

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
School of Nursing & Midwifery Studies



Research Review and Ethics Screening Committee
Outline of Functions and Overview of Procedures

1. WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT ABOUT?

For the benefit of SONMS staff and students this document outlines the functions of the School's Research Review and Ethics Screening Committee (RRESC), and introduces review and ethics screening procedures established in SONMS.

Full terms of reference for RRESC, which is a sub-committee of the School Research Committee, can be downloaded from the RRESC website:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/research/peerreview/>

2. WHO SHOULD READ THIS DOCUMENT?

This document should be read carefully by:

- all members of staff¹ and students in SONMS proposing research projects, or practice/education development projects which have a research component;
- staff supervising students proposing research projects linked to the award of SONMS postgraduate degrees;
- all researchers, including those based in other Schools and institutions, who want access to SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation;
- SONMS staff proposing internally published reports.

3. WHY DOES MY RESEARCH PROJECT OR MANUSCRIPT FOR INTERNAL PUBLICATION HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED TO RRESC?

The principal aim of RRESC is to promote quality in the research and publication processes. However, staff proposing research projects and practice/education development projects with a research component, or preparing manuscripts for internal publication, should note that submitting their work for review and/or ethics screening by RRESC is not an optional extra, but is an essential part of the process of securing approval for their plans.

In reviewing research proposals and manuscripts produced for internal publication RRESC specifically aims to:

- provide support to ensure research undertaken is of the highest standard;
- consider the congruence of planned projects with the School's strategic research aims;

¹ In this context 'staff' refers to Cardiff University employees, and persons not employed by the University (e.g. NHS-employed associate lecturers, lecturer/practitioners, NHS staff holding honorary titles in the School and Research Centre secondees) who are proposing research which is demonstrably associated with the SONMS research strategy.

- provide advice on possible sources of external funding and the requirements of different funding bodies;
- consider resource implications;
- review and approve research costings to ensure that all resource implications have been taken into account;
- manage the process of approving access to SONMS staff, students and resources for the purposes of data generation;
- maintain a record of funded projects, thus to ensure that income is properly credited to SONMS including for Research Excellence Framework (REF) purposes;
- maintain a database of research projects, including for use in updating the SONMS website;
- ensure the quality of internally published SONMS reports.

4. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF RRESC IN RELATION TO RESEARCH PROPOSALS?

RRESC fulfils six distinct responsibilities with respect to the research proposals it receives. Not all of these responsibilities are discharged in all cases, and the attention of researchers is drawn to section 5 below which provides further detailed information in this area.

4.1 Consideration of approval for the use of SONMS resources

Research conducted in SONMS is driven by the School Research Strategy. All research led by SONMS staff represents a use of resources. School resources are also used when members of SONMS staff collaborate on projects led by researchers located in other Schools or institutions.

The work of RRESC in this area centres on establishing the degree of congruence between staff members' research plans and the School Research Strategy. RRESC will discharge this responsibility using the *RRESC – Scientific Review and Costings Assessment of Research Proposals* form which can be downloaded from the RRESC website.

4.2 Scientific review

Scientific review involves assessment of the quality of a proposed project, and for members of staff in SONMS the assessment of plans made to maximise a project's research impact. Information on research impact, which is assessed in Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercises, can be found in the REF 2014 document *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*:

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/

RRESC will scientifically review proposals using the *RRESC – Scientific Review and Costings Assessment of Research Proposals* form, copies of which can be downloaded from the RRESC website.

4.3 Consideration of approval of costings

In the case of research proposals which are being prepared for submission to grant awarding bodies (GABs) by SONMS staff and students, RRESC will review and approve research costings to ensure that all resource implications have been taken into account. Costings are assessed using the *RRESC – Scientific Review and Costings Assessment of Research Proposals* form, copies of which can be downloaded from the RRESC website.

4.4 Ethics screening

Cardiff University Research Ethics Committee determines that all staff and student research projects which plan to involve human participants should be ethically approved prior to the commencement of data generation. With respect to ethics screening, RRESC reviews research proposals and filters these to *either* an NHS route for final ethics approval *or* a non-NHS route. In the case of the former, RRESC directs researchers to apply for final ethics approval through procedures established by the NHS National Research Ethics Service. In the case of the latter, RRESC directs researchers to apply for final ethics approval at the Cardiff School of Nursing and Midwifery Studies Research Ethics Committee.

Guidance on ethics screening and review is contained in the SONMS document *SONMS REC – Research Ethics Guidance for Staff and Students*, which can be downloaded from the RRESC website.

4.5 Verification that ethics review procedures have been followed

Cardiff University Research Ethics Committee requires Schools to satisfy themselves that all human participant research projects involving members of University staff have been ethically reviewed. The work of RRESC in this area encompasses verifying that projects led by researchers in other institutions but which involve members of SONMS staff as collaborators, and projects proposed by members of SONMS staff in their capacity as students of other Higher Education Institutions, have been ethically approved prior to the commencement of data generation.

