



Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 November 2025 at 1pm via Zoom

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Professor Bryony Beresford	Chair
Dr Anna Einarsdottir	School for Business and Society
Dr Justine Daniels	Director of Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange
Professor Mariana Lopez	Humanities Research Centre
Dr Anna Bramwell-Dicks	School of Arts and Creative Technology
Tony Royle	School for Business and Society

Apologies:

Mr Richard Fuller	Assistant Director of IT
Dr Cylcia Bolibaugh	Education
Dr Angela de Bruin	Psychology
Dr Siamak Shahandashti	Computer Science
Dr Duncan Jackson	Head of Academic Quality and Development
Ms Pauline Painter	Lay member

In attendance:

Florence Robinson (Secretary)	Policy Officer (Policy, Integrity and Performance (PIP)) for Ethics and Compliance
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Section 1: Standing Items

Declarations of Interest

25-26/01 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting. None were identified.

Minutes of the previous meeting(s) [AEC.24-25/01]

25-26/02 The Committee members present **approved** the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2025, with the no amendments.

Action tracking and matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda [AEC.24-25/02]

Matters Arising

25-26/03 The Committee **noted** details of the newly created Faculty of Social Sciences Ethics Committee, which combines the previously separate RECs ELMPS and SPSW, and is chaired by Dr Anna Einarsdottir. The LREC will continue to operate with existing application forms while the LREC is established. Plans to amalgamate and streamline the existing application forms in future are in place.

25-26/04 The Committee **noted** PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) will be conducting an internal ethics audit, reviewing ethics process, and compliance with policy and procedures at both University and local level. PwC are expected to provide recommendations for areas of improvement. At the time of the meeting the ToR was in draft, this has now been finalised, and PwC aim to start the audit review before the end 2025. The Committee noted that the outcomes should be available for the next AECC meeting. Query regarding whether there is anything of LREC Chairs to do. At the time of the meeting it was noted there were no action for LREC Chairs.

25-26/04 The Committee **noted** that Architecture and the Norwegian Study Centre joined the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee.
ACTION: Secretary to ensure this is updated on the AECC webpage.

25-26/05 The Committee **noted** updates to the following actions arising from the minutes as follows:

1. M. 20-21/29: The Committee **agreed** to remove this action from the log as this no longer a focus.
 The item can be readded to the log if it is picked up again at a later date.
ACTION: Chair and Secretary to review the action log items and combine actions where appropriate
2. M.24-25/41: The Committee **noted** that research transcription software information guidance is nested within the general transcription software page.
 A query was raised as to whether Copilot was an approved application
 The Committee **noted** feedback from IT in the use of Otter AI. Otter AI is supported by the University but has a number of caveats. Currently only the Otter AI Business Plan meets the University's security and data protection requirements, including multi-factor authentication and administrative controls. IT are working with Otter to identify existing York users so they can help transition them to appropriately managed workspaces.
ACTION: Chair and Secretary to confirm if Copilot is an approved application
ACTION: Chair and Secretary to share the IT guidance page on transcription software
3. M. 24-25/47: The Committee noted the AI Working Group have provided some questions to be included in ethics application forms.
ACTION: Chair and Secretary to share the questions posed by the AI Working Group

Issues Brought to the AECC Since the Last Meeting [AEC.25-26/03]

25-26/06 The Committee noted the queries and issues that had been raised with the AECC Chair for advice (AEC. 25-26/03)

25-26/07 The Committee **noted** that where queries come directly to the AECC these are not routinely shared back to the relevant LREC, including the outcome of any discussions and decisions. The Committee noted the following:

- Queries should be directed to the appropriate LREC in the first instance
- Unsure why researchers are bypassing LRECs and escalating to AECC Chair/Ethics Policy Officer
- Considered updating guidance to ensure researchers are clear they should contact their LREC first
- LRECs should follow up to ensure the appropriate action has been taken
- LRECs should have a mechanism for evidence that specific documentation has been completed e.g. DPIA

ACTION: Chair and Secretary to draft some wording for AECC and LRECS on this topic

Examples of AI Queries Brought to Local Research Ethics Committees [AEC.25-26/04]

25-26/08 The Committee **noted** that one query had been brought to the Language and Linguistics LRECs relating to research into the use of AI-created deepfake audio clones.

- Present Committee agreed to continue to collate AI related queries ahead of each meeting.
- Present Committee members agreed to share the collated queries with the AI Working Group.

Verbal update from the Director of Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange on the ethics element of Changing the Work

25-26/09 Dr Justine Daniels **confirmed** that Changing the Work formally closed a few months ago and there is no longer a specific objective to carry out activities relating to REC restructure. However, the Committee noted the changes made by Social Sciences (25-26/03) and that the Policy, Integrity and Performance team are working to look at options for improving efficiency and oversight across the University. Updates will be communicated to the AECC when available.

Verbal Updates on Matters Relevant to the Committee

25-26/10 No update was provided on the Open Research Strategy Group, as participating members of the AECC were unavailable.

Section 2: Strategic Development, Planning and Performance Monitoring – items for consideration and/or decision

Horizon Scanning and Priorities for 2025/26 Academic Year

25-26/11 The Committee **discussed** the following areas of focus for the 2025/26 academic year:

1. Support Involvement@York in the ongoing development of guidance relating to Public Involvement and ethics.
2. Support the PIP team with the ongoing ethic committee restructure.
3. Develop guidance on non-human and non-genuine participants in research.
4. Develop a set of key principles which can be added to ethics committee webpages to raise more awareness of ethics principles across the University. The Committee **noted** the following:
 - This is a challenge area across the University.
 - There is a need to have all information in one easily accessible place (one stop shop) and include details of what to do if they have not followed the process correctly, where/who do they go to. Information needs to be available for staff and students and made clear that it is research undertaken as part of the institution including, research and study, PhD.
 - Ethics information is not consistently shared with new staff/PhD students, especially where ethics is not normally needed for projects.
 - Other institutions take the approach that researcher should assume ethics approval IS needed, until it is confirmed that it is not required – It may be more appropriate to ensure that the guidance and information on when ethical approval is and isn't required is clear rather than asking each researcher to confirm they do not require ethics – this responsibility to confirm the need for ethical approval should lie with the researchers supervisor.
 - There's a need to make sure that staff/students are invested, not scared that they will do something wrong as this resulting in overapplication and increased workload for ethics committees.
 - The severity and level of academic/research misconduct need to be made clearer.
 - Imperial College London has a good example of where research information is all in one place.**ACTION:** Secretary to put a call out to committee members and LREC Chairs to collate good examples of where information provided across the institution.

Processing ethics applications for scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) - LREC Chairs survey by Academic Practice [AEC.25-26/05]

25-26/12 No comments or feedback were raised by the Committee in relation to this item.

Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters

Reconfirmation of AECC Terms of Reference and membership [AEC.25-26/06]

25-26/13 The Committee members present **agreed** to defer the review of the ToR and membership to the next meeting in the interests of time.

ACTION: Secretary to circulate editable copy of the ToR for Committee members to review.

ACTION: Secretary to contact members with expiring membership.

Section 4: Reports for information and Meeting-related information

Committee reports (unreserved) / Reports for information

25-26/14 The Committee **noted** the following for information:

1. Minutes of the meeting of Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 05 March 2025 [AEC.25-26/07].
2. Redacted Minutes of the meeting of Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) held on 24 March 2025 [AEC.25-26/08].