

4.09.12

Woodcroft

Kilchrenan

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11/5/12.

Professor David Littlejohn
Associate Deputy Principal
University of Strathclyde

Dear Professor Littlejohn

David,

University Ethics Committee (UEC) – Issue of Student Applications and Supervisor Role

During the recent RKEC meeting, at which I presented the annual report for UEC, I highlighted the issue that UEC has been experiencing with student applications. Student applications are becoming more numerous. Supervisors are required to be Chief Investigator (CI) on student applications, both undergraduate and postgraduate, to ensure that risk to the University is managed adequately. This has been investigated by UEC, in consultation with the insurers and HR, and UEC concluded that it can, and must, continue to insist that the Supervisor takes on the Chief Investigator role.

Whilst the majority of Supervisors take a close interest in, engage with and provide guidance on their students' applications to UEC, (and to Departmental/School Ethics Committees), a significant minority appears not to be doing so. There is sometimes reluctance, and on at least one occasion, refusal, to take the CI role. Applications are received which are incomplete and whose applicants have clearly not consulted the Ethics Code of Practice or the Guidance Notes on what is expected in an application. It is clear that in some cases Supervisors have not read the applications, despite being the Chief Investigator and signatory to the application. (There is extensive and detailed information available on the Ethics web pages on the University site).

It would be appreciated by UEC if this difficulty could be conveyed to those responsible for research in the University and if it could be stressed to Supervisors that their support with ethics applications is both mandatory and beneficial to their students.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Condie

Convenor, University Ethics Committee.