

Lancaster University
Research Ethics Review Appeals Procedure

Preamble

1. It is encouraged and expected that all informal avenues will be exhausted through the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) concerned. If those people are conflicted, it will be referred to the Chair of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). If all are conflicted, the appeal will be referred to the Head of Governance Services.
2. Those making an appeal are protected by the University's policies on victimisation and harassment.
3. An appeal can only be made on the following grounds:
 - i) There were procedural irregularities in the review process where the Committee may not have reached the same conclusion had these not occurred
 - ii) There is evidence of prejudice or bias in the review

If there were material circumstances relating directly to the case that were not brought to the attention of the FREC at the time of the initial review the project should be resubmitted for FREC approval with the updated information.

4. Records of appeals will be kept by FRECs and summaries included in reports to UREC.

The formal procedure

5. The researcher should notify the FREC Secretary in writing within ten working days of being notified in writing of the decision they wish to appeal including the following information:
 - i) The title of the research proposal and name of the lead researcher or supervisor as appropriate
 - ii) The date of the decision to be appealed
 - iii) Specify the grounds, referencing those in 3 above
 - iv) Any supporting documentary evidence
6. The Chair of the FREC will screen the appeal and first confirm he or she is the most appropriate person to Chair the appeal panel. If the Chair is conflicted, it will be referred to the Deputy Chair of the FREC, Chair of UREC or the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.
7. Once conformed, the Chair of the appeal panel will confirm if it is based on at least one of the two permissible grounds specified in 3. (above). If it is not, it will be dismissed.
8. Where the appeal is based on a valid ground, a suitable panel will be assembled based on the subject area of the project and drawn from the FRECs or the UREC, supported by the FREC Secretary who will supply relevant information from the FREC that made original decision, as well as any additional information that may be deemed relevant. The panel will co-opt disciplinary experts if deemed necessary.
9. The panel may meet virtually or face-to-face, at the discretion of the Chair of the appeal panel.
10. The panel will process appeals as quickly as is reasonably possible and will not normally take longer than 25 working days from the receipt of the written appeal. The appellant will be informed in writing of the date of the meeting of the appeal panel and expected date for a decision. Both the researcher and the FREC Secretary involved will be notified of the result in writing.

11. The FREC Secretary will ensure that any institutional obligations and/or relevant contractual obligations to research funding bodies and partner institutions are identified in conjunction with relevant staff in Research Services.
12. The decision of the Research Ethics Committee considering the appeal is final.