

APPROVED Terms of Reference and Membership Composition of the College Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (CREC) for use in Academic Year 2024/2025

The College Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (CREC) is a sub-committee of the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (UREC). Its primary focus is to consider ethical implications relating to activities of research and knowledge exchange undertaken by College colleagues and students, or others working with the University, in accordance with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics policy.

Terms of Reference

Specifically, the CREC is required to:

1. Promote engagement with the *University of Westminster Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Policy and Guidance* by supporting researchers and facilitating research as outlined in the [UKRIO/ARMA Research Ethics Support and Review guidance](#), including:

progress formal ethics review efficiently and in a timely manner within defined timeframes, with appropriate analysis of ethical implications and the associated proportionality of review, with mechanisms for 'expediting' review in exceptional and well-justified situations

to be motivated by an endeavour to give favourable opinions to ethical research through the provision of advice to researchers, aiming to ensure that a favourable opinion is secured

to provide opinions which are well-reasoned, adopt structured approaches to review drawing on moral theory, with reviews being consistent and balanced. This last point is particularly important; opinions must include appropriate positive feedback as well as any necessary constructive criticisms. This approach allows regular researchers to build their skills in designing and delivering ethical research

they should be transparent and accessible, justify opinions, providing clear rationales

2. Review and decide the outcome of proposals for research and knowledge exchange ethics review by the University colleagues and students, in accordance with the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Policy and Guidance and Processes^{1,2}:

A decision shall be either:

¹ The CREC cannot review (or 'approve' or authorise or give 'permission to proceed') on behalf of the University, any Class 4 research or Class 3 research which specifically requests Health Research Authority defined institutional sponsorship or Health Research Authority approval (and/or NHS REC review). Currently, these are related to the UREC's role as working on institutional risk, compliance or governance issues (including legal or regulatory) with relevant governance or management colleagues. Whereas the CRECs are independent ethics review bodies not holding legal or regulatory coverage in their composition. There are mechanisms in place for UREC to seek the support of CREC colleagues in the ethical aspects of all these areas to allow expertise to be drawn upon by UREC when needed. These mechanisms will continue to be reviewed by UREC or the University as necessary.

² In reviewing applications the CREC will seek to protect the rights, dignity and privacy of participants, humans or animals, the researcher and others involved in the research; protect the integrity of the environment, natural habitat, resources; avoid risk of harm to objects and sites of historical and cultural importance; protect vulnerable populations and protect cultures and cultural heritage

to provide favourable ethics opinion;

to provide provisional favourable ethics opinion (subject to conditions);

not to provide a favourable ethics opinion.

3. Ensure that all decisions of the Committee consider cultural sensitivities and support the University's commitments to equity and inclusivity.
4. Use the Virtual Research Environment (VRE) system to manage and undertake reviews and progression of outcome and decisions.
5. Promote a culture of ethical research and knowledge exchange and provide advice to the UREC on matters relating to ethical review if requested.
6. Report to UREC on research and knowledge exchange ethics matters³, including through the Annual Activity Report or similar reports as advised by UREC,

Membership

Ex-officio

College Research Ethics Coordinator (Chair) (1)

College Director for Research and Knowledge Exchange (1)

Additional Ex-officio for *College of Liberal Arts and Sciences REC*:

- Clinic Manager or nominee (1)
- University Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Designated Individual (DI) or Persons Designate (PD) as nominee (1)
- Chair, Psychology Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Working Group or Deputy Chair as nominee (1)

Nominated or Elected

British Psychological Society accredited member or nominee from the same constituency (1)
(*nominated by the Chair of CREC*)

College Doctoral Researcher (1) or nominee from the same constituency (elected by Doctoral Researcher constituency)

School Doctoral Coordinator (1) (*nominated by the College Director for Research and Knowledge Exchange*)

Academic colleague from another College (1) (*nominated by Chair of UREC*)

One academic representative from each School (4) (*nominated by Head of School*)

Professor or Reader (1) (*nominated by Chair of UREC*)

Research and Knowledge Exchange Group/Unit Leader or champion (2) (*nominated by Chair of UREC*)

³ Ethics matters will include reporting annually via the retrospective Annual Activity Report statistical information relating to CREC review as well as local issues identified by the CREC or CREC Chair/Secretary pertaining to the previous academic year. The CREC will also report via the CREC Chair regular Minutes and brief written Issues and Update reports which could contain information such as member vacancies, resources issues, REC or local researcher training needs identified etc.

The Chair will appoint one of the ex-officio or nominated/elected members as Deputy Chair.

Co-opted, by invitation

Any colleagues as required.

Secretariat

Nomination of the Director of College Operations

Quorum

A quorum of the CREC shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the members (ex-officio and nominated/elected), including the Chair or their nominee.

Term of Office

Nominated/elected members shall serve a term of office not exceeding three years commencing 1 August in the year of appointment, and a maximum of two terms of office.

Declarations of interest shall be considered by the CREC and recorded in the Minutes. If it is decided and agreed upon that a Conflict of Interest is deemed to exist, the Committee shall exercise its right to exclude that member from participation in the decision-making (vote), however the member may still participate in a discussion. A Conflict of Interest must be recorded in the Minutes.

Meetings

The College Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee shall meet a minimum of 3 times a year (in person or online real-time). Additional meetings may be called by the Chair or Deputy Chair as deemed necessary to execute the business of the CREC.

A CREC may hold sub-panels (by VRE e-meeting (non real-time) or in person or online real-time). A sub-panel will constitute a minimum of 3 members, inclusive of Chair. A quorum for a sub-panel will only be constituted by ex-officio or nominated/elected members (with ad-hoc reviewers from the University pool if necessary⁴). A member may act as Secretary to the panel.

⁴ CREC may request that arrangements be in place for consideration of proposals via the inclusion of ad-hoc reviewers to enable timely and rigorous review. The University pool of ad-hoc reviewers must be used in order to ensure the reviewers are adequately trained to carry out review.