Code of Practice on Research Ethics and Governance

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1. Introduction

This Code of Practice is intended to promote high standards of ethical awareness and behaviour on the part of those undertaking research associated with the University, whether staff or students, involving human subjects. It seeks to provide assurances to the subjects of such research, and to representatives of the organisations with which they are associated, that their rights and welfare are of paramount concern, thereby protecting its standards of research governance. Research governance, as defined by the Scottish Executive, “concerns setting standards to improve research quality and safeguard the public. It involves enhancing ethical and scientific quality, promoting good practice, reducing adverse incidents, ensuring lessons are learned and preventing poor performance and misconduct”.

The development of the Code is in part a response to increasingly demanding external expectations concerning standards of research governance and probity in higher education, as expressed in benchmarking statements, professional body requirements, disciplinary organisations’ codes of practice for its members, and broader concerns about standards in public life. These expectations apply not only to staff research. The University has an important responsibility to educate students in the ethical practices expected of practitioners undertaking research in, and hence contributing to the knowledge base of, their chosen disciplines and professions. This Code should be used to uphold best practice within the disciplines and professions represented within the University.

2. The scope of the Code

This Code applies to all staff and student activities where data concerning direct human subjects, or involving implications for human subjects, is collected and
processed. The code applies to all directly funded research projects, as well as research that does not attract funding, student projects and other activities where data is obtained from human subjects or informants. Where secondary data (i.e. existing information) is being used, processed or reworked, the researcher must also consider the ethical implications, even where ethical concerns should have been addressed within the original project. (Research concerning animals and environmental issues will be covered by separate arrangements, in accordance with Home Office regulations in relation to animal welfare.)

The overriding concern of this Code of Practice on Research Ethics and Governance is to protect the interests of those people who are the subjects of the information, or who may be affected by such information. They have a right to privacy, not to be misrepresented and not to be harmed as a result of being researched. Although important, this is not an absolute right. There may be circumstances (for example in investigative journalism or organisation studies) in which covert research or deception might be justifiable, where the public interest may override the rights of the individual. However, such enquiries must be informed by full consideration of their ethical implications at the planning stage by expert assessors. (The principles and the process are described in more detail below.

Responsibility for ensuring that all research meets the University’s standards in relation to ethics and good governance lies at faculty level, with the Associate Dean (Research and Knowledge Transfer). Decisions about whether or not a project requires formal approval by the relevant Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee (or an appropriate external body such as an NHS Local Research Ethics Committee) rests with a series of trained ‘gatekeepers’ (see Section 4). These individuals are already responsible for approving student and/or staff projects, at all levels. Under this Code they are charged with the additional responsibility of identifying within project proposals potential ethical issues which require referral to the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee. This structure enables local areas to conduct investigations within the ethical precepts and codes which represent best practice within their fields, rather than having one University-wide Code which attempts to cover all eventualities. In some cases ethical issues might be raised that require advice from and/or referral to the University Research Ethics and Governance Committee, but beyond this basis investigative activity within schools and programmes must be informed by appropriate local standards and values.

Researchers themselves, especially if they are inexperienced, may not foresee circumstances where their subjects may be harmed. This is why all research proposals, whether from students or members of staff, need to be scrutinised by trained and experienced ‘gatekeepers’ capable of assessing them in the light of the norms and standards which apply within their discipline or profession. Relevant professional and academic research ethics issues must be addressed within students’ curricula, to ensure that they become adequately equipped to make their own informed judgements and to uphold appropriate standards of conduct. Annex 2 contains details of some useful discipline-based ethics codes which will have relevance beyond their own boundaries.

The University expects all academic staff to engage in developmental activities in order to maintain the currency and relevance of the knowledge they impart to students. These activities are often described as ‘scholarship’, ‘consultancy’ or
‘creative work’. ‘Research’ and ‘research active’ (as applied to members of staff) are often seen as more precise, more exacting definitions, which have been used to determine, for example, who is eligible for entry in Research Assessment Exercises and which activities attract Funding Council income. Some common definitions for research are given in Annex 1; this Code applies to all work within the definitions of research given in Annex 1.

3. Guiding principles

3.01 The guiding principles of this Code of Research Ethics are non-maleficence and beneficence, indicating a systematic regard for the rights and interests of others in the full range of academic relationships and activities. Non-maleficence is the principle of doing, or permitting, no foreseeable harm including infringement of rights as a consequence of the research. Benificence is the requirement to serve the interests and well-being of others, including respect for their rights. It is the principle of doing good in the widest sense.

