

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2018

Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in July 2012 by Universities UK. A Progress Report published in November 2016 confirmed that the concordat approach continues to be favoured over alternatives such as direct regulation. HEFCE have included compliance with the Concordat as a condition of the HEFCE grant and it is a requirement for receipt of RCUK funding.

The Concordat recommends that institutions should make an annual statement on research integrity which is made publicly available. In accordance with this recommendation this annual statement provides details of activities undertaken to enhance research integrity within the University.

Summary of actions and activities undertaken to support research integrity

The University is committed to the principles outlined in the Concordat and Research Integrity features on the Research Office website in a section on Ethical Research. Following a compliance review, which reported to Research Committee in February 2017, the University has produced a Code of Practice for Research to provide additional guidance to staff. This includes a statement of the University's commitment to the Concordat. This Code of Practice was approved by Senate in November 2017 and is now available on the University's website. The Research section within the University's Ethical Policy Framework has been updated to reflect this guidance. In addition, the process for approval of projects involving research with military applications or dual use technologies has been updated and a process has been introduced for approval of projects or research requiring access to potentially security-sensitive material. Details are available within the Ethical Policy Framework. On the recommendation of the Ethics Committee an Ethical Awareness Form for Taught Student Projects has been introduced which gives guidance on processes for ethical approval.

Research integrity continues to feature within training sessions for academic staff on the research environment, e.g. Working in the Current Research Environment, and research ethics for research students, e.g. Ethical Thinking in Research. The Doctoral College have continued their subscription to Epigeum's Research Integrity on-line training programme following a one-year trial. This offers an enhanced training programme for PGR and early career research staff/academics and a concise version appropriate for experienced staff.

The University carried out a review in 2013 of its procedures for ethical approval of research involving human participants to ensure that these were robust. Recommendations from that review have been implemented and a process review of approval procedures is being undertaken by the Research Office in consultation with the University's Change Team. A trial of an on-line submission route had been undertaken with a view to developing a solution which will simplify the application process for applicants. This had been well received by applicants and options to implement an on-line process are being explored. The University Code of Practice for Investigations involving Human Participants has been updated and is now available on the University's website.

Loughborough University has implemented procedures to enable it to sponsor projects involving the NHS, which are expected to increase following the opening of the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine. Robust Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to meet the sponsor responsibilities, as defined in the NHS Research Governance Framework. The University continues to communicate regularly with UHL and University of Leicester in order to facilitate sharing of best practice and to ensure efficient support for Loughborough staff.

The University is a subscriber to UKRIO (UK Research Integrity Office).

Process for dealing with allegations of research misconduct

The Research Misconduct Policy had been updated and approved by Senate in November 2017. The updated version has been made available on the University's website. Informal advice on research integrity is available through the Research Governance Officer in the Research Office and formal reporting of allegations of misconduct is made directly to the PVC(R) or Chief Operating Officer following discussions with the School's AD(R) and Dean as appropriate.

Statement on formal research misconduct investigations

There had been no formal investigations of research misconduct by a research student or a member of staff during 2017.