4.6 Consideration of approval to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation

All projects in which research access is sought to SONMS students must be submitted for consideration by RRESC prior to the commencement of data generation. Projects which propose to include members of staff in SONMS during the data generation process, and which are unlikely to make excessive demands on staff members' time (for example, projects in which researchers invite the completion of single questionnaires or invite participation in single interviews), are not required to be forwarded to RRESC. Research proposals likely to make greater demands on staff members' time are required to be forwarded to RRESC in order that potential resource implications can be considered.

5. WHAT WILL RRESC DO WHEN IT RECEIVES MY RESEARCH PROPOSAL?

The context in which research projects are being proposed determines which combination of the above responsibilities RRESC will discharge in each case.

Further details on the preparation of proposals for submission to RRESC are given in section 7 below.

5.1 I am a member of staff leading a project not connected with the award of a postgraduate qualification

In these cases research proposals should be submitted to RRESC for:

- consideration of approval for the use of SONMS resources;
- scientific review;

- consideration of approval of costings (if project is being prepared for submission to a GAB);
- ethics screening;
- consideration of approval to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation (if appropriate).

5.2 I am a member of staff collaborating on a project led by a researcher who does not work in SONMS

In these cases research proposals should be submitted to RRESA for:

- consideration of approval for the use of SONMS resources (including consideration of the level of research income which it is proposed will be attributed to SONMS if GAB funding is secured);
- verification that ethics review procedures have been followed;
- consideration of approval to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation (if appropriate).

5.3 I am a SONMS student proposing a project as part of my studies

In these cases research proposals should be submitted to RRESA for:

- scientific review;
- consideration of approval of costings (if project is being prepared for submission to a GAB);
- ethics screening;
- consideration of approval to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation (if appropriate).

5.4 I am a member of SONMS staff proposing a project in my capacity as a student of another Cardiff University School or another Higher Education Institution

In these cases research proposals should be submitted to RRESA for:

- verification that ethics review procedures have been followed (if project is being proposed in the course of studying for a postgraduate degree awarded by a Higher Education Institution other than Cardiff University);
- consideration of approval to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation (if appropriate).

5.5 I am a researcher not otherwise connected with SONMS who wishes to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation

In these cases research proposals should be submitted to RRESA for:

- verification that ethics review procedures have been followed;
- consideration of approval to access SONMS staff, students or resources for the purposes of data generation.

6. MANUSCRIPTS INTENDED FOR INTERNAL PUBLICATION

Members of staff planning to publish their work internally are referred to the document *RRESC – Publishing Internal Documents*, which can be downloaded from the RRESC website.

7. WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO SEND TO RRESC IN ORDER THAT IT CAN CONSIDER MY PLANS?

To support the review, ethics screening and access approval processes all proposals and manuscripts should be accompanied by a completed RRESC front sheet, which can be downloaded from the RRESC website.

This front sheet includes information on whom completed documents for consideration by RRESC should be forwarded to.

In the case of researchers, full details of planned projects should be sent to RRESC. However, it is recognised that researchers applying for funding are often required to work to short timescales. In these cases, researchers are advised to forward their ‘in progress’ plans, with staff members paying particular attention to the congruence of their proposals with the School Research Strategy and both staff and students paying attention to their costing assessment.

Research proposals can be submitted to RRESC in a number of formats. For example, project details can be submitted using documentation required by external funding bodies to which applications are being made, or using any other appropriate template.

In addition to forwarding proposals and completed front sheets researchers preparing projects for submission to grant awarding bodies should ensure that they forward to RRESC GAB guidance on the preparation of proposals and the production of costings.

Members of staff acting as supervisors are reminded of their responsibility to work with students to ensure the quality of research plans. Whilst RRESC will scientifically review student proposals, this is additional to, rather than a replacement for, supervision.

To support RRESC’s work in considering the use of SONMS resources members of School staff should also forward statements setting out the degree of fit between the aims of their planned projects and the SONMS Research Strategy, and the likely resource implications for the School of leading in or participating in the study.

To support the process of verifying that ethics review procedures have been followed, researchers are required to forward evidence of ethics approval having been secured in the Higher Education Institution in which they or the project’s lead researcher are based, or in which they are registered as a student.

8. HOW DOES RRESC GO ABOUT ITS WORK?

In addition to formally meeting at times notified in the annual SONMS Calendar, in order to expedite the review process RRESC works in an ‘as required’ mode. Using a rota system

RRESC endeavours to respond to research applicants as soon as possible, and always within five working days from receipt of proposals.

Staff and students are advised that research proposals prepared for external funding bodies will not be signed by the Head of School prior to their approval by RRESC.

All proposals for internal publication will be peer reviewed by three members of SONMS staff, of whom at least two will be members of RRESC.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the work of RRESC, please contact the SONMS Executive Officer: Research Administration, Rosemary Williams, at: williamsrc@cf.ac.uk