RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (REC)

MEETING MINUTES

Friday 18th June 2021 | 11:00am Online Videoconference (via Zoom)

PRESENT: Geraldine Scanlon (Chair), Melrona Kirrane (Vice-Chair), Adam Platt, Fiona Brennan, Michael Parkinson, Kate Irving, Mary Sharp, Damian O'Donohue, Claire McCarrick, Ellen Drumm, Noel Prior, Anne Morrissey, Gareth Jones, Mengting Wang, Andy Healy, Michael Breen, Bert Gordijn, Joan O'Connell, Geraldine Healy

APOLOGIES: Brendan Egan, Audrey Bryan, Marta Rocchi, Peter Nowlan, Martin Ward

REVIEWED BY: DCU REC

AGENDA:
1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
2. REC CHAIR UPDATE
3. UPDATE FROM THE AWB
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING OF 21st May 2021 & MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
5. REVIEW OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS
6. "AthenaCX" PRESENTATION – Prof. Tomas Ward and Mr. Brendan O'Neill
7. AOB

KEY COMMENTS/ACTIONS:			
Agenda No.	**Comment/Decision**	**Action**	**Timescale**
1.	Agenda Adopted	N/A	N/A

MEETING MINUTES

2.	The REC Chair confirmed that the REC Terms of Reference (ToR) and the devolvement document, which outlines the requirements for establishing Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs), have now been approved by Research Committee (RC). Currently, only the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences will be devolving for the new academic year.	N/A	N/A
	The REC Chair will be stepping down from their position on the 30th of June 2021. It is hoped that the new REC Chair will be in place shortly and this will be communicated to the committee as soon as it has been officially confirmed.	The new REC Chair will be communicated to REC members as soon as a decision has been made.	Ongoing.
	DCU REC has received 178 applications for review for 2021 to date. This is a 14% increase from the same point in June 2020 and a 43.5% increase from the same point in June 2019. All of this would not be possible without the hard work of DCU REC members who have facilitated, and continue to facilitate, the review of research applications.	N/A	N/A
	The Chief Operations Officer is currently finalising the DCU Child Protection Policy and Training requirements. The links to these will sit on the DCU REC Portal on Loop. Likewise, the Data Protection Unit (DPU) has agreed to provide a link on the REC Portal for GDPR training. The REC administrator will also be recording a video introduction to their role, which will live on the REC Portal.	Update to be provided once available.	Ongoing.
	The current upgrade to the REC application review and approval system is ongoing. It is hoped that the system may be available by September's REC meeting.	Update to be provided once available.	Ongoing.
3.	The Animal Care & Welfare Officer (ACWO) provided their update to the REC.The ACWO gave a brief introduction to the	N/A	N/A

	work of the Animal Welfare Body (AWB). The AWB meets every 3 months and provides any relevant updates to the REC. The EU Commission and the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) in Ireland have provided guidance on the use of non-animal models for conducting breast cancer research. As a result, researchers will need to exhaust all non-animal approaches (e.g. developing and producing antibodies from non-animal sources) in order to receive approval from the HPRA and conduct their research.		
4.	An outstanding item from the previous meeting minutes on the 21st of May 2021 was the collation of common errors / omissions that applicants make. The REC Chair thanked members for providing their input and as a result has highlighted some of the most common errors / omissions that applicants make in the REC application guidance videos that are currently under development. These videos will sit on the REC Portal on Loop.	REC Chair to include these common errors / omissions in the guidance videos that will be available to researchers on the REC Portal within Loop.	Ongoing.
	Minutes from the previous full committee meeting (21st May 2021) were approved.	N/A	N/A
	Outstanding applications are awaiting responses from applicants.	REC administrator will follow-up with members via email if required.	N/A
	Total of 11 amendments to existing protocols which have been approved in the period of the 21st May 2021 – 18th June 2021	N/A	N/A

5. REVIEW OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS: All REC Ref Numbers highlighted in RED were applications reviewed outside of usual REC meeting dates.

REC Ref No.	Comments		Decision

2021_154	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_155	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_156	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_157	Approved	Approved
2021_158	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_159	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_160	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_161	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_162	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_163	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_164	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_165	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_166	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_167	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_168	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_169	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_170	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_171	Approved	Approved
2021_172	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_173	Approved	Approved
2021_174	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_175	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_176	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_177	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)
2021_178	Requires clarification(s)	Pending Clarification(s)

KEY COMMENTS/ACTIONS:

Agenda No.	Comment/Decision	Action	Timescale
6.	The REC were joined by Prof. Tomas Ward and Mr. Brendan O'Neill who presented their "AthenaCX" research management tool.	REC Administrator to discuss potential pilot schemes with the AthenaCX team.	As soon as possible.

	The system can be used for any study, allowing researchers to embed their PLS and Consent Form and surveys into a mobile app which allows them to obtain consent from participants remotely. If researchers are interested the AthenaCX team can put together further information and discuss access.		
7.	The REC thanked the outgoing REC Chair for their significant contributions in facilitating the conduct of ethically sound research at DCU, and their overall dedication to the work of the Research Ethics Committee. Over the course of their tenure they have overseen many changes to the operation of the REC in a very short period of time.	The REC Chair will be stepping down on the 30th of June 2021.	N/A
	Next REC Committee meeting scheduled for 27th of August 2021	N/A	N/A