

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

## SOP UREC-SOP-005 FOR EXPEDITED (FAST TRACK) REVIEW

Version Number	1
Prepared by	Huzma Kelly (Research Ethics and Integrity Officer)
Reviewed by	Lauren Shukru (Research Governance Officer)
Approved by	Professor Catherine Dormor, UREC Chair
Approved by	Professor Andrew Linn, RKE Steering Committee
Effective Date	17/04/2024
Review Date	17/04/2027

Version Number	Edited by	Approved by	Effective date	Details of changes

### Expedited (fast track) review

In exceptional circumstances Principal Investigators (PI) may seek an expedited (fast track) review where there is an urgent and justified need for ethics review within a shorter timeframe and/or out of committee cycle.

The term 'expedited review' refers to the timescale within which the review occurs. All expedited reviews will be conducted with the same integrity and rigour as demanded by the University's ethics review processes and expedited reviews must be conducted in line with the *UREC-SOP-003 Criteria and Systems for Review (to be published 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024)*, regardless of urgency.

### How to request an expedited review

To submit a request for an expedited review the PI must email the relevant REC Chair and Secretary (marking the message 'high importance') and copy in their line manager (and/or RKEO if the proposal is in receipt of funding). At the time of the request the PI **must have** completed an initial ethics self-assessment within the VRE (although this may not have been submitted.)

### Information required in support of the request

The e-mail should explain:

1. the date/time by which ethics review (and an initial outcome) is required;
2. why ethics review is required by the above date/time - to include rationale and justification for the tighter timescale, including supporting documentary evidence where appropriate;

3. why ethics review was not sought earlier; and
4. the implications of the review not being expedited as requested.

### **Processing requests for expedited review**

The REC Chair or Secretary should aim to respond within five working days to let the requestor know that:

- A. expedited review is appropriate in this instance and the request can be accommodated by the REC;

**OR**

- B. the request cannot be accommodated by the REC since expedited review is not appropriate in this instance and/or there is insufficient evidence to justify the request, in which case the applicant may be invited to re-submit the request with further supporting information;

**OR**

- C. it is not possible for the REC to accommodate the request due to reasons of availability (e.g. number of reviewers, expertise, independent members required etc.) or workload constraints;

**AND**

- D. the request will therefore be escalated to the UREC Chair and Secretary (who in turn may delegate the expedited review to another CREC if appropriate).

### **The integrity of the ethics review**

As stated above, any expedited review must be conducted in line with the *SOP Systems for Review UREC-SOP-003 Criteria and Systems for Review (to be published 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024)* and with the same rigour, regardless of urgency.

Where an application requires a full ethics review prior to the commencement of the research, the request for an expedited review will not override this requirement. RECs must be allowed to work independently to ensure an unbiased and rigorous ethics review and cannot be influenced by funder or external requirements to commence work; threats of loss of funding or the seniority of the researcher/s.

Any issues regarding funder requirements and expectations, and/or funding award conditions, should be discussed with the HoS/Line Manager and RKEO Pre and Post Awards (Research Development) Team.

For any enquiries regarding this procedure please contact your line manager (or supervisor in case of student researchers) in the first instance. If you require further information please email [research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk)