



Office of the Vice President Research
and Innovation an Leas-Uachtaráin
Taighde agus Nuálaíochta

Maynooth University

Research Ethics
Committee

Terms of Reference

Version: 2

Effective Date: March 2020

Reviewed: Research Committee, Governing Authority

Next Review Date: June 2024

Introduction to the Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee

The Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee is a standing subcommittee of the Research Committee with devolved responsibility to make decisions on ethical approval of research and to assist Maynooth University academic staff and research students in negotiating ethical issues in research. The committee is further divided into two subcommittees as follows:

The Social Research Ethics Subcommittee

This subcommittee reviews proposals of research with human participants or secondary use of personally identifiable data derived from human participants or human biological material (with the exception of research that involves taking blood or tissue or other biological samples from humans, human remains or cadavers, or the use of physiological measurements or other intrusive techniques involving humans).

The Biomedical and Life Sciences Research Ethics Subcommittee

This subcommittee reviews proposals of:

- research with humans that involves taking blood or tissue or other biological samples from humans, human remains or cadavers, or the use of physiological measurements or other intrusive techniques involving humans
- research with non-human vertebrate animals as set out in EU Directive 2010/63/EU and SI. 543 of 2012
- research using genetically modified organisms
- research using biohazardous agents.

Terms of Reference for Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee and subcommittees

Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee (REC)

The REC:

- is responsible for the development and recommendation of policies and procedures in relation to ethics in research, which may from time to time become necessary.
- shall discuss and make decisions regarding any ethical issues in research arising at Maynooth University.
- shall receive copies of all applications to its subcommittees, and their decisions.
- shall review any applications that the subcommittees feel are contentious.
- may set up further subcommittees if the need arises.

Biomedical and Life Sciences Research Ethics Subcommittee

This subcommittee is responsible for:

- the review of applications regarding ethical issues of:
 - a) conducting research with humans that involves that involves taking blood or tissue or other biological samples from humans, human remains or cadavers, or the use of physiological measurements or other intrusive techniques involving humans
 - b) conducting research with vertebrate animals
 - c) conducting research using genetically modified organisms
 - d) conducting research using biohazardous agents
- the communication of all approvals/denials to REC
- the proposal of recommendations to the REC on ethical policy in research related to a-d.

Social Research Ethics Subcommittee

This subcommittee is responsible for:

- the review of applications regarding ethical issues of conducting research with human participants or secondary use of personally identifiable data derived from human participants or human biological material (with the exception of research that involves taking blood or tissue or other biological samples from humans, human remains or cadavers, or the use of physiological measurements or other intrusive techniques involving humans)
- the communication of all approvals/denials to REC

- the proposal of recommendations to the REC on ethical policy in research with human participants.

Membership of Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee

REC should have at least ten members, and may co-opt experts where required. A vice chair should be elected from the membership. Committee members should sit for a maximum of three years. Committee members should rotate on a staggered basis to ensure continuity for new members.

- Vice President for Research (Chair)
- Non-voting Secretary
- Members of the Social Research Ethics Subcommittee
- Members of the Biomedical and Life Sciences Research Ethics Subcommittee
- An academic staff member with academic qualifications and research experience in law or a barrister or solicitor, not affiliated to Maynooth University (appointed by the Chair)
- A lay person who brings an impartial view to the committee (appointed by the Chair).

The REC also has powers to co-opt additional members who shall provide expert advice on particular questions, as required.

Membership of Research Ethics Subcommittees

The subcommittees should have at least eight members, and the Chair may co-opt more experts where required. A vice chair should be elected from the membership. Committee members should sit for a maximum of three years. Committee members should rotate on a staggered basis to ensure continuity for new members.

Biomedical and Life Sciences Research Ethics Subcommittee:

- Chair - An academic member of staff with experience in the biomedical and life sciences nominated by the VPRI
- Vice Chair – elected from the members listed below
- A secretary who may be provided from Research Development Office staff
- Three academic staff members with academic qualifications and research experience in 6 Medical/Biological sciences
- A designated veterinarian or expert who is charged with advisory duties in relation to the well-being and treatment of the animals
- An animal care and welfare officer who is responsible for overseeing the welfare and care of the animals in the user establishment
- An academic staff member with academic qualifications and research experience in psychology
- A statistician or person with expertise in statistical analysis
- And/or an academic representative from any department that may from time to time require ethical approval from the Biomedical and Life Sciences Research Ethics Subcommittee.
- A lay-person who may or may not be a member of Maynooth University staff provided they outside of the disciplines under review.

Social Research Ethics Subcommittee:

- Chair – An academic member of staff with experience in Social research nominated by the VPRI
- Vice Chair – elected from the members listed below
- A secretary who may be provided from Research Support Office staff
- At least two academic staff members with academic qualifications and research experience in sociological research
- At least one academic staff member with academic qualifications and research experience in anthropological research
- At least one academic staff member with academic qualifications and research experience in psychological research
- At least one academic staff member with academic qualifications and research experience in educational research
- At least one academic staff member with academic qualifications and research experience in a

humanities discipline

- A person with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people and/or additional academic representatives from any department in any faculty that may from time to time require ethical approval from the Social Research Ethics Subcommittee.