

## Annual Statement on Research Integrity – 2018/19

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1. The University is committed to supporting the highest standards of research integrity which are reflected in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).
2. The Concordat sets out the following five commitments for universities to comply with:
  - [Commitment #1](#) - maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
  - [Commitment #2](#) - ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
  - [Commitment #3](#) - supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers;
  - [Commitment #4](#) - using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise; and
  - [Commitment #5](#) - working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.
3. Our University is compliant with all of the commitments set out in the Concordat:
  - a. The University has a [Code of Good Practice for Research](#) , approved by the Academic Board, that promotes honesty and openness in research, provides clear information for researchers on the standards they are expected to follow when conducting research;
  - b. The Research Team, as part of Research & Enterprise, has responsibility for ensuring that all proposals for research projects submitted by academics for external funding are subject to ethical review and meet external sponsor requirements;
  - c. The Graduate School, as part of Research & Enterprise has responsibility for ensuring that the quality of processes and procedures relating to research degree programmes and in the training and development of academic staff and research students are appropriate and in line with best practice;
  - d. Our University is compliant with the QAA Quality Code, Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, expectations and indicators and has robust procedures in the management of research students;
  - e. The University's internal Peer Review and Approval process, as co-ordinated by the Research Team, safeguards the quality of external research grant applications and compliance with funding organisations prior to submission;
  - f. All research projects are subject to ethical scrutiny and the University's Research Ethics Sub-Committee maintains oversight of the implementation of the University's [Research Ethics Policy](#) & [Research Ethics Procedures](#) relating to research ethics and conducts an annual audit to assure itself of compliance by staff and students in the University.

### Research Governance

4. The importance of the promotion of research leadership is detailed in the [University's Code of Good Practice for Research](#) and the support for the needs of new researchers is strongly promoted.

5. The University is a continuing member of Vitae which helps to inform best practice in the programme of support for researchers. The University also holds the HR Excellence in Research Award.
6. The Graduate School is responsible for the organisation of the staff and research student development programme that demonstrates the commitment to developing our academic staff and research students, in line with the Concordat and Vitae's Researcher Development Framework, through a range of training opportunities on all aspects of research activity. Continued professional development funding which supports researchers with conferences, higher degrees and other related expenses is also available.
7. The [Policy & Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#) provides detailed information on the University's Policy for sustaining integrity in all aspects of research; a comprehensive set of procedures for use when investigating allegations of misconduct in research; and guidance on the appropriate disciplinary procedures associated with findings of misconduct in research. We believe them to be transparent, robust and fair in order to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise. They have been benchmarked against, and are compatible with, the principles of the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity (2012), the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2013) and the UK Research Integrity Office's Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (2008). They have also been benchmarked against a number of comparator UK universities, to ensure that they are up- to-date and aligned with good practice in the sector.
8. The Research & Enterprise Committee advises the Academic Board on the development, review and implementation of the sections of the University's Academic Regulations related to research and associated policies and procedures, in light of developing national and international expectations. Investigations into allegations of research misconduct are reported through the University's governance structures and an anonymised overview report is presented, for monitoring purposes, to the Audit Committee on an annual basis.
9. As a condition of any research grant, the UK Research Councils require that universities in receipt of research funding have in place policies and procedures to ensure good practice in research and the avoidance of research misconduct. Research Councils have been asked by their Audit Committees to ensure that any instances of possible research misconduct are being addressed, and that work which is funded is not exposed to any undue risk from misconduct. As part of that assurance, Research Councils UK has asked that the Audit Committee is made aware of our regulations and procedures relating to good practice and research misconduct; and that the Committee receive an annual report on any issues which may have arisen. The following documents are published on the University website and form a framework to ensure good practice in research and clear procedures for dealing with any issues which arise in this area:
  - a. [Research Ethics Policy](#)
  - b. [Research Ethics Procedures](#)
  - c. [Academic Regulations: Chapter 11 Research Awards](#) which detail that the circumstances of a claim of Research Misconduct will be investigated in line with the provisions of our Research Misconduct Procedure;
  - d. [Policy & Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research University's Code of Good Practice for Research](#)

## **Activities 2018/19**

10. During 2018/19, the following activities took place to support the University's commitment to supporting the highest standards of research integrity: *(The relevant Concordat commitment is indicated in parenthesis)*
11. In 2019 the University will benefit from membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) further enhancing and promoting research integrity and oversight of best practice of our research activity.
12. The Research Ethics Sub-Committee received the annual research ethics audits from the Schools. The audit reports provided assurance that research ethics was being managed by the Schools and that practice was compliant with the University research ethics policy and procedures. Throughout 2018/19 the Sub-Committee monitored the implementation of the actions plans that came out of the school research ethics audits to ensure that any recommendations for improving practice were implemented (#1; #2).
13. The Research Ethics Sub-Committee undertook a review of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and agreed that the University appeared to be compliant. It was agreed that a fuller mapping of the Code against the University's Research Ethics policy has been carried out and submitted for discussion to URESC in May 2019 (#2; #5).
14. Working with the University IT Service, the Head of Research has take responsibility for overseeing system updates to the University's online ethical approval system to improve its overall functionality and address any emergent issues. Following review, a system update is in development to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process. A Working Group will be established to oversee system development and functionality and co-ordinate responses to external developments which need to be reflected in the process and supported by the system.
15. An annual away-day for the management of research ethics at the University was held in February 2019. (#3). The Away Day focussed on best practice requirements and the identification of training needs and support across the University. The importance of the roles of Research Ethics Co-ordinators in Schools was re-iterated and communicated.
16. The Research Ethics Sub-Committee received a standing report at each meeting detailing any applications for research ethics approval under the remit of the Prevent Duty (#2).
17. The Chair of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee delivered a number of research ethics training sessions to Local Research Ethics co-ordinators and School Research Ethics Co-ordinators (#3).
18. The Graduate School oversees and manages the Research Training Programme (RTP). The RTP is based on Vitae's Researcher Development Framework and provides opportunities for research students to develop key research and professional skills to help them with their studies and future career progression. The RTP includes core elements and is complemented by school subject specific workshops. Each Research student attends a central induction at the beginning of their programme of study and new for 2018/19 two development days that covers by example, methodologies.

19. The Graduate School oversees and manages a comprehensive programme for academic development in all aspects of research. There is an established development programme for academic staff to become research supervisors, which includes 'Becoming a Research Awards supervisor' and training for 'Experienced Supervisors' as well as training for Independent Chairs and internal examiners. (#3).
20. During 2018/19 no cases of research misconduct were recorded or reported.
21. In addition to the actions listed above, the University's continued review and monitoring of processes, policies and training in particular through the Research & Enterprise Committee, the Research Ethics Sub-Committee, and the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, will ensure the University's ongoing commitment to high quality and ethical research.