3.02 All proposals for the activities described above fall within the remit of the Research Ethics and Governance Committee. As explained under in Section 4 (Procedures for implementation), all proposals will be scrutinised in the usual way by trained ‘gatekeepers’. Those projects which appear to have the potential to harm others, including those involving vulnerable informants or populations where specific ethical consents are required (such as NHS clients), must be submitted for consideration to the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee (or, in certain cases, its external equivalent).

Legal and procedural requirements

3.03 Researchers are expected to comply with the legal requirements of undertaking a piece of research. The Data Protection Act, the Computer Misuse Act, the Equal Opportunities Act, the Race Discrimination Act, the Obscene Publications Act, the Human Rights Act and the Freedom of Information Act are likely to be particularly relevant, along with relevant legislation on disabilities, health and safety, and animal rights.

3.04 Researchers are expected to comply with the Napier University Code of Practice on Research Ethics. Research should conform to the university’s policies on Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities. A formal risk assessment should be conducted at an early stage to ensure the protection of all participants in the research (informants and researchers) on the advice of the local Health and Safety Advisor.

3.05 Researchers should abide by the Code of Ethics of any professional body or subject association of which they are members, which takes precedence over the University’s Code. They should also be aware of any Code of Ethics which applies to potential or actual collaborators on the project and/or other participants (such as NHS research ethics approval procedures). Where the location of the research is external to the university it is essential that the regulations, procedures, practices and guidelines which apply in these situations are taken into account.
General principles

3.06 Researchers should be aware that failure to secure institutional approval for their projects before commencing primary data collection, or failure to observe the conditions set by those bodies which have considered the proposal either within the university or outside it (such as a NHS research ethics committee), may constitute a disciplinary offence. For students (depending on their status) this falls within the remit of academic or non-academic misconduct.

3.07 Researchers must not compromise the guiding principles of non-maleficence and beneficence, legal obligations and any pre-existing rights in the conduct of research, other than in exceptional circumstances and with formal ethical approval of the project proposal (including a justification of this approach).

3.08 Researchers must weigh up, and reach a rational judgment on, the potentially conflicting risks and benefits of a particular piece of research in terms of the principles above. One example is the possible public benefit weighed against the harm to individuals arising from covert research yielding information which discredits an organisation but which (it could be argued) may be in the public interest. ('The public interest' is not defined and will depend on the particular circumstances pertaining in any given case.)

3.09 Researchers are required to ensure that the interests of all participants, whether directly or indirectly involved, are taken into account when evaluating the research against the principles of non-maleficence and beneficence.

3.10 Researchers should consider the ethical implications of the research in relation to the physiological, psychological, social, political, religious, cultural and economic consequences of the work for the participants. This is not to argue that no work should ever be produced which might be capable of causing offence. However, the range of possible outcomes should be fully considered in advance, and the scope for causing harm must be weighed against the potential benefits to assess the justification for proceeding. Such proposals, where the University’s reputation may be at risk, should be referred to the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee.

3.11 Researchers should consider not only the welfare of their informants and the organisations with which they are associated, but should also seek to avoid actions which may damage the interests of other researchers, and the reputation of their discipline or of the University. Additionally, those directing research should consider their responsibilities towards members of their research teams, anticipating and guarding against the possible harmful consequences of conducting and disseminating the research. This includes health and safety considerations, both within and outside the University.

3.12 Where the researcher is not fully competent or sufficiently informed to make a fair judgment about the conflicting needs and interests of direct and indirect participants (for example, in relation to an undergraduate project on a sensitive topic) it is essential that specialist advice is sought, normally from the ‘gatekeeper’ in the first instance or from the Convener of the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee (see Procedures, in Section 4, below).
Informed consent

3.13 Ethical conduct in research demands respect for the rights of others who are directly or indirectly affected by the research. For human participants, both their physical and personal autonomy should be respected. Participation in the research should be on the basis of informants’ fully informed consent and participants’ rights of privacy should be guaranteed, with safeguards concerning confidentiality (see 2.18, 2.19 and 2.20). Written consent should be obtained where appropriate. There should be no coercion of any kind to participate in the project, and informants should be assured of their right to withdraw at any time, without repercussion. Equally, the means by which participants are recruited should be carefully assessed in relation to possible rewards for participation. Rewards offered to participate in research should not induce participants to accept risks or engage in behaviour that they would not normally tolerate.

