Guidelines for Deans of Schools and Associate Deans for Research

If there are any queries on these guidelines, please contact Anna Ramberg, Research Office (020 7040 3040)

1. The Senate Research Ethics Committee is concerned with all aspects of the ethics of research investigations involving human and animal subjects carried out in the University or under the auspices of the University, by its Schools, staff or students. (The University has a Senate policy stating that no invasive research, or research requiring a Home Office licence, is to be conducted on live animals within University premises.)

2. All research involving children (those under 18), those unable to give informed consent, minority groups, vulnerable categories, pregnant women or women in labour and persons with a physical or mental disability must be referred to Senate Research Ethics Committee.

3. During 2012/13 work has been undertaken to clarify the framework of delegated authority bilateral agreements with Schools.

4. It is the responsibility of the Dean of School or their nominee to determine whether a project should be submitted to Senate Research Ethics Committee. It is recommended that each School either has a School Research Ethics Committee to oversee ethical issues arising from research that takes place in the School or ensures that responsibility for such oversight is clearly within the remit of one of its existing committees. The School Research Ethics Committee or equivalent should also recommend that, where a research proposal raises a fundamental ethical dilemma, a submission to Senate Research Ethics Committee is necessary. Senate Research Ethics Committee requires a termly statement or copy of minutes listing the projects approved by the School. Senate Research Ethics Committee can request a submission to the Committee on any proposal they deem to have a fundamental ethical dilemma as detailed in the termly report or minutes.

5. In general, all Research Ethics Committee applications are submitted to all members of the Committee for discussion at a formal meeting. The Chair may consider taking Chair’s Action to approve addendums to previously approved research proposals; the extension of a research study; approval of a previously tabled research proposal where minor amendments were requested; and applications where a tight funding deadline has to be met.

6. The procedures of the Senate Research Ethics Committee apply to all research proposals with an ethical nature, regardless of instances when the proposal has approval from other outside Research Ethics Committees (e.g. NRES).

7. The University’s Professional Indemnity insurance policy includes an extension for research and clinical trials under the control of the University Senate Research Ethics Committee. If approval is not sought and granted from Research Ethics Committee, the researcher will not be covered by the University insurance policy.