
STREAMLINING ETHICS PROCESSES

1. ISSUE

To advise staff of important changes being made to both Animal and Human research Ethics application and committee processes.

2. BACKGROUND

Streamlining Ethics applications is a key recommendation of the North Shore Partner Review.

A project is currently underway which will see all ethics applications (both animal and human) being submitted on-line, and the automation of committee processes, and reporting. This system is being built in-house by Institutional Analysis and Reporting Office, and will be built on the success of the on-line CATTEI platform.

3. DISCUSSION

An Ethics On-line Steering Committee has been formed and includes:

- **Aleks Alimpijevic**, IARO
- **Andrew Llyod**, Presiding Member, Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
- **Bronwyn Greene**, Ethics On-line Project Manager
- **David Macpherson**, Director, IARO
- **Janice Besch**, Director, Grants Management Office
- **Margaret Wright**, Manager, Ethics Secretariat
- **Michael Grimm**, Chair, Presiding Member, UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee A
- **Michel Beal**, Presiding member, Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC)
- **Minote, Apte**, Chair, Animal Care Ethics Committee B
- **Neil Warren**, Member, Human Research Ethics Advisory (HREA) Panel B
- **Paul Scimone**, IARO
- **Robby Kartono**, IARO
- **Stephen Lord**, NHMRC Principal Res Fellow (POWMRI)

There are several stages to this project:

- **Development of an on-line "SMART" form** for both Human and Animal Ethics applications. Roll-out of the Animal Ethics on-line form will commence from the end of August 2007, and Human Ethics from end October 2007.
- **Committee automation.** This stage will see the generation of agenda's, distribution of applications, and committee decisions, and minutes made on-line for both Animal and Human Ethics applications. Committee automation

is planned to be rolled out from mid May 2008 for Animal Ethics and mid November 2008 for Human Ethics.

- **Data Migration** – this will allow all existing ethics applications to be uploaded into the new Ethics on-line database. Data migration is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.
- **Reporting** – The development of on-line standard and ad-hoc reporting will be developed to meet statutory and other reporting requirements. The reporting module is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

What are the benefits of the Ethics On-Line Project?

- Increased transparency of the ethics committee processes- researchers will be able to see the status of all existing approved protocols and the status of applications currently under consideration by the Committees.
- The use of a “SMART” form will ensure that only completed forms can be submitted, ensuring that no part of the application can be inadvertently “missed”;
- Researchers will no longer have to submit paper copies of ethics applications to the Ethics Secretariat;
- The Ethics Secretariat will no longer have to manually enter application information into a database, improving the integrity of the data, and saving valuable time and resources of Ethics Secretariat staff;
- Committee automation will eliminate the need for a paper based committee process, and will improve the speed of committee decision communications; and
- The in-house development will ensure that the project is developed with minimum cost and there will be no on-going maintenance costs to UNSW.

Where do I get more information about the Ethics On-Line Project?

Any questions, concerns or comments regarding the Ethics On-line Project should be directed to Bronwyn Greene, (x 52983, b.greene@unsw.edu.au) or one of the members of the Steering Committee.

4. RECOMMENDATION

That you note the proposed changes to ethics applications and processes.

Les Field
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)