

University of Utah
Research Ethics Consultation Services (RECS) Charter

I. Introduction

The University of Utah Vice President for Research created RECS in 2020 and sponsors the services as an informal resource to the University research community.

II. Mission

The purpose of RECS is to provide individuals and research teams with an opportunity to discuss ethical issues or concerns about aspects of research in a discrete informal setting.

III. Scope

RECS can be used to help identify or generate options, to resolve disputes (conflict management) or to assist in identifying best practices for research (advisory).

There must be a research component identified with the issue or concern to be addressed by RECS. In situations where there is no direct research component, individuals may be referred to other offices or units for assistance.

IV. Constituents

RECS are available free of charge to all who are involved or have been involved in research at the University of Utah, including faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, trainees, students, research participants, etc.

V. Consultants

Consultants are selected for RECS based on areas of research expertise and experience with research ethics.

Consultants may initiate informal inquiries within the University to help resolve situations that arise through RECS.

Consultants may recuse themselves from a case at any time and for any reason. Consultants are not required to disclose their reason(s) for recusal.

Consultants are expected to avoid involvement in situations where there is a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest including but not limited to personal or other relationships with a party involved in the consultation that could interfere with the consultant's ability to fairly evaluate the situation and provide guidance. Potential financial conflicts of interest must be reported to the University Conflict of Interest Office for evaluation.

VI. Core Principals

Confidentiality RECS sessions are discrete, but not entirely confidential. Activities for which mandatory reporting is required by law or University policy must be reported to the appropriate authorities/offices. For more information, please review the [University Reporting Requirements and Best Practices](#).

Impartiality For cases involving conflict or disputes between individuals, consultants will seek to remain impartial.

Informality RECS do not have established formal processes or required formal records. Participation in RECS is voluntary and cannot be compelled under any circumstances. Individuals can withdraw from participating in RECS at any time.

Independence RECS operate independently from other units at the University and only report findings as anonymized trends to the Vice President for Research.

VII. Limitations

Consultants will not engage in formal processes or investigations as part of RECS. Consultants have no authority to investigate, adjudicate, sanction, bind, or enforce.

Consultants do not provide professional counseling, such as mental health counseling, legal or medical advice, or any other advice that is provided by a licensed professional.

VIII. Non-Retaliation

Constituents have the right to engage in RECS without reprisal. Retribution or retaliation for utilizing RECS or withdrawing from RECS should be reported to the Associate Vice President for Research Integrity and Compliance.