3.14 Prior to gaining informed consent the researcher should ensure that participants are fully informed of the nature and the purpose of the research, how it will be conducted, the anticipated outcomes, who is undertaking it, who is funding it, and how the outcomes will be disseminated. This should be explained in language which the informant can easily understand, and ideally well in advance of the work to be carried out. Where there are third parties marginally involved in the research, for example as members of the public in an observer capacity, or where groups of people are involved, informal consent might be more appropriate than formal consent. A clear record of who, when and how consent was given should be maintained.

3.15 Where participants are not in a position to give informed consent (for example, children or mentally incapacitated adults), the researcher should seek advice from the Research Office early in the process of planning the project, as vetting or formal clearance may be required. (See Annex 4 for information about Disclosure Scotland.) Any data-gathering taking place within organisations for children or vulnerable adults, even observational or covert studies (see 3.13), are likely to require formal approval from the organisation concerned, as well as from the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee. It is vital to seek approval from such an organisation even for low-intervention studies of its members such as those conducted from a place open to the public (for example, observational studies of behaviour in a school playground done from the street, or at a children’s sports club done from the spectators’ seats), not least for the researcher’s own protection.

3.16 Young persons over the age of 16 are generally thought to be able to give informed consent but it might be appropriate to seek advice, depending on the nature of the project. Research involving children under 16 will require the informed consent of parents, carers or guardians. Notwithstanding the fact that parental consent has been obtained, primary responsibility for safeguarding the rights of the child remains with the researcher. Again a clear record of when and how consent was given should be maintained.

3.17 Where the nature of the research is such that informing participants before the work is carried out might render the results invalid, for example within aspects of the social and cognitive sciences such as perception, participants must be given appropriate explanations following the study. Covert research within organisations is
regarded as generally undesirable since it violates the principle of informed consent by research subjects. In both these sets of circumstances, for this reason, justification for the proposed course of action must be submitted for prior approval to the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee. Researchers must provide convincing reasons why such research should proceed without informants’ prior consent, and how the likely benefits outweigh this consideration. Researchers should not actively deceive or passively mislead participants just because of an expectation that their prior permission will not be obtained.

3.18 In summary: researchers should ensure that all research participants have been given ample opportunity to understand the purpose, nature and anticipated consequences of the research and give informed consent well in advance of participation. Researchers should maintain records of consent to participate. Participants have the right to withdraw from a research study at any point without having to give reasons. Caution should be exercised, and the approval of the relevant FREGC sought, when planning studies that involve compromising the principle of fully informed consent.

Confidentiality and data protection

3.19 Participants’ confidentiality and anonymity should be maintained and their personal privacy protected. The identity of participants should not be revealed unless their written permission is obtained in advance of the study commencing.

3.20 The collection, storage, disclosure and use of research data by researchers must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Researchers should be vigilant about the risk of identification and breach of privacy and confidentiality posed by all kinds of information storage and processing, including computer and paper files, e-mail records, photographic material, audio and videotapes and any other information in which an individual is named, or from which an individual could be identified.

3.21 Researchers should put in place methods of data disposal that maintain the principle of confidentiality.

Research undertaken in public places

3.22 Researchers should pay particular attention to the implications of research undertaken in public places. Its impact on the environment is one key issue; observance of local culture is another. Researchers must observe local laws of obscenity and public decency. Those engaged in research should have due regard to religious and cultural sensitivities (see 3.10, above.) Even if those members of the public who are observed are not identified by name, care should be taken to safeguard their anonymity (for example, in the use of photographs, video or film). (See also 3.14, above.)

3.23 The researcher is required to balance the parameters of academic freedom and free speech with their responsibilities to the community and to safeguarding the reputation of the University. It is prudent to document meetings concerning this point prior to conducting research.
**Academic integrity**

3.24 The general principle of integrity should inform all research activities. Honesty should be central to the relationship between researcher, participant and other interested parties. Research outputs should contain acknowledgment of the work of others, as appropriate. Particular care should be taken in acknowledging the work of research students. Issues about joint ownership of work by students and supervisors (including authorship of publications) should ideally be discussed at an early point in the student's programme, and confirmed or renegotiated later, as work is written for publication. Issues arising from industrial placements (including the firm's interests) and the protection/registration of materials should also be considered in principle at an early point, and reviewed later. For inexperienced researchers, the 'gatekeepers' have a key role in overseeing and managing these issues.

