

**Title:**                   **Experiences of embedding an online system for ethical approval of research projects**

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Share experiences of introducing an online process for the ethical approval of student and staff research projects.
- Discuss opportunities and threats: People, business processes, staff development, technology and the changing HE environment.
- Share and apply understanding within one's own work.

#### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

A University-wide online ethics resource has been developed at Southampton Solent University to support faculties and services implement the University Procedures for the ethical approval of research and enterprise projects.

The online ethics resource is a dedicated space for staff and students. The resource provides a short summary of the ethical approval process, and links in with key internal and external documents, such as the University Ethics Policy, the BERA Guidelines and the UK RIO Code of Practice for Research.

Staff and students can use the online resource to self-certificate an Ethics Release, using the automated Ethics Release Checklist (ERC). The resource also supports the Full Ethical Review Process as it automatically prompts principal investigators to complete a Request for Ethical Approval Form (REAF) and tailor the REAF according to the responses previously given in the ERC.

However, it was accepted at the outset that an automated online system alone would not guarantee acceptance of the ethical approval process by staff or students. This is why various activities were undertaken. For example, a lunchtime seminar for Faculty Ethics Standing

Panel was run to discuss the process for ethical approval and consider some 'real' examples drawn from different subject areas represented within the University.

In this workshop we will discuss the activities that contribute to the effective implementation of an online system. This will lead to further discussion on the challenges of embedding an online system at local level.

With enterprise fast becoming a key driver across the sector and disciplines becoming increasingly wide-ranging, we will consider how an institution can deal with the management of ethics in a changing environment, and the issues around transferring a set of principals derived from medical ethics into the full range of academic disciplines.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

1. Introduction to the ethical approval process for research and enterprise projects at Southampton Solent University (15 minutes)
2. Small group work: Discuss the challenges of embedding ethical approval processes across an institution (20 minutes), to include for example:
  - o How to raise awareness of the online ethical approval process among staff and students
  - o The use of case studies as a learning method
  - o How to audit the ethical approval system
3. Plenary: Experiences captured during the discussions (10 minutes)

### **References**

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Macfarlane, B. (2009). *Researching with integrity, The Ethics of Academic Enquiry*, London: Routledge