

## **Annual Statement on Research Integrity Activity 2013/14**

The Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2013/14 was approved by Board of Governors on 26 June 2014.

### **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 will be asked to confirm their compliance in the annual assurance statement (required in December 2014), which will be subject to routine audit.

The Research Ethics Committee (a sub-committee of Research and Innovation Committee) has been monitoring the University's progress towards compliance with the Concordat.

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. Summary of actions and activities that have been 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:

#### **2.1 Staff Resources**

As a result of the University restructure in 2012/13 the academic post of Research Ethics Director was established in each Faculty. This recognises the significance of research integrity and establishes clear responsibility for this area at Faculty level. The Research Ethics Directors meet regularly with key staff in Research and Business Services to review processes and procedures for research ethics, making recommendations to Research Ethics Committee as appropriate.

#### **2.2 Faculty Research Ethics Committee**

A further outcome of the 2012/13 restructure has been the re-establishment of Faculty Research Ethics Committees, with standard terms of reference.

#### **2.3 Ethics Training**

Research Ethics Committee launched a programme of mandatory research ethics training for all academic and research staff in 2010/11. Since then, a series of workshops delivered by an external provider have been run annually to ensure that the maximum number of staff are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to research ethics. Around 60% of staff have been through this training to date.

From 2014/15, ethics training will be delivered within Faculties. A standard presentation covering compliance has been agreed. This will be supplemented by Faculty-specific requirements and information. The training will be delivered by the Faculty Research Ethics Directors and the aim is to deliver to all staff.

Training is also mandatory for PGR students.

#### 2.4 Ethics Audit

An ethics audit process was agreed in 2011. Review of ethical approvals and the processes supporting them is carried out systematically in each School/Faculty using expert panels. The audit process highlights both good practice and areas where the University could improve. In light of the restructure, a light-touch audit was agreed for 2012/13, but a full audit of 2013/14 data is currently underway.

#### 2.5 System for Ethical Approval

This year Research Ethics Committee has agreed standard forms and templates for handling ethical approval across the Faculties, to ensure a consistency of approach across all academic areas. The University has developed an on-line system for handling ethical approvals, although this is not currently used in all Faculties. A project to improve the system is in train, with a view to ensuring the system is used across the University by the end of 2015.

### **3. Assurance that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and continue to be appropriate for the needs of the organisation**

The Misconduct in Research Policy and Procedure has been revised this academic year following consultation with various bodies, including Research Ethics Committee. The policy is available to all staff through the website.

### **4. High-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken**

#### 4.1 PGR Students

In the last year there have been no formal investigations into research misconduct by PGR students.

#### 4.2 Staff

In the last year there has been one formal investigation into research misconduct by a member of staff, which was not upheld by the Panel.