

PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING ETHICS BOARD REMIT 2024/25

In line with University requirements to review annually the remit of main committees at all levels, the Physical Sciences & Engineering Ethics Board has reviewed its remit. Where appropriate, the remit has been updated to ensure that the work of the Board remains relevant for the coming year.

The Board has ensured as a minimum that the remit reflects any requirements set by University policies to ensure that matters of research ethics are thoroughly addressed within the Schools of Engineering, Geosciences and Natural & Computing Sciences in a clear and transparent way. The University requires that research with certain defined characteristics – including research involving human participants – must undergo ethical review from the Board or another suitable body, and the Board's Standard Operating Procedure describes the review process.

Membership

- Convener – a senior academic from within the Schools of Engineering, Geosciences or Natural & Computing Sciences following a competitive interview process.
- Two academic members of staff from each School – each nominated by the Head of School.
- One representative from Digital Information Services.
- One representative from Research & Innovation.
- One representative from the South China Normal University's Joint Institute's Ethics Review Process
- A senior academic from outside the Schools with relevant experience (appointed by the Vice-Principal for Research on the recommendation of the Convener).
- The Board may also invite other members of University staff to join the Board, or to participate in Board meetings and/or reviewing, as necessary.

Board Remit

The Physical Sciences & Engineering Ethics Board has oversight of ethical aspects of research in all areas of the physical sciences and engineering. It is responsible for maintaining and reviewing the Board's Standard Operating Procedure, and for reviewing and adjudicating on all applications for ethical approval. The Board's remit covers research carried out by staff and students in the Schools of Engineering, Geosciences and Natural & Computing Sciences. The Board may also be involved in reviewing applications received from other disciplines, on request.

In addition to duties on the Board, School Ethics Officers are responsible for ensuring that the Standard Operating Procedure and any additional guidance developed by the Board, the University's Ethics Advisory Group or the University's Research Committee are communicated to staff and students within the School (this includes ensuring that all colleagues are aware of their own responsibility to apply for ethical review of research proposals as required by the policy).

School Ethics Officers are also required to ensure that any matters relating to research ethics specific to areas of research within the School are communicated to relevant

colleagues, and to keep ethical issues in the School under review.

Relationship of the Board with the University's Ethical Governance Structures

The Board provides regular reports relating to ethical issues, reflects on wider ethical structures and provides opinions on where these might be adapted or changed, and provides input on any other matters relating to research governance within the Schools to the University's Ethics Advisory Group. The Ethics Convener is a member of this group, and will, where appropriate, provide feedback to the members of the Board on how policy decisions made by the Ethics Advisory Group will apply to the Schools.

The Board provides advocacy on how the disciplines within the Physical Sciences & Engineering Ethics Board work and represents the needs of the Schools so that University policy can be informed by our practices.

The Ethics Advisory Group is a sub-committee of the University Research Committee, which has overarching responsibility for managing the University's research ethics and governance arrangements and is a Committee of Senate.