University of Bath

Second Reader for research grant application
Role Definition

The University seeks to promote the highest standards of scientific and professional integrity and to give due consideration to the ethical, social and environmental issues arising from its activities. The principal aim of ethics review is, as far as possible, to protect all groups throughout the lifetime of the activities and into the dissemination process. As part of the University's commitment to maintaining high ethical standards, the role of the Second Reader has been defined with an outline of its responsibilities.

The Second Reader of a grant application is an independent member of staff (usually an academic staff member of the Department) who is external to the project. The PI (Principal Investigator) will pass the proposal and EIRA 1 (Ethical Implications of Research Activity) form to the Second Reader for them to read and ensure that the application is correctly completed and the ethical implications have been identified and reviewed.

The Second Reader will:

(a) ensure that policies and guidelines developed by the University in relation to research applications are followed;

(b) have a broad understanding of the research topic;

(c) have the ability to identify ethical implications arising from the research and independence to challenge the PI's view. NB There should be no conflict of interest with the application;

(d) be able to judge the level of scrutiny necessary to assess higher level ethical implications and know where to refer the research application where ethically contentious issues are identified;

(e) have knowledge of current nationally-agreed ethical codes for relevant professional associations where appropriate;

(f) resist pressure to carry out the role of Second Reader where the timescale does not permit proper scrutiny of the grant application.

Support Framework

The Second Reader may refer to documents held on the Research Integrity and Ethics web pages (http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/governance/ethics/) and may attend relevant training at workshops such as those held for Departmental Research Ethics Officers.

The following Committees have oversight of ethics issues:
Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/bodies-and-committees-senate/ssrec-committee/index.html)
Research Ethics Approval Committee for Health (http://www.bath.ac.uk/health/internal.bho/research-ethics-approval-committee/)
Psychology Ethics Committee (http://www.bath.ac.uk/psychology/internal.bho/research-ethics/)
And there is an e-mail for more general queries on the University's ethics processes: ethics@lists.bath.ac.uk

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