

School of Psychology (SoP) Research Ethics sub-Committee Terms of Reference  
September 2023

This committee sits as a School of Psychology Research Ethics sub-Committee (referred to thereafter as the SoP REC) within the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. The SoP REC comprises of a team of reviewers and the Chair (Dr Gabriela Jiga-Boy) and co-Chair (Dr Menna Price) and is directly answerable to the *University Research Ethics & Governance sub-committee*. All applications are reviewed initially by one reviewer and assigned a risk level (low, medium or high), then it is reviewed by either the Chair or co-Chair, who confirm/modify the risk level as appropriate and approve/request changes/reject as appropriate. Changes may also be requested at the initial review stage.

**SoP Students:** To ethically review all research with human participants and/or data not publicly available. We also provide review of student and staff service evaluation proposals.

**SoP Staff:** To provide ethical review for research with human participants and/or data which is not publicly available when no other system for formal ethical review is available. We do not review educational evaluations unless students are required to participate in activities outside any usual evaluation

**Students:** An application for SoP REC approval must be completed by the supervisors of SoP final year project students and by Post Graduate students conducting research with human participants or looking at data that is not publicly available. All Post Graduate student applications should be authorised by academic supervisors prior to submission and cannot be submitted without the supervisor's authorization. Where SoP students are intending to conduct research with NHS patients, the applications should be reviewed by the student's supervisor and approval sought from the relevant NHS LREC Committee (via IRAS). If NHS REC approval has been granted, applicants will NOT be required to submit an additional application to SoP REC. Any research being conducted by Swansea University students overseas will require approval by SoP REC. For any collaborative research that had received ethical approval in the collaborator's institution, the Swansea University collaborator will need to submit an ethical application that includes the initial ethical package (i.e., protocol, materials, etc.) and the proof of ethical approval already obtained. No advertising or recruiting for the proposed studies should be conducted before an application has received ethical approval.

**Staff:** Staff conducting researching with human participants who are SoP students or any other populations should seek approval from the SoP REC committee if the research does not involve NHS patients. Where SoP staff plan to conduct research with NHS patients, approval should be sought from the relevant NHS LREC Committee (via IRAS). This will not require additional submission to SoP REC if NHS REC approval has been granted. Any research being conducted by Swansea University staff overseas will require approval by SoP REC. For any collaborative research that had received ethical approval in the collaborator's institution, the Swansea University collaborator will need to submit an ethical application that includes the initial ethical package (i.e., protocol, materials, etc.) and the proof of ethical approval already obtained. No advertising or recruiting for the proposed studies should be conducted before an application has received ethical approval.

Any application considered by the committee will either be: (a) given a favourable ethical opinion (b) determined to be in need of revision and re-submission, (c) not given a favourable opinion (i.e. rejected).

The Chair of the committee has the final decision. The role of the Chair also encompasses leading on strategic direction, implementing governance procedures and regular review of submission processes. The Chair is responsible for preparation of a termly report to the *University Research Ethics & Governance sub-committee*. This would include through put data with special note of high risk and debated / contested applications.

### **Membership:**

The committee is comprised of a body of SoP staff members with relevant expertise and knowledge of various kinds of research and practice and British Psychological Society ethical guidelines. The committee may co-opt external members and administrative support where special expertise not already present within the committee is needed. Members (i.e., reviewers) are normally appointed by the Head of School, or by a nominee of the Head of School, for a tenure of 2-3 years in the first instance. Reviewers can also be appointed by self-nomination. All reviewers and are expected to enrol and complete the training available prior to being allocated work for review and to update their review knowledge in line with the latest developments circulated from

the University Research Ethics & Governance sub-committee. The current membership and expertise of the SoP committee 2023/2024 are available on request.

## **Appeals**

Applicants have a right of appeal against committee decisions. Such appeals should be submitted to the Chair within 10 working days of receipt of the decision. The Chair will then re-consider the application, seek external guidance if needed (e.g., at the Faculty or University levels) and may invite the applicant to discuss the application further at a committee meeting.

## **Terms of office:**

Committee members will normally serve for a period of two to three years. There is no maximum tenure for members, but membership will be reviewed every three years to try to share the benefits and burdens of membership across SoP REC. The Chair's appointment will be reviewed every two years. The Chair has the right to review individual membership.

## **Process for ethical approval:**

We recommend that applicants follow the sequence of steps outlined below:

1. Discuss the application with your supervisor and research team. Applications should be reviewed by the supervisor for the overall quality and to make sure that the relevant paperwork is included;
2. Identify any ethical issues raised by the research and discuss these with your supervisor/research team;
3. Make sure you have used the most recent templates for all the documents requested in your ethics application (available [here](#));
4. Complete an application on the Ethics RM system. This should include all other relevant documentation (e.g., the Participant Information Sheet, the Consent form, full Debrief, recruitment/advertising text, etc.) The application must be signed by the researcher and their supervisor where relevant.
5. Applications will then be received by the administrative team.
6. A committee member will be nominated by the administrative team to review the application initially. The reviewer will be sent an invitation to review the application. If they accept the invitation, they will be invited to proceed
7. Once the reviewer has completed the review, the application is then allocated to the Chair/co-Chair for a second review and the confirmation of outcome (approval, changes requested, or rejection). The Chair/co-Chair make the final decision with regards to outcome and inform the applicant via the system.