

PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE – TOR

Terms of Reference:

The terms of reference for the University Research Ethics Committee can be found within the 'Research Ethics Policy 2013 (updated 11/06/13)'. This is a summary and list of members' roles.

Purpose:

The University has an established set of fundamental principles to ensure Good Scientific Practice, the integrity of research involving human participants, research involving animal subjects, and general principles of data confidentiality and access (taken alongside those of the UK government Chief Scientist¹, the RCUK², and relevant professional bodies).

(PU Research Ethics Policy 2013, Section 2)

Roles and responsibilities of committee: (PU Research Ethics Policy 2013, Section 3-8)

- Develop, implement and monitor research ethics policies
- Approve the terms of reference, membership, procedures and annual reports of Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs) and give guidance to FRECs as required.
- Consider specific ethical matters, for example, if a FREC is unable to reach a decision on a research proposal or if a researcher wishes to appeal against the decision of a FREC
- Undertake an annual audit of decisions taken by Committees, particularly those decisions taken by expedited review
- Maintain a watching brief on emerging ethical issues relating to research and if necessary report to Chancellery and/or Academic Board.
- Report to the Research and Innovation Committee and provide an annual report to Academic Board as an addendum to the Research and Innovation Committee's annual report

Composition of Membership (PU Research Ethics Policy 2013, Section3)

- Dean of Research & Innovation (Chair)
- Head of Graduate School
- FREC Chairs
- Lay member
- Representative from Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Board
- Secretary
- Administrator

Lay member: Person to act as a 'floating member' of all FRECs. He/she will not be required to attend all FREC meetings however he/she will be asked to comment on all proposals which FRECs believe raise significant ethical issues and/or whenever a sponsor requires approval by a lay member (PU Research Ethics Policy 2013, Section12).

Sub-committee: Appeals referred by a FREC to the UREC will be considered by a sub-committee. This sub-committee will comprise all UREC members with the exception of the FREC Chair referring the appeal for consideration (PU Research Ethics Policy 2013, Section 27).

Meetings are convened biannually, usually in May and November.