# School Research Ethics Committee Annual Report 2019-20

Any project or research involving human participants (including the use of questionnaires and interviewing subjects), where there are legitimate concerns for the welfare and interests of those carrying out the activity, involving animals, where there is potential to damage or change our cultural heritage or the natural environment, there potential for reputational damage or which requires an individual to step outside accepted regulatory or legal norms should be subject to ethical review and must follow Birkbeck's ethical procedures.

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of School |  |
| Name of School Research Ethics Officer |  |

Please answer the following questions (expand the space available for each answer, if necessary).

1 Please list the names of members of your School Ethics Committee. At least one member should be from outside the School. Please provide an explanation if this is not the case.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Member(s) external to School |  |
| School Members(normally the members are the Departmental Research Ethics Officers) |  |

2 Please give the number of research ethics cases considered for approval in accordance with your School Ethics Policy. Please also complete the template at Appendix A on the outcome of sensitive cases. (Definitions of routine, sensitive and extremely sensitive are outlined at Appendix B).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Number** |
| Routine |  |
| Sensitive |  |
| Extremely sensitive |  |

3 Please comment on any action taken or required in reviewing these cases.

4 Please comment on the ethical issues raised in your School during the year.

5 Please comment on any particular difficulties encountered in considering ethical issues in your School.

6 Please describe the approach taken in your School to ensure appropriate training in research ethics and research integrity is provided to all researchers

7 Are there any specific training or development needs related to ethical issues and approval procedures in your School which need addressing? If so, please detail.

8 Are there any other points you wish to bring to the attention of the College Research Ethics Committee? If so, please detail below.

9 Which departments ethical approval processes were reviewed this year? Please also discuss and identified areas of best practice or concern.

10 Have your School’s procedures for ethical review been introduced or revised since the last annual report was made? (Please confirm)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **YES** |  |
| **NO** |  |

If YES, can you please attach a copy of the current procedures.

Please email completed reports to committees@bbk.ac.uk.

Many thanks

## Appendix A: School Research Ethics Annual Report Outcomes of Applications

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Department** |  | **Proposals** **Submitted** **by** | **Type of Proposals** **Submitted**  | **Number approved - NO Further Comment** | **Number approved - WITH Resolution of Issues** | **Number not yet approved/ resolved** | **Any comments** |
|   |  | Staff | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
| DEPARTMENT 1 |  | Student | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | Total |  |   |  |  |  |
|   |  | Staff | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
| DEPARTMENT 2 |  | Student | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | Total |   |   |  |  |  |
|   |  | Staff | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
| DEPARTMENT 3 |  | Student | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | Total |   |   |  |  |  |
|   |  | Staff | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
| DEPARTMENT 4 |  | Student | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | Total |  |   |  |  |  |
|   |  | Staff | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
| DEPARTMENT 5 |  | Student | Routine |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Sensitive |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | Total |   |   |  |  |  |

## Appendix B: Definitions of ‘sensitive’ ‘extremely sensitive’ and ‘routine’ research projects

### Sensitive:

* a research methodology which raises ethical questions but which has not been previously considered by the appropriate Ethics Committee
* a research methodology where participants are to be subjected to questions, or other procedures which carry a risk of beingharmful to their physical or mental well being
* the research requires data from a set of participants who may not have the capacity to give informed consent, for example children and vulnerable populations
* the research involves groups where permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members

### Extremely sensitive:

* the research involves (or might appear to involve) deception, or is conducted without participants’ full and informed consent at the time when the study is carried out
* the research involves access to personal information or confidential information on identifiable living individuals *or* the research combines existing datasets in a way where anonymised individuals might become identifiable
* all cases of predictable media interest or sensitivity
* all cases where there is a conflict of interest
* all cases where the veracity of source material cannot be readily checked (i.e. material from anonymous sources)
* all cases where there is a significant risk of reputational damage to the College (which may include a consideration of the source of funding for the research)
* all cases where the research team is undertaking security sensitive research. Security sensitive research includes research commissioned by the military or under an EU security call, research that requires the researchers to obtain security clearance or research into terrorist or extremist groups
* all cases where the research team need to access illegal or extreme materials

It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list and all proposals should be considered from the perspective that they may be sensitive or extremely sensitive rather than from the presumption that the research is in line with normal disciplinary practice.

### Research in line with normal disciplinary practice (Routine):

* research projects which so closely follow previous research already given ethical approval within the last 3-5 years[[1]](#footnote-1) that the ethical issues are identical and have already been considered
* projects that have less than minimal potential risk of harm to participants and others affected by the proposed research and this risk can be mitigated by following best practice already established within the discipline
1. The exact time frame to be decided by each School Ethics Committee, based on what is appropriate for its academic discipline. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)