



Annual Statement on Research Integrity Activity 2018/19

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, Office for Students has maintained the former HEFCE requirement 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 Knowledge Exchange Committee). The following actions and activities have been undertaken in 2018/19

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 standardised research ethics online module was developed by the Faculty Research Ethics Directors and rolled out via HR's mandatory training platform. The training is a role-specific requirement for all academic staff.

This training is supplemented by Faculty-specific requirements and information, including reviewer training, and training for Departmental Ethics Leads.

2.4 Ethics Audits

A full audit of ethical review process was undertaken under the auspices of University Research Ethics Committee during the summer of 2019. A series of actions have been agreed and the Ethics Steering Group will be responsible for implementing these during the forthcoming Academic Year. In addition, an independent audit was undertaken by Ernst and Young (EY) as part of a broader review of Research Innovation Services and Systems. EY looked at findings from our internal ethics audit and made one key recommendation which the Ethics Steering Group will also ensure is enacted.

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

Research Ethics Committee has agreed some additional guidance for researchers about what is in scope of the ethical review process to provide clarity in relation to knowledge exchange and impact activity.

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. It will be reviewed in 2019/20 in line with any changes to the revised Concordat for Research Integrity.

4. **Formal Investigations into Research Misconduct**

4.1 PGR Students

In the last year there have been three investigations, two of which related to plagiarism. In the first case, plagiarism was identified within the submitted thesis, admitted via stage 1, and considered minor to be addressed within the resubmission. In the second case plagiarism was identified within the submitted thesis, admitted via stage 1, and the outcome is to be reviewed by GSC before being resolved. The third case is an allegation of falsification of data, two years after the award. The Graduate School are awaiting further follow-up to determine the process to review.

4.2 Staff

In the last year there have been zero investigations into staff academic misconduct in research.