



Research Integrity Annual Statement 2016/17

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 are included among its signatories, and HEFCE has stipulated that compliance with the *Concordat* is a condition of the HEFCE grant from 2016/17.

The *Concordat's* 5th commitment requires in particular that the University should present a short annual statement to its governing body 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 with 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.

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 <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/research/our-approach/governance>

Statement for 2016/17

1. Introduction

Committees

The Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC) met three times, on the 13th Dec 2016, the 3rd Feb 2017 and the 9th May 2017

At these meetings the Head of Research Development and Governance highlighted any specific issues relating to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the new research integrity training. Updates have continued to be provided to the University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC). The Research Integrity and Governance Office (RIGO) have also held internal meetings to deliver actions articulated in the action plan.

Action Plan

The action plan to ensure compliance with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* was reviewed at the Research Integrity and Governance Committee on 3rd Feb 2017. The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Self-Assessment Tool has provided useful guidance and assurance about our ongoing commitment to the Concordat.

The UKRIO Self-Assessment exercise conducted on our *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* action plan identified an opportunity to better engage senior researchers/ managers as 'champions' to promote culture of research integrity amongst local research environment and to assist with implementation plan'.

The RIGO are now working with the Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) to develop a suitable role, and how others may further support this role within the faculties.

The University is a member of Association for Research Administrators (ARMA) and subscriber to UKRIO.

2. Key Achievements

During 2016/17, 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:

- March 2017: The University Ethics Policy was updated.
- Feb 2017: RIGC initiated the revision of the Code on Good Research Practice, with a view to bringing the terminology into line with the Concordat.

b) Training/Awareness

- During 2016-17, members of the Research Integrity and Governance Office (RIGO) attended the annual conference run by the UKRIO.
- Monthly RIGO surgeries were held across the campus to advise researchers on research ethics and governance issues on a responsive basis.
- The leaflet outlining ethical review procedures at the University has been updated. This has helped to raise awareness of the ethics process, both internal and external, to the University.
- The University Ethics Committee and RIGO initiated a workshop series titled 'Exploring Ethics' with events on the 8th March 2017 and the 5th April 2017. These gave researchers the opportunity to share their experiences of ethical issues around online research and the process of informed consent and information giving. A report was produced and circulated to all academics. The series will continue in 2017/18.
- RIGO has delivered structured face-to-face training on the ethics process at the University and good research practice via training programmes for PhD students and Early Career Researchers.
- The RIGO website has been updated and more resources, guidance, and templates are now available to researchers across the University.

c) Compliance with Best Practice

- The University Ethics Committee carried out an audit during May 2017 on a random sample of research projects in order to highlight areas of best practice and issues in need of attention. In addition, the audit was used as an opportunity for researchers to comment on their experience of the ethical review process and on training needs as an input to future development.
- The RCUK Assurance Questionnaire and audit required the University to detail its current practices related to ethics and integrity and the resolution of any cases of misconduct. No issues were raised as part of the audit.

d) Research Governance

RIGO has expanded and recruited a Clinical Research Governance Officer whose background provides strong acumen in clinical regulatory affairs. In addition, one of the roles within RIGO has evolved to focus on delivering more Research Integrity and Governance training.

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 of Practice 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 is scheduled to be updated in 2017/18.

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

No formal investigations were undertaken during the academic year 2016/17. Although, one case of research misconduct was "Suspended at Screening Stage", if any action of the Respondent warrants the Formal Investigation to be undertaken we would then undertake it at a future point. In the interests of being open and transparent, the University does report that 2 other preliminary investigations were undertaken in the period.

PROFESSOR VINCE EMERY
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Senior Vice-President (Global Strategy and Engagement) &
Professor of Translational Virology
3rd October 2017