



**K E E L E**  
UNIVERSITY

Centre for Professional Ethics

## **Keele Research Ethics Training: Course Programme**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>  
October 2008**

**Keele University, Staffordshire**

### **DAY ONE: Morning**

#### Introduction to Research Ethics

Session I: 10:00 - 11:15

Session II: 11:30 - 12:45

The first two sessions of the course offer a broad introduction to research ethics. The first session examines the basis of research ethics and the second session seeks to systematise our ethical judgements by introducing the different moral theories (e.g. consequence-based and rule-based) that are used in ethical arguments about research. Discussion centres on the reasons for doing research and some possible objections that might arise in relation to doing certain types of research.

### **DAY ONE: Afternoon**

#### Research Ethics Case Studies

Session I: 1:45 - 2:45

Session II: 3:00 - 4:00

Different types of research produce different types of ethical issues. These sessions explore, through a series of case studies, some of the potential ethical difficulties that may arise in research projects involving such areas as randomized controlled trials, epidemiological research, and qualitative methods.

## **DAY TWO: Morning**

### Information Giving and Valid Consent

Session I: 10:00 - 11:15

Session II: 11:30 - 12:45

What is the nature of consent and how can we ensure that it is ethically valid consent? How should information be given to patients participating in research to ensure ethically valid consent? What are the potential problems with information provision and how might they be overcome? Is it ever justified to do research without the consent of the patient? Are there kinds of research that can proceed without obtaining consent?

## **DAY Two: Afternoon**

### Voluntariness and Consent

1:45 - 2:45

Follows on from the morning sessions by looking in detail at some other issues that arise in relation to consent and coercion.

### Competence and Consent

3:00 - 4:00

Adults who are unable to consent are vulnerable groups of research subjects. What types of research, if any, are acceptable? How does the requirement to obtain informed consent apply? (A separate session in later courses examines this issue in relation to children).

## **DAY 3: Morning**

### Equipoise

10:00 – 11:15

In a healthcare context, randomised controlled trials (RCTs) involve randomly allocating patients to different treatments and, in some cases, to non-treatment. This random allocation is generally thought to be ethically acceptable only if the researchers, or the research community, are in a state of *equipoise* with respect to the different 'arms' of the trial. This session explores what the requirement for equipoise is, how stringently it should be interpreted, and how it should be weighed against other considerations (such as the scientific quality of the research outputs).

### Harm and Risk

11:30 – 12:45

Given that much research involves some risk of harm (to researchers, research participants, or third parties) this session explores how risk of harm is to be assessed and how it relates to other considerations such as benefits to research participants, and the quality of their consent.

## **DAY 3: Afternoon**

### Preserving Confidentiality

1:45 – 2:45

Conducting research means that sensitive information is often stored about participants. What principles govern the conduct of information storage and use? How can confidentiality be preserved? What difficulties are faced by using methods such as anonymisation?

### Breaching Confidentiality

3:00 - 4:00

Researchers often need to access information about other people. How can access to e.g. potential research subjects' medical records be justified? What is the difference between privacy and confidentiality?