3.25 It is good practice to offer participants and other relevant stakeholders access to a summary of the research findings. Research reports should be truthful, accurate and demonstrably the work of the author/s concerned. Readers should be offered sufficient information to assess the justification of the author’s inferences and interpretations of information.

**Contractual responsibilities**

3.26 The terms of any contract relating to research must not compromise the guiding ethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence, legal obligations and any pre-existing rights. Advice on contracts is available from the Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation office.

3.27 The terms of research undertaken on behalf of a sponsor must be agreed formally in advance. Terms will include the specification of the research project, the roles and responsibilities of the researchers, the University and the sponsor, and agreement on the dissemination and exploitation of the research outputs. The need for confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements (such as an embargo on a research degree thesis) must be negotiated in advance.

3.28 Researchers are expected to observe the University’s policy on intellectual property rights.

3.29 The terms and conditions of research contracts should be clarified with all parties before the project commences with particular regard to access to research sites and data, copyright, rights concerning publications, prior disclosure and the disclosure of information, contractual payments and remuneration, dissemination arrangements and any other benefits.

3.30 The researcher/s should furnish the sponsor with research reports and other deliverables as agreed in the original contract.

4. **Procedures for implementation**

All members of the University (both staff and students) undertaking research are expected to understand and to comply with the Code of Practice on Research Ethics and Governance. It is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that their project
meets the requirements of the Code and does not breach it at any time. If circumstances change in the course of conducting a project, this should be brought to the attention of the relevant ‘gatekeeper’ and, if necessary, the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee. (In the case of students’ projects, they are responsible for keeping their ‘gatekeeper’ informed of relevant developments and circumstances.)

Each faculty will publicise their structures and processes for ensuring compliance with the Code. Every person proposing to undertake a research project, whether student or member of staff, already needs formal approval or direction of some kind before it commences. All project proposals involving human subjects or informants should incorporate a statement of any ethical issues likely to arise, and explain how they are to be handled. The people responsible for giving or withholding approval in this way are ‘gatekeepers’ in relation to this Code, responsible for assessing whether any proposed project fully meets the ethical standards and concerns associated with the discipline or profession concerned. Approval to proceed may come from a module tutor, dissertation tutor, research degree supervisor, research Centre, team or project leader. Associate Deans for Research and Knowledge Transfer are ultimately responsible for the maintenance of high ethical standards by students and staff within their faculty through ensuring that these vetting arrangements operate effectively for all projects undertaken, and that all research methods training incorporates appropriate consideration of ethical issues.

All these ‘gatekeepers’ will have received staff development to enable them to identify when a proposal requires (or may require) consideration by the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee. In such cases they will advise the proposer (for staff research) on this procedure, or (for students) will refer it to the FREGC on their behalf. The FREGC will consider the proposal and either approve it, approve it with conditions, refer it back for substantial revision, or veto it. In the event of the FREGC being unable to reach a decision, the proposal may be referred to the University Research Ethics and Governance Committee. Researchers are also invited to seek guidance from their FREGC, even if formal approval is not required. The FREGC will meet regularly to consider cases. Simple or urgent cases may be dealt with by correspondence, or on ‘chair’s action’.

In addition to meeting the requirements of this Code, researchers are expected to observe the ethical standards of their own discipline or profession (such as those of the British Psychological Society or the British Sociological Association), and to meet the formal ethical requirements of organisations controlling access to vulnerable informants (such as clinical settings, care homes and schools). Where external formal research ethics approval procedures exist, these take precedence over the University’s own procedures, but the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee should be notified where this alternative route for ethical approval has been taken. Both Faculty and University Research Ethics and Governance Committees will maintain a record of referrals and decisions made and will produce regular reports.
Annex 1: Definitions of Research, Scholarship and Knowledge Transfer

Research
Research can be defined as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and to the voluntary sectors; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and analysis of materials, components and processes, e.g. for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytic techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

The definitions of various types of research given in the Roith Report (PCFC, September 1990), which have gained wide acceptance within higher education, include the following:

Basic research: experimental and theoretical work undertaken to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without a particular application in view.

Strategic research: applied research that is in a new subject area which has not yet advanced to the stage where eventual applications can be clearly specified.

Applied research: work undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards practical aims or objectives.

Creative work: the intervention and generation of ideas, images and artefacts including design. Usually applied to the pursuit of knowledge in the arts.

