

## **Annual Statement on Research Integrity Activity 2017/18**

The Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2017/18 was approved by the Board of Governors on 19 November 2018.

### **1. Background**

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in July 2012 by Universities UK. It was endorsed by the Research Ethics Committee in December 2012, and by June 2013 the University was a signatory. As a condition of funding, HEFCE require that all institutions signed up to the Concordat be compliant by 1 April 2014. Institutions are asked to confirm their compliance in the annual assurance statement, which is subject to routine audit.

One of the requirements of the Concordat is to produce a short annual statement to the Board of Governors that:

- provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
- provides assurances that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
- provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

### **2. Actions and activities undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues**

Research integrity is overseen by the Research Ethics Committee (a sub-committee of Research and Innovation Committee). The following actions and activities have been undertaken in 2017/18

#### **2.1 Staff Resources**

The Faculty Research Ethics Directors continue to meet regularly with key staff in Research and Innovation Services to review processes and procedures for research ethics, making recommendations to Research Ethics Committee as appropriate.

#### **2.2 Ethics Training**

A standard ethics training presentation, for all faculties, delivered by the Faculty Research Ethics Directors, has been implemented since 2014/15. This training is supplemented by Faculty-specific requirements and information, including reviewer training, and training for Departmental Ethics Leads.

An online training module was developed during 2016/17 which went live in October 2017 as part of the HR suite of mandatory training for academic staff.

## 2.4 Ethics Audit

A full audit of ethics processes was due in June 2018. However, due to staff illness this was not undertaken and is instead expected to report in February 2019. Several actions from the 2016 audit were carried forward in 2017/18. These were to ensure that staff are aware of when to apply for ethical approval for consultancy projects.

## 2.5 System for Ethical Approval

A new online system for research ethics approvals went live in April 2017 for staff and postgraduate research projects. The system has been used successfully and has been rolled out to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students in 2017/18. As part of the rollout feedback is monitored to ensure up to date training and guidance is available. The system enables MI reporting to ensure that applications are managed consistently and in a timely manner.

## 2.6 Requirements for Ethical Scrutiny and Review

This issue has been debated by Research Ethics Committee on several occasions, resulting in guidance for use by colleagues across the university to provide consistent advice on activities that require ethical scrutiny and review.

# 3. **Research Misconduct Policy**

The Academic Misconduct in Research Policy and Procedure was revised in 2017/18 and is available to all staff through the Human Resources pages on the intranet.

# 4. **Formal Investigations into Research Misconduct**

## 4.1 PGR Students

In the last year there has been two investigations, both of which related to plagiarism. In the first case, no further action was taken, and it was resolved at stage 1 informal investigation. In the second case, the award had been made several years ago and related to self-plagiarism. The relevant sections were removed from the NRL.

## 4.2 Staff

In the last year there has been one investigation. The allegation related to plagiarism. The allegation was resolved at stage 1 informal investigation; no further action was taken.