

Role description – Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC) Panel Review member

Preamble from Queen Mary Research Integrity Policy

The Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee has been authorised by Senate to advise on all research policies, to oversee their ethical content, and to provide advice on ethical and related issues arising from their implementation. This includes training of researchers, data management, research misconduct, discrimination, confidentiality, and acceptance of funding.

The Senate has granted authority to the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee to establish criteria, processes, and procedures to enact this policy and to grant approval to research according to its terms.

Preamble from Queen Mary Policy on Research with Human Participants

The Ethics of Research Committee is responsible, under authority delegated by Senate, for approving the ethical standards of research involving human participants or materials derived from human participants. All such projects throughout Queen Mary should be submitted to the Committee for approval, except those research studies which fall within the remit of the NHS Research Ethics Committee, or other such recognised bodies.

Overview of the Role

The main purpose of this role is to carry out ethical review of research studies involving human participants, their data or samples from across all Schools and Institutes in the University, which involve [more than minimal risks](#) and could require Panel Review, and to bring specific expertise to the review process from the School or Institute that the member represents.

It is anticipated that Panel Review members will also take a lead role in promoting a culture of best practice research ethics across their School, and the University more widely.

Key Responsibilities

- 1) Provide independent, competent, and timely research ethics review to studies received from across the University.
- 2) Approve as proposed; to request further clarification or modification; to refuse approval of applications and amendments received; or to refer applications to main QMERC.
- 3) Ensure that every study which undergoes Panel Review is dealt in accordance with the [University's research with human participants policy](#), other associated [research QMUL policies](#) and ethics guidance produced by Research Councils, Professional Associations, and other external bodies, to alert the Panel Chair where there may be a conflict of interest.
- 4) Ensure that applicants are treated fairly and equally in accordance with the [University's Equality policies](#).
- 5) Alert the Panel Chair and the JRMO Research Ethics Office (research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk) as of any training needs, and to attend any relevant training provision that is made available to them.

- 6) Alert the Panel Chair of any ongoing issues relating to the ethical review of research that should be dealt as a matter of policy by QMERC.
- 7) Provide a report as and when required with respect the devolved School Research Ethics Committee (DSREC) review activities, if attending as a representative.
- 8) Provide guidance and awareness-raising amongst colleagues and students within the School on the ethical conduct of research and ethical review procedures as appropriate.
- 9) Disseminate guidance produced by the QMERC or JRMO Research Ethics Office relating to proper ethical conduct of research to their School.
- 10) Promptly refer any failure to follow procedures or protocols for ethical review to the Panel Chair and the Research Ethics Office (research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk).
- 11) Contribute to the development, monitoring and review of QMERC procedures and processes.

Frequency of Meetings

- Panels usually meet on two occasions during the academic year. It is anticipated that Panel Review members will make every effort to attend these meetings either in person or via videoconference or by providing comments prior to the meeting;
- Panel Review members must attend a minimum of one meeting per academic year;
- Additional meetings may be scheduled where necessary; and
- The expected time commitment for these responsibilities is approximately half a day per meeting (minimum).

Term of appointment

The term of appointment for a QMERC Panel member is 3 years. Terms of appointment may be renewed.

Person specification

- Expertise in research activities in their field and/or research ethics
- Strong personal commitment to ensuring the highest standards of research practice
- Strong personal commitment to protecting the interests of participants who take part in University research
- It is expected that the (each) DSREC Chair / Deputy Chair will become a QMERC Review Panel member.

Recognition for the role

Acting with the highest ethical standards, and with integrity, in all that we do is a core value of the University's Strategy 2030.

The role of the QMERC Review Panel member is important for promoting ethical research practices and for protecting the rights and interests of research participants.

The following are provided to support the role of the QMERC Review Panel member:

- Recognition of contribution to ethics review and institutional support review procedures in Progression, workload allocations and appraisal reviews

- Notification of relevant research ethics training opportunities
- Support and guidance from the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee and the Research Ethics Facilitators.
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Recommended appointment process

Appointment to the role will be made by the QMERC Chair and Deputy Chair using nominations or advertisement.

- Role description agreed (as above);
- Role announced;
- Expressions of interest considered by the JRMO Research Ethics Office (research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk) and the QMERC Chairs;
- The JRMO Research Ethics team can support the process by addressing informal enquiries about the role (research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk); and
- Decisions made communicated to the individuals interested in the role of QMERC Panel member.

Training for new members

QMERC induction

It is recommended that new QMERC Panel members take a one-hour induction session which is offered by the JRMO Research Ethics Office and observe at least one QMERC Panel meeting before undertaking their first review. Please contact the Research Ethics Facilitators (research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk) in the first instance to ask when the next training session may be available. The session covers key aspects of the University ethics review process including: why research ethics is important; when Queen Mary ethics review is needed; how is ethics review conducted; overview of the research ethics application form.

If you have been recently appointed as a QMERC Panel member, you will also be invited to an introductory meeting with the QMERC Chair and the Chair of the Panel you will be a member of.

QMERC Panel members are expected to undertake research ethics related learning during their term of appointment. See our 'Guidance and Training for Committee members' document for resources to support you in your role.

It is anticipated that QMERC Panel members will keep a record of the research ethics related training they have received or delivered. This record may be requested by the Research Ethics Facilitators.