Scholarship
Scholarship can be defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases. The activity represents work which is intended to expand the boundaries of knowledge within and across disciplines by in-depth analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information and by making use of rigorous and documented methodology;

Knowledge Transfer
Knowledge Transfer can be defined as supporting the dissemination of research outcomes in industrial, healthcare, educational and cultural areas of activity; through developing continuing professional and vocational education to meet the needs of business and industry, healthcare professionals and teachers; and increasing the public understanding and appreciation of science, technology, the arts and humanities. The Scottish Funding Council has identified seven areas of activity involving Knowledge Transfer:
Outreach: the creation of industry-academic links through initiatives normally joint funded, such as knowledge transfer partnerships or small business initiatives supported through regional development schemes such as European Structural or Social Funds.

Enterprise Schemes: developing and improving the skills and expertise of key staff to support knowledge transfer activities, through, for example, staff exchanges, industrial fellowships, secondments and sabbaticals with industrial, commercial and cultural partners.

Consultancy: the deployment of existing knowledge for the resolution of specific problems presented by a client, usually in an industrial or commercial context.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): is a continuous process of personal development designed to improve the capability and realise the full potential of professional people at work. This can be achieved by developing a wide range of knowledge, experience and skills, which may not normally be acquired during routine work, and which together produce and maintain a competence to practise.

External Contract Research: work undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge, but directed primarily at resolving specific problems identified by industry or governmental agencies.

Licensing; the granting of a license to commercially develop intellectual property in the form of a patent, registered design or copyright.

Venturing: The provision of seed funding through venture capital provision to develop appropriate research to the stage of commercial development by either an existing company or by the formation of a spin-out company from a higher education institution.

Work in all of these categories is governed by this Code.
Annex 2: Ethics codes and other useful references

GENERAL

Texts


Online references

www.cre.gu.se/links.html.
This is the website for Göteborg University’s Centre for Research Ethics, which covers a huge range of resources, disciplines and media.

The Centre for Applied Ethics, University of British Columbia, Canada.
www.ethics.ubc.ca/resources

BUSINESS

Texts


Online references

Academy of Management Code of Ethical Conduct:

Market Research Society Code of Conduct
http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/codeconduct.htm

Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines
http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm

ENGINEERING

Texts

*This provides a good foundation to the practical problems of ethics for engineers.*

Online references

Responsible Research, Online Ethics Center, National Academy of Engineering (USA)
http://www.onlineethics.org/CMS/research.aspx

An Engineering Ethics Curriculum Map, Royal Academy of Engineering
HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES

Codes


Life Sciences: Research Ethics in Relation to the Natural World

See http://www.lifesciences.napier.ac.uk/teaching/ResCom/ResCode.htm

This code is based on a Joint Code of Practice for Research issued by BBSRC, Defra, FSA and NERC in 2003

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Codes

The British Sociological Association has been concerned with identifying ethical issues and promoting professional standards in sociology for over 20 years. In a section on its website called Professional Standards it has a Statement of Ethical Practice which is well worth looking at, not just by sociologists but by all staff and students working within the social scientific tradition. There are sections on authorship guidelines, anti-sexist and anti-racist language, dealing with sexual harassment, and applications for research funding. See http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm

Likewise the British Psychological Society has a long tradition of concern with these issues. www.bps.org.uk/documents/Code.pdf contains a Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines which covers working with human participants and animals, and also equal opportunities and sexual harassment. Again, it is of much broader relevance than just for its members and psychologists.

Journalism: The National Union of Journalists website not only has a Code of Conduct but also includes the text of some speeches and articles about the application of the principles of good journalism: www.nuj.org.uk/front/inner.php?docid=346.

See also the Code of Practice of the Press Complaints Commission: www.pcc.org.uk/cop/intro.html.

Texts


Online references

Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm
Public Interest Test (online references)

Some useful discussion of 'the public interest test' can be found online. This is usually in relation to exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act, but similar general principles apply. Try, for example:

http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/exintro/index.htm


http://www.foi.nhs.uk/downloads/081a_pp_the_exemptions.pdf

http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/publications/foiundaswilsonpublicint.htm
Annex 3: Related Napier University policies

Copyright
http://staff.napier.ac.uk/Services/Library/Information/Copyright/CopyrightInformation.htm

Data Protection Code of Practice
http://www.napier.ac.uk/deptsmas/Sms/publications/DataProtection.pdf

Health and Safety at Work
http://staff.napier.ac.uk/Services/has/Home.htm

Information Security Policy
http://staff.napier.ac.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E0C3F950-FFA3-4E9A-9CA8-377E4DCE32D5/1069/isp2_PDF

Intellectual Property Policy
http://staff.napier.ac.uk/Services/Finance/Business+Appraisal+Office/Documents/IntellectualPropertyPolicy.htm

Risk Assessment Guidance Notes
http://staff.napier.ac.uk/Services/Finance/Business+Appraisal+Office/Documents/ProjectRiskAssessment.htm
Annex 4: Disclosure Scotland

The Disclosure Scotland scheme is a process designed to enhance public safety by providing criminal history information on staff and students applying to join the University, as well as information on existing staff and students. Disclosure Scotland issues certificates known as "Disclosures" which either gives details of an individual's criminal convictions, or states that they have none.

