted for a further period of up to three years with the agreement of the Chair of the University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC).