

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2017/18

Background

In July 2012, Universities UK published '*The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*' (July 2012), a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. HEFCE, NIHR, RCUK and the Wellcome Trust were included among its signatories, and HEFCE stipulated that compliance with the *Concordat* is a condition of the HEFCE grant from 2017/18. Subsequently, UK Research & Innovation has fully endorsed the *Concordat*.

The *Concordat's* 5th commitment requires, in particular, that the University should present a short annual statement to its governing body 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 they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation; and
- Provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

To improve accountability and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity, this statement will be made publicly available. The University of Surrey's Statements are published at:

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/research/excellence/integrity-and-governance>.

Statement for 2017/18

1. Introduction

Committees

The Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC) met four times during the period under review, on 3rd Oct 2017, 5th Dec 2017, 22nd Feb 2018 and 14th June 2018. The RIGC is a sub-committee of the University Research & Innovation Committee (URIC), which replaced the University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC) in October 2017.

The Research Integrity and Governance Office (RIGO) have also held internal meetings to deliver actions articulated in the action plan with particular focus on increasing awareness of Research Integrity and making available more resources to researchers across the University.

The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Self-Assessment exercise conducted as part of our *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* action plan identified an opportunity to better engage senior researchers/managers as 'champions' to promote a culture of research integrity amongst local research environment and to assist with implementation plan. The Associate Deans (Research & Innovation) and the Director, Doctoral College (DDC), may be contacted with any issue related to research integrity, or to report a concern regarding research misconduct.

The University will ensure they have a member of the Association for Research Administrators (ARMA). The University is a subscriber to UKRIO.

2. Key Achievements

During 2017/18, the University has undertaken the following actions and activities to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity issues:

a) Revisions/Changes to Existing Policies:

- Nov 2017: The [Code on Good Research Practice](#) was updated and revised to ensure alignment with and reference to the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* including the core elements (Honesty, Rigour, Transparency, and Care). A new section was added on 'Internal Resources' noting the resources, policies and guidelines provided by the University. The document's structure was re-ordered to better reflect the flow of the research journey.
- Feb 2018: The University's [Ethics Handbook for Teaching and Research](#) was updated with revised review criteria and process.
- The [Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct](#) was updated to introduce the Director, Doctoral College, role and minor changes regarding the process based on experience so far in managing the policy and to reflect UKRI and other funders' requirements.
- The current [Security-sensitive Research Policy](#) was revised primarily to add the addition of 'Webpage blocking' introduced by the University's IT department.

b) Training/Awareness

- RIGO provided 'Research Integrity, Ethics & Governance' drop-in surgeries. These were held three times a month across all three faculties to educate and advise researchers on research ethics, governance and integrity issues on a responsive one-to-one basis.
- The University Ethics Committee (UEC) and RIGO continued the workshop series titled 'Exploring Ethics' with an event on 1st November 2017. The Chair of the NSPCC Ethics Committee gave a presentation on 'Ethics and Research with Children and Young People'.
- RIGO has continued to deliver structured one-to-one training on the ethics application and approval process at the University, as well as good research practice via training programmes for PhD students (PGRs) and Early Career Researchers (ECRs).
- RIGO have developed a new resource entitled [RIGO Bytes](#) (Surrey Login required). These are a series of one-page documents highlighting common risks, mistakes and useful facts to help researchers plan and undertake their research effectively and in line with relevant guidelines and regulations. RIGO Bytes also clarify many of the common terms used in the research environment that are not well known to PGRs and ECRs. RIGO Bytes are available to researchers across the University and four series were published during this academic year:
 - Research Integrity and Governance
 - Human Participants in Research
 - NHS research
 - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and research
- The Chair of UEC delivered a talk on ethics to each of the three faculties at the annual 'Welcome Week' for postgraduate students in Sept 2017.
- During 2017-18, members of RIGO attended the UKRIO annual conference.
- Students were supported by a wide variety of sessions provided through the Researcher Development Programme (RDP) and Doctoral College training events. RIGO has had stands at these regular events.
- During April 2018, RIGO re-launched an awareness campaign of the online [ethics self-assessment \(SAFE\)](#) and provided training on this.

- All Faculty Ethics Committees (FEC) now have an [online ethics application system](#).
- The University also provided central training sessions and workshops covering: Research Data Management, Data Management Plans, Introduction to Surrey's Data Repository, Introduction to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), GDPR for Researchers, and Integrity and Plagiarism: Exploring Perceptions and Misconceptions.

c) Compliance with Best Practice

- During 2018, the UEC, supported by RIGO, carried out an internal audit. This was to support high ethical and research integrity standards and maintain compliance with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, in addition to meeting the contractual requirements of some research funders, including the UKRI. The audit was carried out on a random sample of 10% of research projects, which had been submitted during the 2016-17 academic year, and which included an ESRC funded project. The outcome of the audit was positive and highlighted areas of best practice and issues in need of attention. In addition, the audit provided an opportunity for researchers to comment on their experience of the ethical review process and on training needs as an input to future development. An anonymised summary of the audit is published on the University's external [webpages](#).

d) Research Governance

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): RIGO has been working the University's Data Protection Officer to identify areas where the new legislation affects researchers. RIGO have produced guidance documents and templates to reflect compliance with GDPR. The University's Data Protection Officer and the RIGO Manager have delivered several training sessions which focus on research and are planning to deliver more in the coming year across all faculties.
- A member of RIGO undertakes the sponsor role for the Health Research Authority (HRA) and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) research applications. RIGO also manages the regulated activities of Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products (CTIMPs) and liaises with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) inspections and reporting.

3. Research Misconduct

a) The University provides assurance that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair and that they are appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

The [Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct](#) was introduced in 2015. The Code was developed with the involvement of a number of stakeholders including the University of Surrey Students Union, academic representatives from the University, UKRIO and the Legal and Secretariat team.

The Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct is being updated to introduce the Director, Doctoral College, role and also to include minor changes regarding the process based on experiences so far in managing the policy and to reflect the UKRI and other funders' requirements.

b) The University Statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

There were no allegations of research misconduct and no formal investigations were undertaken during the academic year 2017/18 (see Annexe 1).

PROFESSOR VINCE EMERY FRSB
Chair of the Research Integrity and Governance Committee,
 Senior Vice-President (Global) & Professor of Translational Virology
 13th September 2018