Where a research project involves extensive one-to-one contact with vulnerable people, it may be necessary to seek formal checking of researchers for any criminal convictions (on certain courses this process happens automatically.) New regulations require the University to ensure that checks are undertaken on staff and students seeking this sort of access.

It is essential that Disclosure checks are carried out as appropriate, as there are significant risks of non-compliance (e.g. potential damage to the University’s reputation), if an issue occurs concerning a student or member of staff working or researching in an affected area who has not had a Disclosure application processed.

University guidance on Disclosure Scotland is available at: http://staff.napier.ac.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6A63730E-A584-4FC0-A9CD-21E5005B1EFC/3217/DisclosureScotlandGuidance2.doc

If you have any queries concerning the Disclosure process which are not addressed by this document, please contact Registry Services or Human Resources, who act as the registered contacts with Disclosure Scotland.

Disclosure Application forms can be downloaded from the Disclosure website at www.disclosurescotland.co.uk. Registry Services also hold a stock of Disclosure Scotland forms.
Annex 5: Terms of Reference, remit and membership of the Research Ethics and Governance Committee

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<th>Research Ethics &amp; Governance Committee</th>
<th>Terms of Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong></td>
<td>On behalf of the Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer Committee to consider the ethical dimension of research proposals and to oversee governance policies, procedures and practices in relation to research.</td>
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<td><strong>Remit</strong></td>
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<td>1. To oversee the University’s arrangements for considering the ethical dimension of research activities.</td>
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<td>2. To oversee the University’s policies, procedures and practices for ensuring probity in the conduct of its research.</td>
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<td>3. To work to promote good practice in the conduct of research in the University.</td>
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<td>4. To receive annual reports from Faculty Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer Committees on their handling of research ethics and governance issues.</td>
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<td>5. To produce an annual report on its activities for the Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer Committee.</td>
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<td>6. To consider research proposals referred to it from faculties and give or withhold permission accordingly.</td>
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<td>7. To work appropriately within the remit of the committee to deliver the objectives of the University’s Strategic Plan.</td>
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<td>8. To consider equal opportunities issues arising from the remit of the Committee, and to recommend action as appropriate.</td>
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<td>9. To consider risk assessment issues arising from the remit of the Committee and to recommend action as appropriate.</td>
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<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Associate Deans (Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer) [one of whom shall be nominated as Convenor]</td>
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<td>Director of the Graduate School</td>
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<td>A member of staff from the Research Office, nominated by the Director of the Research Office</td>
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<td>A member of the Chaplaincy, nominated by the Vice Principal (Academic Quality &amp; Customer Service)</td>
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<td>One person with knowledge of ethics issues in the NHS to be nominated by the Dean of HL&amp;SS;</td>
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<td>One external person (not being a member of staff or student) nominated by the Principal on a 3-yearly basis;</td>
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<td>Nominated by the Deans, collectively:</td>
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<td>One senior teaching fellow;</td>
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<td>One member of the Professoriate;</td>
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<td>One Reader;</td>
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<td>One Head of School.</td>
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<td>Vice-Convenor: shall be nominated from within the membership of the Committee</td>
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<td>Clerk: A member of staff of the Research Office</td>
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| Specific Policy Responsibilities       | Research ethics and governance                                                      |
| Co-options                             | None at present                                                                      |
| Quorum                                 | One-third of the total membership (excluding co-options) which must include either the Convenor or a designated Vice-Convenor |
| Frequency of Meetings                  | Monthly in term-time                                                                |
| Reporting Line                         | Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee                                             |
| Current Sub-Committees                 |                                                                                     |
| Current Working Groups                 |                                                                                     |
| Minutes                                | Copies of open minutes will be forwarded to the Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee. Open minutes and papers will be held in hard copy in the Research Office and electronically by the Secretariat for posting on the University’s Intranet. |
| Closed minutes will be held by the Research Office. |                                                                                     |