



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Automatic
Control &
Systems
Engineering.

Ethics Review Procedures

Remit of the University's ethics review system and ethics review procedures

All members of staff within the Department of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering and supervised students who are registered in this department and who plan to undertake research which involves human participants or their data or tissue, should ensure that their proposed research is ethically approved via the appropriate ethics review procedure, prior to commencing such research.

- Research projects that involve the NHS should be ethically reviewed via the NHS's ethics review system, administered by COREC: www.corec.org.uk, and such projects should not be additionally ethically reviewed via the University.
- Research projects that involve human participants or their data or tissue, but which do not involve the NHS, should be ethically reviewed via the department of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering's ethics review procedure.
- Should a project's Principal or Chief Investigator plan to seek ethics review via an alternative route then they should, in the first instance, contact the secretary of the University Research Ethics Committee (U-REC), Mr Richard Hudson (ext. 21448).

The appropriateness of ethics review and procedure is more precisely defined in the 'Applicants ethics checklist'.

University standard ethics forms

Where ethics approval is required via the department's ethics review procedure, the following University standard forms will be used:

1. 'Applicant's ethics checklist': *applicant to complete*
2. 'University research ethics application form': *applicant to complete*
3. 'University participant information sheet': *applicant to complete if appropriate*
4. 'University participant consent form': *applicant to complete if appropriate*
5. 'Ethics reviewer's comments form': *ethics reviewer to complete*

These standard forms are available from
www.shef.ac.uk/researchoffice/support/winning/ethics/system.html

Department ethics review panel

The department has in place an ethics review panel, designed to act as a forum in which ethical issues can be raised and discussed and which ethically reviews contentious research ethics applications. The current members of this panel are:

- Professor M A Balikhin
- Professor S A Billings
- Professor P J Fleming
- Dr R F Harrison
- Professor V Kadiramanathan
- Professor M M Mahfouf
- Professor H A Thompson
- Dr S Walker

Ethics administrator

The role of the ethics administrator is to administer the department's ethics review process and key duties include:

- receiving applications from applicants and forwarding them to an appropriate number of ethics reviewers.
- choosing the ethics reviewers, including 'lead' ethics reviewer for each ethics review of an application.
- in exceptional cases to administer the review of contentious applications, in liaison with the Chair and members of the ethics review panel.
- Inform the applicant and the University Research Office of the ethics review outcomes.

The ethics administrator is currently **Mrs Debbie Proctor**.

Ethics reviewer

Only departmental members of staff who have been nominated by departments as ethics reviewers may ethically review research projects.

Ethics reviewers must be independent of the applications that they review.

A minimum of **three** ethics reviewers are required to ethically review either a staff led application for a supervised postgraduate researcher application.

A minimum of **two** ethics reviewers, one of whom is expected to be the supervisor, are required to ethically review applications from supervised postgraduates-taught level and from under undergraduate level students.

'Lead' ethics reviewers

Each individual ethics review of an application should include a 'lead' ethics reviewer, chosen by the ethics administrator. The role of the lead ethics reviewer is to decide the ethics review outcome, having considered the comments of the different ethics reviewers. The 'lead' ethics reviewer may ask the ethics review panel to ethically review the application if s/he has concerns about the nature of the research.

Review of contentious applications

In exceptional cases where there is *significant, fundamental difference of opinion* about the ethics of a piece of research then the application should be reviewed by the department's ethics review panel. In very exceptional cases the application can be ethically reviewed by U-REC.

Appeals procedure

If an application is not approved, the applicant may appeal against the decision by contacting the ethics administrator. The administrator will arrange for the department's ethics review panel to ethically review the application. If the ethics review panel also decides not to approve the application then the applicant may appeal against the decision to the secretary of the U-REC. The U-REC's secretary will arrange for the U-REC to ethically review the application and the U-REC's decision will be final.

Reporting ethics review outcomes to the University's Research Office

Following each ethics review, the ethics administrator will send an electronic copy of the record of the ethics review outcome to the University's Research Office.

Monitoring of the department's ethics review system by the U-REC and provision of an annual report to the U-REC

The U-REC reserves the right to monitor the department's ethics review procedure as and when required and, as a minimum, will contact departments on an annual basis for an annual report of key activities and findings over the preceding twelve months.