

Further particulars: External member of the University of Oxford Medical Sciences Research Ethics Committee (MS IDREC)

The University of Oxford seeks to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in research (whether they are participants, third parties or staff and students) and to promote high ethical standards of research. The University achieves this by:

- fostering a culture within the University that embraces the principles set down in the [University's Research Ethics policy](#) and in the legislation to protect the rights, dignity and welfare of those involved in research;
- providing ethical guidance that communicates regulatory requirements and best practice, and offering ongoing support and training to staff and students to maintain high ethical standards; and
- maintaining a review process that subjects research to a level of scrutiny in proportion to the risk of harm or adverse effect.

For more information please see <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics>.

The University seeks an external member, to serve on a committee considering the ethics of the University's research studies in Medical Sciences and Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (the Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee, or MS IDREC).

An external (or 'lay') member is someone who is **not** currently employed by, or studying at, the University or its colleges in any capacity, and whose primary personal or professional interest is **not** currently in any particular research area.

Application Procedure

Please send a C.V. and cover letter stating why you think you would be suitable for the role, including examples of relevant work or volunteer experience, to Helen Barnby-Porritt, MS IDREC Secretary, by email to ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk. The closing date for applications is **Monday, 26th February 2024**.

Appointments are normally for an initial term of four years, with a possible extension for a further four years. It is hoped that the external member can be appointed in time to join the committee for its first meeting of the new academic year in October 2023 and be available to review applications from then on. Appointments will be made by the Central University Research Ethics Committee on the recommendation of the Chair of the MS IDREC.

If you have any questions about the vacancy, please contact Dr Helen Barnby-Porritt, Research Ethics Manager on 01865 (6)16577 or email ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk.

Remuneration

Membership of the committee is a **voluntary role**, and **no remuneration is available**.

However, reasonable travel expenses for the attendance of meetings will be paid, in line with the University's expenses policy. Please note that members will therefore need to live within reasonable travel distance from Oxford.

Person Specification

We are looking for a person with the skills, knowledge and personal qualities which would contribute to the ethical review of research in the Medical, Mathematical, Physical and Life sciences. **You will not need to have any specific academic qualifications or experience.**

Experience within commercial or public administration, community organisations, education, welfare services, the charitable sector or healthcare, whilst not exhaustive, could all be relevant to ethical review of research in the medical sciences.

Necessary qualities for appointment are

- an ability to understand the research proposals under discussion, to process information logically and articulate reasons for decisions;
- an awareness of ethical issues, including an ability to look with objectivity at the issues presented, and to demonstrate honesty and integrity in decision-making;
- the capacity to see issues from different perspectives, especially that of the participant; but to reach decisions based on your own reading of these situations;
- regular access to e-mail and the internet, and the time and willingness to consider applications by e-mail and return comments promptly and regularly;
- willingness to serve the public interest and the community;
- demonstrable respect for the integrity of others;
- the capacity to attend meetings in Oxford three times a year (usually in January, May and October).

The following knowledge would be helpful but is not essential:

- an appreciation of topics which may be researched by medical and life scientists, and the situations in which researchers work with people (which include healthcare settings, community groups, overseas countries, local authorities, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, schools and children);
- some knowledge of higher education, or research.

Please note that employees of the University of Oxford or of one of the Oxford colleges or permanent private halls and students of the University, and those employed in a research capacity, are **not** eligible to serve as external members of the MS IDREC.

Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee

Membership

The Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee is composed of:

- a Chair and a Vice-Chair (the Vice-Chair may be an external member);
- at least one other external member;
- up to nine academics, representing a spread of academic approaches to research from across the medical sciences;
- other members (academics, or external members), co-opted as required.

Description of the Role

The Committee meets **three times each year** (once in each academic term, approximately: mid-October, late January, early May) to consider policy questions and to review procedures.

However, regular work is required between meetings to

- read applications for ethical approval, which are reviewed by e-mail, **and**
- to comment on the ethical appropriateness of the methods and the approaches used in these projects.

External members are asked to review two applications per month on average. Members are usually given two weeks to review, though sometimes urgent applications may need a faster turnaround time.

The Committee's role and responsibility

The Committee is authorised to:

1. Review the ethics of all proposals submitted to it for research involving human participants, human tissue and/or personal data conducted by University employees or by University students or conducted by others on University premises, unless the research falls within the remit of the National Research Ethics Service, in which case such research must meet the requirements of that Service;
2. Grant ethical approval on behalf of the University if it is satisfied that the research complies with the University's research ethics policy;
3. Withhold, suspend or withdraw approval of research if it is considered to be in contravention of the University's research ethics policy;
4. Establish and regularly review for approval by the Central University Research Ethics Committee:

- (a) procedures for monitoring research approved by it to verify that the research continues to comply with the University's research ethics policy;
 - (b) procedures for ensuring that all research projects involving human participants and/or personal data are reviewed and approved, as appropriate, under the relevant subcommittee's procedures; and
 - (c) standing orders.
5. Report annually to the Central University Research Ethics Committee and provide such other reports as are specified in its Standing Orders.