**Lay members’ Faculty Research Ethics Committee role description**

Lay members assist with the reviewing of research ethics applications at committee meetings. This may entail reading a number of applications and other documents before each meeting and weighing up complex and conflicting issues. The rationale for reviewing ethics applications is mainly to protect participants but also to ensure the safety of the researcher(s) and the role of the lay members is to consider research projects from an independent perspective. Lay members are expected to contribute to discussions at meetings to lend their views as well as to listen to the perspectives of others, such as academic and student committee members.

In addition to assisting with reviewing ethics applications, other issues may be discussed at meetings pertaining to the business of the committee(s). It is essential that lay members are aware of the need for confidentiality and will be willing to do Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation training. Information encountered either from the documents they have access to or information which is discussed in meetings must not be disclosed to parties outside of the committee.

The faculty committees hold up to 11 meetings per academic year (once a month, but do not meet in August) and lay members are expected to attend at least 6 meetings per year. Additionally, documents for meetings are accessed electronically therefore lay members need to be IT literate, have access to a computer, laptop or tablet and also be able to provide a personal, confidential, email address as most messages are sent to members by email.

**Lay members’ University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) role description**

UREC lay members occasionally assist with reviewing ethics applications which have been referred from the Faculty Ethics Committees to UREC for advice. However UREC’s main remit is to ensure the University has a robust Research Ethics Policy, provide guidance on its interpretation and oversight and to review policies and guidelines on good research conduct. UREC also has oversight of the work which the Faculty Research Ethics Committees do. UREC meets four times per academic year but ad hoc meetings may be arranged should they be needed; lay members are expected to attend at least three meetings per academic year.