

Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee

Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee is a committee of Senate.

Terms of reference

1. To provide a forum for the independent review of research ethics in the University.
2. To review and advise on University research ethics policies, and to provide a source of advice on ethical issues arising from their implementation. To consider research ethics issues in the light of the University's mission and values, and to ensure that those policies provide an ethical framework for research within the University.
3. To approve policies, procedures and guidelines for the consideration of all proposals for research that involve human participants¹ and materials derived from human participants, and which are to be undertaken by staff or students of the University, including the identification of criteria for low-risk and high-risk applications.
4. To advise on training provisions for those undertaking research involving human participants or personal data.
5. To monitor and report to Senate on the implementation of research policies and to advise on any other matters of relevance referred to it by Senate.
6. To provide a pool of expertise that could be used if appropriate to contribute to investigative panels in cases of alleged research misconduct.
7. To assure itself that appropriate training in the ethics of research is available to staff and students.
8. To establish and maintain the membership of the Research Ethics Review Panels.
9. To monitor the work of the Research Ethics Review Panels and to consider reports on ethical approval granted by the Review Panels and through the low-risk system.
10. To consider research ethics applications that meet the criteria for being high risk or that are complex, and those applications referred to it by the Review Panels.
11. To consider relevant external developments relating to research ethics and to identify any implications and required actions for the University and the Committee's work.

¹ For the purpose of the Committee's terms of reference, '*research which involves human participants*' should be interpreted in the broadest sense, i.e. student work, quantitative and qualitative studies involving questionnaires and interviews etc and not limited to, for example scientific experiments involving human subjects. This is further confirmed in the University's Policy on Research Ethics.

12. To refer researchers who submit proposals which require consideration by an NHS, or other specialist committee, to the appropriate committee if a Review Panel has not already done so.
13. To report to Senate on its work, especially highlighting any high-risk research and activity relating to research ethics procedures and policy.

Membership of QMERC Main Committee

- An external Lay member as Chair
- An internal member of academic staff (Deputy Chair)
- A representative of Queen Mary Senior Leadership Group, or their nominee,
- Up to fourteen academic staff members, including three from each of the three Faculties of the University (Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering, Medicine and Dentistry) and one from Professional Services
- Up to three further co-opted external members.
- Up to three further co-opted members drawn from the staff of the University.

Each member (except the Chair) also serves on a Review Panel, as below.

Quoracy

Seven members comprise a quorum.

Secretariat

The Research Ethics Facilitator will be a member of administrative staff of the University.

In attendance

The following may attend meetings of QMERC:

- Representatives from the Joint Research Management Office
- Researchers invited to discuss their proposals and other matters with the Committee.
- Other staff and students of the University with the agreement of the Chair.
- Panel members with the agreement of the Chair.

Meetings

- 3 times per year.

Research Ethics Review Panels

The seven Review Panels report to the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee and provide independent consideration of applications for research ethics approval for studies involving human participants.

Terms of reference

1. To consider applications for research ethics and decide, on behalf of the University, whether ethical approval should be granted. This approval may be conditional or based on specified recommendations.
2. Be able to withhold, suspend or withdraw approval of research if it goes against University policy.
3. To identify issues for report or escalation to the QMERC.
4. To make reports to QMERC on its work as applicable.
5. To identify those proposals that require consideration by an NHS Research Ethics Committee or other specialist Committee and advise researchers or refer them to the relevant Committee.
6. Panel members are responsible for actively identifying and declaring any conflicts of interest (for example, if a member has been assigned the review of a research proposal in which they are named as one of the Supervisors), and for ensuring that they are not leading the review of any such research proposals.

Membership

Across all Review Panels, there is membership representative of each Faculty, and each Panel has at least one member from each Faculty.

- A QMERC academic staff member, or lay member, as Chair
- A QMERC member from another Faculty, or lay member as Deputy Chair
- At least two, and up to six, academic staff members, at least one of which is from the third Faculty.
- At least one lay member.

Secretariat

The Research Ethics Facilitator will be a member of administrative staff of the University.

Quoracy

Three members comprise a quorum, including the Chair or Deputy. Written comments submitted in advance accepted.

In attendance

The following may attend meetings of Review Panel:

- Representatives from the Joint Research Management Office
- Researchers invited to discuss their proposals and other matters with the Committee.
- Other staff and students of the University with the agreement of the Chair.
- New Panel members in training, acting as observers.
- A postgraduate research student as an optional member but may not lead on ethical reviews

Meetings

- 2 times per year per Panel

Devolved School Research Ethics Committees (DSREC) Sub-Committee

DSRECs are devolved sub-committees of QMERC who are set up to receive and approve low-risk research studies within their area of expertise.

This sub-committee has been established to accommodate the growing popularity for applications for approval to establish a REC at School or Departmental level within Faculties. Not only does this sub-committee review new applications, all existing DSREC Chairs/Deputies are invited, and it will act as a forum to share best practice and overcome challenges.

Terms of reference

1. To consider applications to establish a DSREC and decide on behalf of the University, whether approval should be granted. This approval may be conditional or based on specified recommendations. The review will always consider the DSREC's proposed Terms of Reference.
2. To prepare reports and write minutes of the DSREC Sub-Committee meetings, to be submitted to the QMERC.

Membership

- A QMERC academic staff member, as Chair
- A QMERC member, either Lay or from another Faculty
- DSREC Chairs and/or Deputies and/or member representative

Secretariat

The Research Ethics Facilitator will be a member of administrative staff of the University.

Quoracy

Three members comprise a quorum, including the Chair.

In attendance

The following may attend meetings of DSREC Sub-committee:

- Representatives from the Joint Research Management Office
- Researchers invited to discuss their proposals and other matters with the Committee.
- Other staff and students of the University with the agreement of the Chair.
- New Panel members in training, acting as observers

Meetings

- 3 times per year.