



Research Integrity Annual Statement 2017 – 2018

University Research Integrity Committee

Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in July 2012 and is a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and governance. The Concordat's fifth commitment requires a Research Integrity Annual Statement that:

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

Introduction

The University Research Integrity Committee met three times in the academic year 2017/18; 19th September 2017, 25th January 2018 and 24th April 2018.

The University Research Integrity Committee reports to the University Research and Innovation Committee and helps develop university-wide practices and policies.

Each school has its own Research Integrity Committee and Convenor to deal with research ethics at local level, primarily the approval of ethics applications. The work of each school committee is reported to the University Research Integrity Committee, including information on the number of applications submitted in total, as well as numbers approved, rejected or referred. The University Research Integrity Committee also manages a cross-university ethical approval process for ethics applications submitted across the University, or where researchers involved are from two or more schools.

Allegations of Research Misconduct

There were two cases of alleged misconduct in 2017/18. Both were investigated in accordance with the University's Misconduct policy and RCUK Policy, the Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct and the UKRIO Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research. The cases have been considered and deemed to have no case to answer. No further action has been taken. Both cases regarded issues of authorship, and recommendations were made and taken forward by the Convenor of the University Research Integrity Committee.

Major Initiatives and Developments

In the academic year 2017/18, the following initiatives were addressed and completed:

1. Authorship

Following two allegations of research misconduct relating to authorship, the committee considered the University's position in this area. This culminated in a working group being convened to draft cross-discipline guidelines for the University's Code of Practice on Research Integrity, using sector guidance from the Singapore Statement and the Committee on Publication Ethics.

The working group's submitted guidelines were approved. These stipulated agreement on authorship in advance of the study, backed up by documentation. Verbal agreement was recommended to be avoided. Documentation on any changes to original agreements if a research project changed also required documentation. The guidelines are to be added to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity in 2018/2019.

2. GDPR

The committee sought internal advice on how the introduction of GDPR regulations in May 2018 would affect the processing of personal data in research.

Training sessions were run for researchers across the University, and the committee agreed to provide easily available advice on key issues to researchers via amendments to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity. These amendments are to be submitted for approval and added to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity in 2018/2019.

3. IRAS

Following discussion, the committee agreed to streamline its processing of IRAS applications for NHS ethical approval. It was agreed that a handbook should be drafted to assist researchers in gaining NHS ethical approval, as well as necessary modifications made to the role of sponsor to ensure timely submission. The handbook and new process are to be submitted and approved by the committee in 2018/2019.

4. Health and Safety

The committee continued to consider the inclusion of health and safety procedures in research. A procedure for lone working as a social researcher was approved. Available health and safety training was approved and endorsed by the committee.

Alisdair Stapley Clerk to the University Research Integrity Committee October 2018