



SECRETARIAT & LEGAL SERVICES
ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	Policy on Ethical Approval of Research by External Bodies
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	<p>The policy provides guidance regarding co-operation with external bodies on research and ethics approval.</p> <p>The policy applies to all staff and students within the University of Lincoln.</p>
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	Academic Board approved the policy on 17 June 2009.
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	Dean of Research
PERSONS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	The policy was considered by members of Academic Board, Research Policy Committee (<i>now Research Committee</i>) and Research Ethics Committee.
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board on 17 June 2009
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	17 June 2009
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The policy is available on the Secretariat portal.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	September 2012
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to the Research Ethics Committee
DATE:	13 July 2009

Policy on Ethical Approval of Research by External Bodies

Introduction

From time to time the University is approached by external bodies (organisations or individuals) who wish to conduct research involving the University's staff, students, facilities, data, or any other thing owned or controlled by the University. As the University is an organisation dedicated to research and the public good, it is minded to facilitate such research where this is properly conducted, does not act to the detriment of the University or its staff, and acts to the public good or to the advancement of knowledge.

Accordingly, where such a request is received, it shall be considered by the means specified below, and approval given where possible. Where approval is not appropriate, the external body shall be contacted in writing, and informed that the research cannot be supported. It is a matter for the Chair of the relevant committee whether the reasons for any rejection of permission should be given.

Consideration of External Requests to Conduct Research

A request by an external body to undertake research involving the University's staff, students, facilities, data, or any other thing owned or controlled by the University, should normally be referred to the most appropriate Faculty Research Ethics Committee. Where there is no appropriate link to a faculty, the request may be referred to the University Research Ethics Committee.

The committee shall consider the request, and satisfy itself as to the following issues:

1. Is the proposed research properly designed, and therefore capable of coming to a successful conclusion?
2. Is the person proposing to undertake the research of demonstrable competence?
3. Is the proposed research compliant with the University's policies on research ethics?
4. Is the proposed research likely to be conducive to the public good, or to advance knowledge?
5. Is the individual person conducting the research subject to professional restraints on action and adherence to research ethics processes?
6. Is there any risk that the proposed research (or its conduct) will damage the reputation of the University, put it at legal or other risk, or otherwise adversely affect the University?
7. Is there any risk that the proposed research will adversely affect the University's relationship with external organizations and collaborators?
8. Will the proposed research impose any significant cost on the University?

With respect to the issues one to three, the committee may, for example, take the view that, if the research is conducted by a member of staff or student of another Higher Education Institution within the United Kingdom, and has been approved by the appropriate research ethics process within that institution, or if the research is conducted by a member of the National Health Service and has been approved by the research ethics process of the National Health Service, then these issues have already been given sufficient consideration. Alternatively, if the committee wishes it may seek further clarification, and/or require a submission for ethics approval through its own processes.

With respect to issue four, the committee should reject applications to involve the University in research which is not likely to be beneficial.

With respect to issue five, where the University is approached by a private individual, or an organization that does not have the level of accountability governing the activities of academics, the committee may decide to decline the request, or to seek such assurances (including legal agreements) as it deems necessary to assure itself that no undue risk is accrued.

With respect to issue six, the committee shall take a view based on the nature of the research, and may decide to decline the request, or refer the issue to the University Research Ethics Committee, in case of uncertainty.

With respect to issue seven, the committee should seek assurances from the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Dean of Faculty that the proposed relationship does not in any way compromise the University's relationship with external bodies, including its standing with existing or prospective partners and collaborators. It should also check with the external proposer of the research whether they, or their organization, have any pre-existing working relationships with the University, and where such relationships do exist, ensure that these are not compromised by the proposed research.

With respect to issue eight, if the committee feels there are cost implications, then the written approval of the Dean of Faculty must be obtained before approval may be given (in the case of the University Research Ethics Committee, the written approval of the Deputy Vice Chancellor with responsibility for research must be obtained).

If there are any other issues that cast doubt on the wisdom of approving the request, the committee may exercise its judgement to decline the request.

If the committee feels that the judgement is particularly difficult, or raises issues of principle that should be considered at a higher level, it may refer the issue to the Research Ethics Committee.

Faculty Research Ethics Committees should report on any external requests and approvals in their Annual Research Ethics Reports.