

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
**COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS & GOVERNANCE IN ARTS,
SOCIAL SCIENCES & BUSINESS**

COMMITTEE REMIT, 2023/24

In line with University requirements to review annually the remit of main committees at all levels, the Committee for Research Ethics & Governance in Arts, Social Sciences and Business has updated its remit to ensure that the work of the Committee remains relevant for the coming year.

The Committee has ensured that, as a minimum, the following remit reflects any requirements set by University policies to ensure that matters of research ethics are thoroughly addressed within the six Schools of Business; Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History; Education; Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture; Law; and Social Science (hereafter referred to as 'the Schools') in a clear and transparent way.

Committee Responsibilities

The Committee Responsibilities (revised in December 2023) are described as being:

1. To be responsible for the ongoing revision of the Research Ethics and Governance Committee Policy in the Schools and monitoring its implementation;
2. To develop policy and guidelines in accordance with research good practice and ethical issues as they relate to research undertaken in all areas of the Schools;
3. To keep apprised of developments in research ethics and good practice as applicable to the research disciplines in the Schools;
4. To review all applications made by staff and postgraduate research students for ethical approval received from the Schools (and other areas of the University as necessary) either through online review or by further referral to full Committee review^{1,2};
5. To give written decisions and, as appropriate, feedback for all applications received. This will be provided via the Worktribe Ethics process;
6. To record and archive all applications, practices and decisions relating to the ethical review of research;

¹ Where an application requires to be considered by the full Committee, the Principal Investigator will be invited to attend the meeting.

² It is not the intention of the Policy that research should be prevented. Rather, feedback will aim to enable the Principal Investigator to re-consider those aspects that have caused concern for the Committee prior to resubmission of a revised proposal.

7. (Through School Ethics Officers) to ensure that researchers (staff and students) within the Schools are provided with information on good practice and ethical review requirements of the University and disciplinary associations relevant to their research;
8. To ensure that staff and students in the Schools receive appropriate opportunities to take part in training in good research practice and ethical matters;
9. To report to the appropriate bodies in the University.

When a particular issue of research ethics cannot be resolved through either expedited review or in discussion with the Committee, the Chair will defer adjudication to the University's Ethics Advisory Group.

The Chair will be invited to present an annual report on the Committee's activities to the Ethics Advisory Group. The Dean for Academic Research Partnerships and Research Governance chairs the Ethics Advisory Group, and the Chair of this Ethics Committee is a member. The Dean will, on behalf of the Chair, be responsible for maintaining a routine line of communication between this Committee, the Ethics Advisory Group, the University Research Committee (where necessary) and the Vice-Principal for Research.

Membership

- Chair - A senior academic from Arts, Social Sciences & Business, appointed on the recommendation of the Vice-Principal for Research.
- Dean for Academic Research Partnerships and Research Governance (if not Chair).
- One academic member of staff from each School (the School Ethics Officer, or where necessary, the Deputy School Ethics Officer – both nominated by the Head of School).
- A senior academic from outside the Schools with relevant experience (appointed by the Vice-Principal for Research on the recommendation of the Committee Chair).
- A senior representative from IT Services (appointed by the Committee Chair or the Dean for Academic Research Partnerships and Research Governance) to provide advice and guidance on ethical issues as they relate to information technology.
- The Committee may also invite other members of staff to participate in committee meetings, as necessary.

Committee Remit

The remit of the Committee is as follows:

The Committee for Research Ethics & Governance in Arts, Social Sciences and Business is responsible for maintaining and reviewing the Committee's Standard Operating Procedure, and for reviewing and adjudicating on all applications for ethical approval made by staff and postgraduate research students within the Schools.

In addition to duties on the Committee, School Research Ethics Officers are responsible for ensuring that the Standard Operating Procedure and any additional guidance developed by the group or the institutional Research Policy Committee are communicated to staff and students within the School (this includes ensuring that all colleagues are aware of their own responsibility to apply for ethical review of research proposals as required by the policy).

School Ethics Officers are also required to ensure that any matters relating to research ethics specific to areas of research within the School are communicated to relevant colleagues, and to keep ethical issues in the School under review.

Relationship of the Committee with the University's Ethical Governance Structures

This Committee provides regular reports relating to ethical issues, reflects on wider ethical structures, provides opinions on where these might be adapted or changed, and provides input on any other matters relating to research governance within the Schools to the University's Ethics Advisory Group. The Dean for Academic Research Partnerships and Research Governance chairs the Ethics Advisory Group. The Ethics Chair is a member of this group, and will, where appropriate, provide feedback to the members of the Committee for Research Ethics & Governance in Arts, Social Sciences and Business on how policy decisions made by the Ethics Advisory Group will apply to the Schools.

This Committee provides advocacy on how the disciplines within the Schools operate, and represents the needs of the Schools so that University policy can be informed by our practices.

The Ethics Advisory Group is a sub-committee of the University Research Committee, which has overarching responsibility for managing the University's research ethics and governance arrangements, and is a Committee of Senate.

Across the University, the Deans for Research provide an interface between their local ethics governance structures and the University's Research Committee, and also a link across the disciplines.