

**Standing Orders of the Social Sciences and Humanities Interdivisional
Research Ethics Committee (SSH IDREC)**

The Standing Orders of the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC are as follows:

- 1) Ethical approval **must** be secured before any research falling under the [University's requirements for ethical review](#) may proceed. This approval is secured by the review and approval of the research by the SSH IDREC, the Medical Sciences IDREC, the Oxford Tropical Research Ethics Committee (OxTREC) or, exceptionally, by CUREC.
- 2) Checklists for 'lower-risk' projects (i.e. using the CUREC 1A checklist) may be reviewed by the Research Ethics Manager and Research Ethics Administrator attached to the IDREC, and approved by the Research Ethics Manager. Application forms for 'higher risk' projects (i.e. using the CUREC 2 form) must be reviewed by a quorum of IDREC members. In cases where research projects are deemed to present a higher level of risk, but do not formally require the completion of a CUREC 2 application, the Research Ethics Manager may review the application with the advice of the Chair, Vice-Chair, or at least one IDREC member.
- 3) Which IDREC scrutinises each proposal is generally determined by the subject of the research, not by the department in which the research will be carried out or to which the principal researcher is attached. The SSH IDREC will accept jurisdiction over projects which use research methodology relevant to subject areas that fall within the Social Sciences and Humanities and has oversight of lower-risk research projects approved by University Departmental Research Ethics Committees (DRECs).
- 4) IDRECs shall use the documentation and procedures approved by CUREC. Any non-administrative changes to these may only be made with the approval of CUREC. IDRECs will normally make their decisions at quorate scheduled termly meetings. The Chair will call and the Secretary will publicise meetings such that the approval timetable can be met.
- 5) At the discretion of the Chair, the scheduled meetings may be replaced by circulation of papers to members.
- 6) CUREC 2 applications will generally be reviewed by email circulation and SharePoint. Approval of such applications must be secured by the votes of a majority of those reviewing the applications, where appropriate including the Chair or Vice-Chair. The Chair may, if necessary, decide the matter by exercising a casting vote.
- 7) The quorum is one-third or five of the members of the committee, whichever is the greater. Within this quorum, there should be no fewer than **two** academic and **one** non-academic/external members. This quorum applies to decisions made at meetings and by email correspondence. Outside full term, or for CUREC 2 applications that have already been reviewed by a DREC and submitted to the SSH IDREC for final review and approval, a reduced quorum will be in place of **three** committee members. Of these, at least one should be external and one internal.
- 8) The Chair may invite researchers to attend a meeting to consider their proposals where this would expedite scrutiny.
- 9) IDRECs shall retain records for seven years after making their decision on research projects.
- 10) IDRECs shall reach one of the following decisions about each project.
 - Approve project

- Approve project once minor amendments have been made
- Defer decision (in exceptional circumstances, where the committee needs further advice)
- Refuse approval
- Decline jurisdiction (referring to another sub-committee of CUREC, or to an external body, such as the NHS, for approval)
- Refer to CUREC (in exceptional circumstances only)

- 11) IDRECs shall decide on an application and normally tell the applicant the decision and the reasons for it as soon as possible.
- 12) After an initial review by officers, further written information or clarification may be requested from the applicant. During this period, the time-frame is suspended, to be restarted when a response satisfactory to the IDREC is received. A final decision should then be made and communicated to the applicant, normally within 30 days (for CUREC 1A applications), or within 60 days (in the case of CUREC 2 applications) wherever possible. The applicant will be informed when this timetable cannot be met and given a new deadline for approval. Extra time should be allowed in complex cases and outside term time.
- 13) Amendments to approved projects shall be considered by the IDREC that approved the original project, and an answer given to the applicant within **15 days** wherever possible. Where the amendment(s) are so substantial that they need to be treated by the IDREC as a new application, or if they are complex amendments to a CUREC 2 project, the **30-day deadline** will apply. The applicant will be informed if this deadline cannot be met.
- 14) Expedited review outside the agreed time frame and quora will be possible at the discretion of the IDREC Chair.
- 15) Changes to an approved research project may be made by the researcher without prior approval from an IDREC only where change
- is necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to research participants, or
 - involves only logistical or administrative aspects of the research.
- Changes made to eliminate hazards must be notified to the relevant IDREC within **25 days** by the submission of a copy of the original checklist or application form, if one was submitted, with changes highlighted.
- 16) Any other changes must be approved in advance by the IDREC.
- 17) The SSH IDREC may require reports from researchers whose projects pose appreciable risk to participants, and may reconsider their approval of the project in the light of any report.
- 18) The SSH IDREC may also require progress reports from a sample of projects approved each year to enable it to monitor the ethical aspects of research in progress.
- 19) IDRECs shall be notified within **seven days of the adverse event** of any unexpected adverse consequences to participants in research projects they approved.
- 20) At the end of each calendar year, IDRECs shall report to CUREC on:
- the names, affiliations and occupations of committee members and of deputies (if used);
 - the number and dates of meetings held;
 - the number of proposals considered;
 - the average time taken from acceptance of application to final decision on each proposal;
 - the training provided to researchers by the IDREC;
 - the results of their audit of applications;
 - if requested, a sample of information sheets and consent forms and the results of their review of progress reports (where projects have been monitored).