

# Research Ethics Committee (REC)

## Terms of Reference

### **1. *Role and Scope of the REC***

The role of the Committee is to examine all proposals for research submitted to the Ministry of National Security, its Department and Agencies (MNS D/A), as well as, research to be conducted by and on behalf of the MNS D/A, and, to recommend to the Permanent Secretary approval, rejection or modification of any such proposals insofar as adherence to ethical standards is concerned.

In this regard, the Committee shall ensure that research proposals meet the criteria as set out in the Research Ethics Assessment Code. Generally, the Committee should ensure that research proposals reflect the following principles:

- a. Respect the civil, social and human rights of persons;
- b. Personal confidentiality is maintained as a general principle;
- c. Informed consent is sought and clearly obtained from persons who participate in
- d. research studies;
- e. Satisfy accepted ethical standards in regards to research methods and procedures,
- f. record keeping and publication;
- g. Provide for the research to be carried out by suitably competent personnel;
- h. The research methods proposed are valid, reliable and capable of answering the
- i. research question;
- j. Research should contribute to the knowledge base affecting the reduction of crime and its effects.

If deemed necessary the Committee shall conduct hearings on a research proposal prior to recommending its authorization, rejection or modification. Members of the Research Ethics Committee with an involvement with any research proposal will not participate in the decision making on that proposal. All research proposals will be submitted to the Committee prior to the commencement of the research. Guidance on the format for submission of proposals is set out in the Research Ethics Assessment Code.

## **2. *Composition of the REC***

The REC will be constituted by seven (7) core members, these are:

- a. The Director of Research and Evaluation, MNS (Chair)
- b. The Director, Strategy, Planning, Policy and Research, Ministry of Justice
- c. The Research Manager, Social Policy, Planning and Research Division, Planning Institute of Jamaica
- d. A representative from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of the West Indies, Mona
- e. A representative from the Faculty of Liberal Arts, University of Technology, Jamaica
- f. A representative from the Department of Correctional Services
- g. A representative from the Legal Unit in the, MNS

Where expert knowledge is required to assess a proposal (e.g. medical or Psychological research), the Committee may co-opt specialist members on a temporary basis to provide technical assistance in ensuring that the research adheres to the ethical standards and procedures of the particular subject area.

### **3. Meetings**

- a. The Committee shall convene meetings on a bimonthly basis to review proposals submitted to the MNS, its Departments and Agencies.
- b. Meetings are scheduled to be convened on the third Wednesday of that month and should commence at 10 am.
- c. In circumstances, which may warrant feedback from the Committee before the scheduled meeting, the Committee may choose to convene at an agreed time.

### **4. Reporting Relationship**

Through the Chief Technical Director, the REC will report to the Permanent Secretary regarding decisions to approve, reject or propose modifications to modify research proposal.

### **5. Confidentiality and overall Research Objectives**

- a. In the case of studies to be conducted in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), the research should contribute to the offender related knowledge base and/or have the intent or reasonable probability of leading to improvements in the custody, care or rehabilitation of prisoners.
- b. Proper arrangements are made for the secure maintenance of confidential data collected in the course of research.

### **6. Administrative Procedures**

The Committee will reconsider relaxing its procedures where a proposal has been reviewed and approved by another Ministry, with documentation to substantiate this claim. Within these circumstances, the Committee's assessment can be facilitated through a round-robin exercise.

# **Appendix 1**

## ***Components of the proposal***

### **Title Page**

- a. Title should be appropriate and not misleading.
- b. It should orient readers to what the research is about.
- c. Names of investigators must be included.

### **Introduction**

- a. Background
- b. Statement of the problem
- c. Justification/Significance of the research
- d. Research objectives and questions

### **Literature Review**

- a. Information known about the topic
- b. Identify any deficits in the area

### **Methodology**

- a. Specify whether the methodology is qualitative, quantitative or mix-methods
- b. Justify why the methodology selected is best suited for the research being undertaken
- c. Description of target population
- d. Sample selection method and size
- e. Method(s) of data collection
- f. Description of all instruments used to collect data
- g. Duration of study
- h. Data analysis strategy
- i. Ethical consideration

## **The value of the research to national development**

### **List of References**

### **Appendices**

- a. In the case of academic research a letter from the institution's Research Ethics Committee indicating approval of the research
- b. Copies of all instruments (e.g. questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guide)
- c. Consent forms
- d. Assent forms
- e. Parental Consent Forms
- f. Relevant Letters to Organizations
- g. Brochures and flyers