School Research Ethics Officer

Role Description

Overview of role

The School Research Ethics Officer (SREO) ensures the highest standards of ethical conduct in research and related activities involving human participants, animals, the environment and data. The SREO is responsible for overseeing the timely, independent and informed consideration of the ethical design of research submitted by undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students. The SREO promotes best practice, raises awareness of ethics and research integrity and provides guidance to students and staff within a culture of honesty and respect for participants, the environment and the full range of stakeholders of university research. The SREO takes a lead role in promoting a culture of research integrity within the faculty.

Key responsibilities

a. To provide final and consistent approval for those projects which have identified and addressed ethical issues appropriately in the application;

b. To seek additional review from a members of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (F-REC) for high risk projects and providing the final opinion to the applicant;

c. To discuss with supervisor or supervisor and student, those projects which have not satisfactorily identified and addressed ethical issues;

d. To consult with the F-REC Chair where there are queries on ethical principles or standards for taught student research;

e. To identify and escalate research governance and regulatory issues requiring the expertise and support of the Senior Research Ethics and integrity Officer (SREIO) or appropriate member of the Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance team;

f. To raise awareness, disseminate information and ensure that policy, guidance and training developed for UG and PGT students by the University in relation to research ethics are being followed, and in the case of training, attended in the School;

g. To report, where appropriate, via the F-REC or SREIO any unmet training and development needs related to ethics;

h. To provide ad hoc, informed, advice and guidance to supervisors, course tutors, module leaders and UG/PGT students on research ethics applications;

i. To provide ongoing contribution to the development, monitoring and review of ethics policy and guidance;

j. In liaison with the Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance Team, lead development and management of activities and training to promote an active culture of research integrity and good ethical practice;

Approved June 2025 by the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub Committee

k. To undertake training and development activities upon taking up the role and subsequently attend a minimum of one training event annually;

l. To attend (optional or as necessary) at F-REC meetings;

m. To liaise with the Associate Deans for Education and the SREIO regarding any school-specific issues;

n. Upon request, to report on applications to the F-REC and support the periodic auditing;

o. To liaise with the school based administrator and web personnel to ensure appropriate links from school websites to central ethics website are established and maintained;

p. To handover to new colleagues at the end of tenure, to ensure a seamless transition in service.

Appointment: by Head of School (HoS). The HoS will seek to appoint members of faculty who represent the diversity of the school.

Tenure: 3 years, renewable for a further 2 upon mutual agreement.