

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

To: List A

Research Ethics Compliance

Based on the existing University-wide ethical committee structure, ethics applications involving human participants are handled by two ethical approval bodies, namely the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties (HRECNCNF), a sub-committee of the University Research Committee (URC) to handle ethics applications from PIs who are academic/research staff or research postgraduate students in Faculties other than Dentistry and Medicine, and the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hong Kong/Hospital Authority Hong Kong West Cluster (IRB) to handle ethics applications from the Faculty of Dentistry and the LKS Faculty of Medicine.

2. The URC and IRB have agreed in May 2015 to formalize a reciprocal arrangement whereby:
 - (a) the HRECNCNF refers ethics applications involving clinical research to the IRB for consideration; and
 - (b) the IRB refers ethics applications submitted by staff and students of the Faculty of Dentistry and the LKS Faculty of Medicine that are outside the scope of clinical studies to the HRECNCNF for consideration.

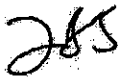
Such referrals will be dealt with by the HRECNCNF and IRB. Staff and students will follow the existing practice for submitting all ethics applications in the first instance to the IRB for the Faculty of Dentistry and the LKS Faculty of Medicine, and to HRECNCNF for all other Faculties.

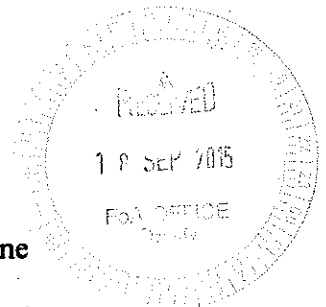
3. Given that the HRECNCNF also considers ethics applications from clinical Faculties referred by the IRB, the URC has approved with immediate effect the change of name of the HRECNCNF to 'Human Research Ethics Committee' (HREC), and the expansion of its membership to include Faculty representatives of Dentistry and Medicine.

4. Moreover, the HREC has also taken the opportunity to review its operational guidelines and procedures, sample forms, frequently asked questions and application form. The major amendments are summarized at Annex.

5. The updated terms of reference of the HREC, and its revised operational guidelines and procedures as well as related documents will be posted on the Research Services website in due course. Should you have any queries regarding the above, please feel free to contact me.

Dean
Faculty of Architecture


 Professor J.H. Bacon-Shone
 Chairman
 Human Research Ethics Committee



September 11, 2015
Encl.

c.c. Chairman, University Research Committee
 Chairman and Secretary, IRB
 Professor F.K.S. Leung, Director of Education and Development for Research Integrity
 Faculty Secretaries

DEAN	
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NO	

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Amendments to the Operational Guidelines, FAQs, Sample Documents and Application Form

Ref	Title of Document	Major Amendment(s)
1	Operational Guidelines and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To clarify the existing arrangement that approval from the HREC is required for research projects without any HKU staff and students participating as PIs or Co-Is that involve human research participants in HKU (paragraph 7). - To include a timeline for PI to report any deviation from the study protocol or compliance incident within 15 calendar days from the first awareness of the deviation/incident by the PI (paragraph 43).
2	Frequently Asked Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To add a question on differentiating compensation for participation from potential benefits to research participants (question 14). - To clarify that the contact of the PI or relevant personnel of the study for participants' enquiry should normally be a telephone number for studies conducted in HK, and an email address for overseas studies. Any deviation from the normal practice requires justifications when the application is submitted to the HREC (question 16).
3	Sample Consent and Related Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To add a new sample assent form for kindergarten students.
4	Application Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minor amendments on questions 1 and 9(c) to improve clarity.

September 11, 2015