Ethics Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 7 November 2023: 9.30 am – 11 am

Online via MS Teams

Members in attendance:

• Chair / Convener: Alexandra Birch-Mayne / Reader in Natural Language Processing
• Uta Hinrichs / Reader in Data Visualisation
• Bjorn Ross / Lecturer in Computational Social Science

Apologies:

• Arno Onken / Lecturer in Data Science for Life Sciences
• Kia Nazarpour / Personal Chair of Digital Health

In attendance:

• Secretary: Katarina Scaife / Research Data Officer

Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>1.1– 23.2: Approval of previous minutes&lt;br&gt;DECISION 01: Committee agreed that the October minutes were a fair representation of the meeting.</td>
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<td>1.2.2 – 23.2: Study plan advice Qualtrics form&lt;br&gt;DECISION 01: The committee agreed that finalising the Informatics managed version of the Qualtrics ethics application form is not an urgent priority.</td>
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<td>7.1 – 23.2: Workload and process relating to the new deadline for ethics applications (5 – 23.2)&lt;br&gt;DECISION 01: It was decided that granting an allowance until February was fair. Applications received afterwards should not be assigned for review and the applicant should receive a response explaining that they have submitted the application too late to be considered. KS agreed to draft this email reply. It was also agreed that a reminder about the December deadline should be sent at the start of December.</td>
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### Actions

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<td>Katarina Scaife</td>
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<td>2 – 23.2: AI interaction with hate speech on social media project ACTION 01: BR to review the document and add any content. ABM and UH to also review and add more content.</td>
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### Minutes of Meeting

#### 1.1– 23.2: Approval of previous minutes

Committee were invited to give feedback on the minutes for the October meeting.

**DECISION 01:** Committee agreed that the October minutes were a fair representation of the meeting.

**ACTION 01:** KS to publish the minutes.

#### 1.2. – 23.2: Matters arising

**1.2.1 – 23.2: Level one applications PIS sub-template**

**ACTION 01:** Ongoing action for BR.

**1.2.2 – 23.2: Study plan advice Qualtrics form**

The committee briefly discussed this item and concluded that the Informatics version of the form can be published when the edits have been made in line with the DPO’s response to item 1.2.1.
DECISION 01: The committee agreed that finalising the Informatics managed version of the Qualtrics ethics application form is not an urgent priority.

ACTION 01: Ongoing action for BR.

1.2.3 – 23.2: Ethics committee membership
ABM followed up with Joy Candlish (Director of Professional Services) and Matthias Hennig (Deputy Head of School) about the Ethics Committee needing a new member. Laura Sevilla-Lara was suggested and the committee raised no concerns with this. ABM will contact Laura when possible.

ACTION 01: ABM to email Laura about membership of the committee when possible.

2 – 23.2: AI interaction with hate speech on social media project
ABM and UH reported from the follow-up meeting with Lotte Segal, Lead of the School of Social and Political Science Ethics Panel (SPS Ethics) and another member of the SPS Ethics Panel. Together, they have been collaborating on a draft guidance document, consisting of questions with the intention of guiding researchers to reflect on how they can ethically undertake their research. The final version of this document will be published on the Inf-Ethics webpages for researchers to refer to. It was suggested that there be a succinct version online and a more detailed version for the committee to use when reviewing applications.

DECISION 01: The committee decided to continue to add potential questions to the draft and review and refine later down the line.

ACTION 01: BR to review the document and add any content. ABM and UH to also review and add more content.

3 – 23.2: Application Review – standing item
No items to discuss.

4 – 23.2 Ethics workshops – standing item

4.1 – 23.2: Ethics workshops – Autumn workshop update
UH reported that none of the suggested November dates are suitable for Atoosa Kasirzadeh. UH is exploring the possibility of arranging the workshop in February instead. However, Atoosa has not yet confirmed availability for then. Due to the high demand for the room needed, the committee discussed the potential of finding an alternative speaker if it will not be possible to schedule in February with Atoosa.

DECISION 01: The committee decided to prioritise arranging the workshop with Atoosa in mind. However, if the scheduling conflicts cannot be resolved, the committee will consider an alternative speaker.

ACTION 01: UH will follow up with Atoosa Kasirzadeh about availability for specific dates in February.

5 – 23.2: UG4 Projects – meeting with UG4 project coordinator
ABM spoke with Hiroshi Shimodaira, UG4 project coordinator and Amir Vaxman, MSc coordinator. ABM drafted two paragraphs: one outlining ethics information for students and the other for markers as approved by the committee. Hiroshi agreed to put together an email with the text and a link to BR’s video on the inf-ethics pages. This email will also communicate the deadline to markers and students.
– the end of December for UG4 students and the end of April for MSc students. ABM also reported that there will now be a tick-box on the marking form where markers can indicate if the project had ethics approval.

6 – 23.2: Data Protection Training Course for Undergraduate students

Recently, there were queries from undergraduate final-year (UG4) students about the stated requirement to complete a Data Protection Training Course on the ethics application form. UG4 students are unable to enrol on the course in Learn Ultra. KS shared with the committee a possible explanation after a brief conversation about this with Simon Smith in Research Data Services. The committee were informed that Undergraduate students are not expected to complete this training at their level and that their supervisor’s completion of the course is sufficient. The committee questioned if UG4 students should still be doing the training regardless – stressing the benefit of learning about Data Protection alongside ethics in research. There was a consensus that UG4 students should be able to access the training course.

DECISION 01: The committee decided to request that UG4 students in Informatics are granted the opportunity to enrol on the course.

ACTION 01: ABM to reach out to UG4 project coordinator and ITO to request UG4 students access to the training course.

7 – 23.2: AOB

7.1 – 23.2: Workload and process relating to the new deadline for ethics applications (5 – 23.2)

UH raised that there may be a higher volume of applications in December and April due to the deadline and asked if the deadline of two-weeks to respond can be relaxed. The committee agreed that this was reasonable and discussed communicating this on the ethics pages or in emails to students. KS then raised the administrative process for applications that are received late. The committee considered a grace period extending to the end of January for late applications and discussed that some students may have extenuating circumstances that would make them eligible for exception.

DECISION 01: It was decided that granting an allowance until February was fair. Applications received afterwards should not be assigned for review and the applicant should receive a response explaining that they have submitted the application too late to be considered. KS agreed to draft this email reply. It was also agreed that a reminder about the December deadline should be sent at the start of December.

ACTION 01: KS will create a draft email response to applications that were made too late after the deadline.

7.2 – Migration of ethics pages on Inf-web to Sharepoint

KS informed the committee she has been tasked with moving the Ethics pages from Inf-Web to Sharepoint this month - in case anyone intends to make changes to the content prior to the migration.

Next meeting:

• 5 December 2023: 9.30 – 11 am