

CODE FOR UCT RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

[Last updated March 2012]

NOTE: this Code applies to all Ethics committees at UCT i.e. including Animal Ethics Committees

All committee members at UCT have a fiduciary responsibility to serve the interests of the university and of the public generally. In accordance with UCT's Conflict of Interest Policy, all decisions are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of the university and the public and, in the case of research ethics-related matters, the interests of research participants and researchers must be protected.

Upon appointment to a Research Ethics or Animal Ethics Committee, all committee members, including external members (e.g. lay persons) have responsibilities, including

- To attend meetings on a regular basis and, as far as possible, to remain until the meeting is adjourned.
- To maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to Faculty guidelines, regarding research proposal or protocol information, reviews and decisions and all matters discussed at committee meetings.
- To disclose conflicting interests, including any personal involvement or participation in the research or in competing research, and, in the event of such a conflict with respect to a proposal, not to review the proposal and to recuse him or herself during the discussion and decision-making process.
- To review independently, impartially and objectively whether the proposed design and conduct of research is likely to protect participants' safety, rights and welfare.
- To serve as a main reviewer in his or her area of expertise.
- To serve as a general reviewer of all research discussed at committee meetings.
- To keep up to date with research ethics and regulatory guidance.
- To contribute to ethics-related continuing education.

Consultants or ad hoc reviewers might from time to time be called upon to assist with research proposal reviews. The obligation to maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to Faculty guidelines, should be made known to these reviewers.

Observers or guests may attend committee meetings at the Chair's discretion or invitation. Such persons have an interest in research ethics and the review process but are not committee members. Observers and guests must maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to Faculty guidelines, regarding the business of the committee.

All persons who attend REC or AEC meetings are free to make observations, ask questions but only REC or AEC members may vote on decisions. Anyone without a vote who disagrees with the resolution of the issues under discussion and/or the outcome of the vote should take the matter up with the Chair of the REC or AEC in the first instance. The Chair may call a special meeting to discuss the substance of the disagreement or to debate more fully issues raised in this way.

Note: Members should confirm that they will conform to faculty guidelines on the confidentiality of application and proceedings. When non-members attend, they should confirm that they will maintain confidentiality.