

## Background Information

Cardiff University's Research Ethics Committee has been established as a sub-committee of the Research Committee to:

- develop and sustain a University-wide awareness of ethical issues arising from non-clinical research involving human subjects, human material and human data;
- produce guidelines for the conduct of such research and for ensuring that all University Schools either have in place appropriate procedures for the consideration and conduct of such research or provide a written explanation as to why such procedures are considered to be unnecessary for them;
- consider and give guidance on research referred to it from Schools and hear appeals on decisions made by Schools. In exceptional cases, the University Research Ethics Committee may itself make decisions on research.

The University is committed to rigorous and objective inquiry and supports academics in pursuing their research in an environment that affirms academic freedom. The University also acknowledges the importance of confidentiality as a guiding principle in research involving people, human material and human data. Cardiff University's Research Governance Framework (Statement of Principle) states that all persons involved with research

*"...have a responsibility and a duty of accountability to society, to their profession, to the University and to the funders of the research, to accept full responsibility for the professionalism and integrity of all aspects of the conduct and publication of their research, and for the activities of any staff or students under their direction".*

Ethical awareness and conduct is one key aspect of this statement. The University and School Research Ethics Committees should be viewed as aiding and supporting researchers in maintaining exemplary ethical standards in research across the institution. While ethical procedures are of crucial importance, they are only part of much broader issues. The University Research Ethics Committee aims to promote a wider ethical awareness throughout the University. It is desirable, therefore, that Schools' procedures should also reflect the objective of fostering a culture among staff and students that is sensitive to ethical considerations where research with people is concerned.

**Failure to follow the University's policy and guidance for the ethical review and approval of research may result in disciplinary action. Where a School Research Ethics Committee or the University Research Ethics Committee becomes aware of research being conducted in breach of these policies and procedures or of researchers who are not complying with them, the matter may be resolved by informal discussion with the researchers and remedial action being taken by them. However, where necessary either committee may refer the matter to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research for further investigation.**