

Ethics Panel

Terms of Reference and Membership

Owner	Executive Dean Academic Development		
Version	1.3		
Changes	Alignment with OfS Regulatory advice 24 Guidance related to freedom of speech.		
Approval date	October 2025	Approved by	Academic Council
Implementation date	October 2025	Date of next review	July 2028
Related internal policy	- Research Ethics Review and Approval Procedures - Code of Practice for Ethical Research involving Human Participants - Guidance on Research Involving Children - Key Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator - Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech		
Related external policies and regulations	OfS Regulatory advice 24 Guidance related to freedom of speech.		

Purpose

The purpose of the ethics panel is to consider research proposals, including proposals from students for dissertations and other projects, that raise significant ethical issues, and to ensure that adequate consideration is given to the ethical dimensions of the project, mitigating the potential for harm or upset to participants.

Terms of reference

To consider research proposals, including proposals from students for dissertations and other projects, that raise significant ethical issues.

To assess whether the proposal can be ethical, which means:

- It is justified;
- It is of sufficient standard, including whether the researcher or student is competent to undertake the project properly and ethically;
- Participation is voluntary;
- Any incentives to encourage participation are appropriate and ethical;
- Consent to participation is requested and recorded;
- Adequate support, or protection for, participants is provided for;
- Any sensitivities of the project (e.g. cultural sensitivities) have been recognised, considered and appropriately managed;

- h) There is an appropriate approach to confidentiality, anonymity or acknowledgement of project participants;
- i) Whether any risks of the project to participants (in terms of dignity, rights, safety or wellbeing) are outweighed by the potential benefits;
- j) The project complies with all statutory and/or regulatory requirements;
- k) The collection and management of data complies with data protection legislation and the College's own data protection policy;
- l) There are no conflicts of interest;
- m) Any issues of commercial confidentiality are appropriately managed.

On the basis of this assessment, to determine whether the proposal should be:

- a) Approved;
- b) Changed and resubmitted to the panel;
- c) Denied.

In line with the College's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, the Ethics Panel will have particular regard to the importance of academic freedom and to the risks to academic freedom of any decision made.

Membership

The Panel shall comprise:

- a) Director of Scholarship and Research (Chair);
- b) Scholarship and Research Lead;
- c) A senior member of academic staff drawn from a pool of Schools-based research leads;
- d) Scholarship & Academic Development Coordinator (who will also serve as the Panel secretary).

Quorum

Three members, including the Chair.

Meetings

The panel shall meet as and when required.

Reporting

The Panel shall report its decision on individual proposals to the project proposer.

The Scholarship and Research team shall keep records of the panel's decisions and report these to Academic Council annually.