



Scoil na Faisnéisíochta & na nEalaíon Cruthaitheach
School of Informatics & Creative Arts

Struchtúir um Eitic Thaighde na Scoile

School Research Ethics Structures

Background

[Institute policy](#) requires schools “to review all proposed research involving human participants or animals conducted by individuals who members of staff in the relevant school or are registered students of that school”

Within the School of Informatics and Creative Arts, the research ethics structures consist of the following entities:

- ◆ School Research Ethics Committee (SREC)
- ◆ A Departmental Ethics Review Committee (DERC) for each Department.

Procedure for the Ethical Review of Staff and Postgraduate Research Projects

All postgraduate and/or School staff research projects¹ should be referred directly to the SREC for consideration.

Procedure for the Ethical Review of Undergraduate Research Projects

A separate procedure, as follows, has been devised for the review of undergraduate research projects within the School with a view to (i) expediting the review process and (ii) availing of local independent expertise.

Step 1: The *ICA Ethical Approval Checklist for Undergraduate Research Projects* and, if required, the *Ethical Approval Application Form*, should be completed². This should be carried out by the project researcher(s) in consultation with the project supervisor³. The project supervisor should check the form(s) for accuracy and completeness before, on behalf of the researcher(s), either:

- ◆ Bringing the application forward, where relevant, to Step 2 or
- ◆ Submitting the application to the relevant DERC (Step 3) or
- ◆ Submitting the application to the SREC.

¹ The term *project* in this document also covers *dissertation* or any similar term used to describe an extended body of work involving research.

² The forms can be completed in soft or hardcopy, as appropriate.

³ *project supervisor* refers to the individual project supervisor, supervisory team member, project coordinator or module coordinator/lecturer overseeing the student project.



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Step 2: Where relevant, for each student project cohort the appropriate set of supervisors⁴ will meet to consider all applications within their remit. Once reviewed, applications will be aggregated and, together with a proposal in respect of each application within the given cohort be brought forward to the relevant DERC for approval (Step 3).

Step 3: The relevant DERC will review applications brought forward from Steps 1 and 2 for local sign-off or, where deemed appropriate, refer applications to the SREC. Reviews should be conducted in accordance with the [DkIT Ethics Policy](#).

The complete terms of reference for the SREC and the DERCs are described below.

⁴ The set of supervisors for a given project cohort refers to all academic staff involved in supervision and/or project co-ordination of that project cohort – where required the number of supervisors should be expanded in line with project numbers to ensure sufficient members.



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An COISTE um EITIC THAIGHDE na SCOILE SCHOOL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. Overview

The School Research Ethics Committee (SREC) is part of the Institute's ethics committee structure and it reports to the Institute's Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

2. Establishment

Established by the Head of School, in line with the Institute's [Research Ethics Policy](#).

3. Terms of Reference

- (i) To review all proposed research involving human participants or animals conducted by individuals who are members of staff in the School or are registered postgraduate students;
- (ii) To review all other proposed research referred by a Departmental Ethics Review Committee or by a project supervisor or set of supervisors, in line with the above procedure for the ethical review of undergraduate research projects;
- (iii) To ensure that the ethics review is independent, competent and timely;
- (iv) To protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants;
- (v) To consider the legitimate interests of other individuals, bodies or communities associated with the research;
- (vi) To consider the safety of the researcher(s);
- (vii) To make informed judgements of the merit of proposals, or to ensure that such judgements have already been made;
- (viii) Where research has been ethically approved elsewhere this will be noted and the application will not be considered for approval. However, where the proposed research seeks to recruit DKIT staff or students as participants, the SREC may require amendments to the proposal, or reject it, if this is deemed necessary to comply with DkIT Research Ethics Policy;
- (ix) To monitor activities and report on these to the IREC;
- (x) To nominate a representative to sit on the IREC.



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4. Membership

- (i) Chairperson (Head of School or nominee)
- (ii) Two or more (as required) members per department.

5. Periods of Office

- (i) The members are normally nominated for a three-year period.
- (ii) All members are eligible for re-nomination.

6. Meetings

As required but at least once each semester.

7. Quorum

Three members.

8. Business Procedures

As described in [Institute policy](#).



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An COISTE ATHBHREITHNITHE EITICE na ROINNE DEPARTMENTAL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. Overview

Each department has a Departmental Ethics Review Committee (DERC) which is part of the School's research ethics structure and which reports to the School's Research Ethics Committee (SREC).

2. Establishment

Established by the relevant Head of Department.

3. Terms of Reference

- (i) To review all proposed research involving human participants or animals conducted by registered undergraduate students in the Department where this research has been referred by either by a project supervisor or set of supervisors, in line with the above procedure for the ethical review of undergraduate research projects;
- (ii) To ensure that the ethics review is independent, competent and timely;
- (iii) To protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants;
- (iv) To consider the legitimate interests of other individuals, bodies or communities associated with the research;
- (v) To consider the safety of the researcher(s);
- (vi) To make informed judgements of the merit of proposals, or to ensure that such judgements have already been made;
- (vii) To approve proposals or forward these, where deemed appropriate, to the SREC;
- (viii) To monitor activities and report on these to the SREC.



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4. Membership

- (i) Chairperson (Head of Department or nominee)
- (ii) Typically, a representative from each set of supervisors for a project module within the Department (for example, the Project/Module coordinator or an identified academic staff member).

5. Meetings

As required.

6. Quorum

As determined by the Chairperson.

7. Business Procedures

As per the SREC.

Document History

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
1.00	2012		The School Ethics Committee was established based on the structures adopted by the Academic Council (AC) (meeting no. 101; 16 April 2008).
2.00	2015		Substantial amendments based on updated Institute policy (AC Meeting no. 141; 6 March 2015). Change of name to School Research Ethics Committee.
2.10	2018		Changes to membership, terms of office and meetings.
3.00	19 th November 2020	School Board	Addition of DERCs and the ethics procedures. Amendment of the SREC's terms of reference accordingly.