

Appendix 3: Audit tool aligned with core principles

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The audit tool reflects the core principles section and has been added to enable institutions to audit themselves against these standards.

1. Standard not met
2. Standard met partially
3. Standard almost met
4. Standard fully met or exceeded

Independence	Grading 1-4	Evidence	Actions agreed
Ensuring that RECs include members from a wide range of disciplines and that RECs have members (which may include chairs) from outside the academic unit(s) covered by the committee.			
Establishing a constitution and terms of reference which guarantee each REC the freedom to make ethics judgements.			
Including representation from groups external to the institution in RECs and other processes. For example, this may involve service users, members of faith groups or delegates from industry.			
Having an overarching policy committee which sets consistent research ethics standards, monitors performance and provides a means to manage appeals against REC decisions.			

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Competence	Grading 1-4	Evidence	Actions agreed
Ensuring that REC membership includes ethics expertise across the range of research carried out by the institution.			
Recognising, through workload allocation or other compensations, that contributing to ethics review and other support processes is accepted institutional work..			
Establishing standard operating procedures that are regularly reviewed.			
Ensuring regular audits of formal review processes.			
Provide training to REC members and researchers.			

Facilitation	Grading 1-4	Evidence	Actions agreed
Ensuring that procedures balance duties of care with enabling and supporting ethical research and innovation.			
Providing training for researchers in ethics issues and in the policies and mechanics of ethics review, seeking to develop researchers' autonomy and skills in making reasoned ethics judgments.			
Progressing formal ethics review efficiently and rapidly, with appropriate analysis of risk and the associated proportionality of review, and mechanisms for expedited review.			
Achieving a good balance between the detail and the burden of completing applications for formal ethics review.			
Making opportunities available for researchers to seek informal advice on ethics issues.			

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Transparency & Accountability	Grading 1-4	Evidence	Actions agreed
Having a clear and easily accessible public statement of institutional policies and processes for maintaining high standards of research ethics.			
Ensuring that there is a named officer of the institution who is the primary contact for research ethics matters.			
Maintaining consistent records of research ethics review and support processes that are made publicly available in a timely manner, while protecting sensitive data.			
Making regular reports, at least once a year, evidencing REC performance in responding to applications for formal ethics review.			