



Senate

Paper Title	Ethics of Research Committee
Outcome requested	To note the executive summary report of the June 2025 QMERC meeting and action taken since.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	Panel restructure from 7 to 6 panels. Recruitment drive focussing on ECRs, students and independent members. DSRECs moving to online Research Ethics Management system.
Questions for Senate to consider	N/A
Regulatory/statutory reference points	N/A
Strategy and risk	N/A
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	QMERC Senate
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QUEEN MARY ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Meeting – 25th June 2025

Main Items Discussed & Relevant Action Since

Current Panel Membership

The Ethics Panel continues to benefit from a diverse and cross-disciplinary membership, drawing representation from a wide range of faculties and professional services. While overall membership numbers have seen some reduction, recent recruitment efforts have focused strategically on engaging early career researchers, professional services colleagues, doctoral students and independent members.

As part of this initiative, PhD students have been appointed to the ethics panels on a one-year basis, while staff members are typically appointed for an initial term of three years. We are pleased to report the successful recruitment of early career researchers from FMD, strengthening our commitment to inclusivity and future-focused engagement. The recruitment campaign remains ongoing, with a particular focus on attracting early career researchers from H&SS and S&E to further enhance the breadth and vitality of the Panel. We are also actively working to recruit members of the local community as independent ethics panel members, ensuring diverse perspectives and meaningful community representation.

Panel Restructure

To improve the timely review of moderate risk applications, changes to the current panel scheduling were proposed. Until recently, the seven panels meet only twice a year, which has proven insufficient to manage the growing volume of applications. Additionally, infrequent meetings mean panel members – both internal and independent – struggle to maintain familiarity with the online review system, affecting efficiency and confidence.

Organising additional ad hoc panels, places a significant logistical burden on the Research Ethics team.

To address these challenges, a new structure was put into action: reducing the number of panels from seven to six, while increasing the frequency of meetings from twice to three times per year. This would result in 18 panel meetings annually – a schedule that better matches the current demand, supports more consistent use of the online system, enhances familiarity, and reduces the need for ad hoc panels. Main QMERC will also be reviewing up to two moderate risk applications at their meetings (once a term), further improving the timely review of these applications.

Devolved School REC (DSREC) update

One year on from the initial drive to onboard DSRECs onto the online Research Ethics Management System, significant progress has been made. Four DSRECs are now fully operational within the system, functioning effectively and benefiting from improved coordination and streamlined processes.

This marks an important step toward the overarching goal of bringing all DSRECs onto the online platform.

The move continues to enhance transparency, consistency, and efficiency across research ethics review processes, and the Research Ethics Team remains committed to supporting this transition across all remaining sub-panels.

Metrics for 1 May 2025 to 31 August 2025

The report below provides a summary of the applications for QMERC ethical approval received and approved between **1 May 2025 to 31 August 2025**.

	Received	Approved
Panel review apps	33	27

Low risk apps	82	82
QMERC apps	1	2
Amendments	61	63
Block (Generic) applications	0	0
DSREC set up applications	0	0
*DSREC renewal applications	2	2
Total	179	176

*DSREC renewal applications – 3 years after set-up each DSREC is required to renew their DSREC status. This is used as an opportunity to amend the DSRECs remit.

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