

# Annual Report for Senate – Research Ethics & Governance Committee

## Summary of key items discussed by the Research Ethics & Governance Committee 2018-19

- New chair
  - After a selection process, the Committee welcomed Dr Anna Brown as the new Chair to lead its work for the next five years
- Senate effectiveness review and impact of University restructure on research ethics review procedures
  - Members were asked to consider their preferences, in discussion with ethics representatives from the other Schools within their designated Divisions, for research ethics review arrangements following restructure. It was observed that, as there must not be a break in provision of research ethics review during the time of restructure, it should be anticipated that the default position would be that current arrangements continue as they are
- Data protection in research – challenges and strategies
  - The University’s Data Protection Officer has attended a number of meetings to discuss GDPR, the updated Data Protection Act 2018, and implications for research. While satisfied that data protection processes and procedures for research at the University are robust, he highlighted a number of remaining challenges of which researchers need to be aware
- Ethics oversight for:
  - New staff importing existing research projects
  - External researchers requesting access to UoK staff or students as participants
  - Guidance documents on appropriate procedures were recirculated
- Research involving human tissue samples
  - Guidance document on legal requirements relating to research involving storage of samples consisting of, or containing, human cells for the purposes of research, was recirculated
- Lay membership on Research Ethics Advisory Groups
  - REAGs that do not already have external representation were encouraged to take advantage of an opportunity to recruit a lay member
- Research data, reuse, and consent
  - Marcus Goodall, Technology Transfer Manager in KIE, presented to the Committee on some problematic cases KIE had faced during exploitation of intellectual property developed as part of research projects
- Huawei research funding and reputational risk
  - While the Committee is concerned with whether research projects meet ethical standards such as independence and dignity of research participants, avoiding harm and maximising benefit to them and to society, reputational risks in accepting

money from certain funders or donors are not within its remit and are usually dealt with at a University-level

- School of Psychology online ethics review system rollout project
  - The Committee requested some changes to the original School of Psychology system in order to make it suitable for wider use. However, due to the University decision not to provide funding to support this project, Information Services are unable to complete any changes that require development work and so no changes are possible within the scope of this project. Outcomes of pilots with volunteer REAGs are awaited
- Nagoya Protocol audit report
  - Results of a recent audit by the Office for Product Safety and Standards were a success. The Nagoya Protocol is an international agreement that relates to access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources. It was noted that GCRF may lead to an increase in Kent-led research that falls within the Nagoya Protocol
- Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK
  - The Committee has previously discussed this issue and unanimously supported the proposal to sign up to the Concordat. However, it appears that the proposal has not been successful. The Committee again confirmed unanimous support to this proposal and it was recommended that this is reported in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation in order that it can be taken forward
- Annual reports from Research Ethics Advisory Groups were received.

#### **Key issues for the Research Ethics & Governance Committee for 2018/19**

- University restructure and its effect on the research ethics review process
- Revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity (published 25 October 2019) and measures to ensure compliance

#### **Research misconduct**

There have been no formal investigations of research misconduct.