

Annual Research Integrity Statement

From: University Executive Board

Date: January 2018

INTRODUCTION

The University of Southampton ('the University') is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (2012) ('the Concordat') to create a comprehensive framework for responsible research conduct and governance. The principles and commitments include:

- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
- ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
- 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;
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

In compliance with the Concordat, the University is publishing a Statement on Research Integrity on an annual basis. The following Statement covers the period from **1 January 2017** to **31 December 2017** and summarises the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlines the actions and activities undertaken, and framework in place in support of fostering a culture of research integrity. It also provides a high-level summary of investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken by the University.

UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A CULTURE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The University of Southampton recognises the importance of undertaking its activities responsibly with the highest ethical standards. The [Simply Better Strategy](#) launched in May 2016 identifies the University's core principles as collegiality, quality, internationalisation and sustainability. These fundamental principles are underpinned by the values of excellence, creativity, community and integrity. The University fully recognises its responsibilities to researchers and the wider community, and is strongly committed to fostering a culture and understanding of good research conduct and governance, and integrity and probity across the full spectrum of its research activities. This commitment can be demonstrated by the University's Research and Enterprise Strategy and the supporting operational plan.

LEADERSHIP ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Concordat including the oversight of research and enterprise policies, research governance and ethics, and training and development opportunities provided by the University to its staff and students. The following groups and/or committees support the Vice-President on matters relating to research integrity:

- **Research and Enterprise Executive Group (REEG)**
- **Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC)**
- **University Ethics Committee (UEC)**
- **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)**

The Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) reports regularly to the University Executive Board (UEB), Senate and the University Council on matters of research integrity to ensure institutional oversight.

Deans of Faculties have an overall responsibility for the performance management of academics and researchers in their respective Faculties. The Deans are supported by Associate Deans Research (ADRs) who represent their Faculty on REEG and RIGC and are responsible for championing research integrity and implementing research and enterprise policies within their respective Faculties.

NAMED PERSON IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT

The Named Person in accordance with the Concordat is Professor Mark Spearing the Vice-President (Research and Enterprise).

Queries or concerns about research integrity and/or reports of research misconduct should be made through the Research Integrity and Governance (RIG) Team which reports to the Head of Contracts, Policy and Governance, Research and Innovation Services (RIS).

Contact: researchintegrity@soton.ac.uk

Telephone: 02380 596846

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND GOVERNANCE TEAM

The University's Research Integrity and Governance (RIG) Team was established in March 2016 and is based within the Research and Innovation Services (RIS). Its responsibilities include:

- Leading on the implementation of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity through facilitating review and development of research policies and guidance, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and research and governance procedures;
- Oversight of research governance through the University's ERGO (Ethics and Research Governance Online) system and regular monitoring of research projects;
- Providing expertise and advice on research ethics and governance, studies involving NHS staff and patients, and sponsorship of clinical trials, in line with legal and ethical requirements and available guidance and codes of conduct;
- Ethics review of high risk research projects;
- Providing advice and training sessions on all aspects of good and responsible research conduct including research integrity, research ethics and governance;
- Ensuring that any allegations of research misconduct are investigated in a fair and timely manner in accordance with the University's [Procedures for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research](#) (applicable to all staff), or passed to the relevant Curriculum and Quality Assurance

(CQA) Team for an investigation by Academic Integrity Officers (AIOs) under the [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#) (applicable to all students);

- Oversight of the University's compliance with the Export Controls legislation and requirements.

RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE POLICIES

The University has a number of policies and processes in place to meet the Concordat, which can be found [here](#).

To ensure that the University's policies and processes are up to date, and that new policies are developed if required, a Research and Enterprise Policies Action Plan has been maintained and regularly reviewed by the Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) in consultation with RIGC, UEC, REEG and AWERB.

In line with the Policies Action Plan, the University's RIG Team has been conducting a review of a number of policies and associated guidance, including the development and launch of a new Code of Conduct for Research and a new version of the Conflicts of Interest Policy. Before official release, each new or reviewed Policy is widely consulted with the University community. Changes to existing policies, or introduction of new policies and procedures, are communicated to staff and students via a number of various communication channels, in line with the comprehensive Research and Enterprise Policies and Guidance Dissemination and Communication Plan. The University aims to review and update its Research and Enterprise Policies at least every three years, or sooner where necessary in line with any changes to relevant legislation, available guidelines, codes of conduct or requirements of regulatory bodies.

RESEARCH ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE

The University has an overarching [Ethics Policy](#) and a number of ethics sub-policies including the Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Studies involving Human Participants, and Animal Research Policy. Since 2012 all staff and student projects (including undergraduate and postgraduate students) involving human tissue, human participants and/or their data, must be registered, reviewed and approved through the University's [ERGO](#). ERGO is an integrated system for obtaining ethics review, sponsorship and appropriate insurance cover, and allows the RIG Team to provide research governance and monitoring. Each University Faculty has a Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC), or an arrangement with another Faculty, for carrying out ethics reviews. Retrospective ethics review is not allowed under any circumstances and where ethics approval was not obtained, this will constitute a breach of the University's Ethics Policy and therefore a breach of academic/research integrity. The University has the University Ethics Committee (UEC) chaired by the Vice President (Research and Enterprise) which is responsible for the oversight and review of policies and guidance related to research ethics and governance. All FECs report annually to UEC and all FEC Chairs are UEC members.

RESPONSIBLE COLLABORATION / RESEARCH FUNDING

The University is committed to the highest standards of research integrity and ethics across all its activities including research, education and enterprise. The University has in place a [Statement of Responsible Collaboration](#) which states the University's position on considering research opportunities and funding in relation to potentially contentious organisations and sectors.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

- It is the University's policy that all researchers receive appropriate training and development opportunities in order to enable them to conduct research to the highest standards. Each University Faculty is regularly organising various research integrity induction sessions, and training and awareness raising events for both staff and students. Examples of these include: good research conduct, research ethics and research governance, ethical issues in research with human participants, Good Clinical Practice (GCP), good laboratory practice, animal research ethics,

and journal authorship. Information and advice, including online training modules, is available on Faculties' Intranets and via regular newsletters. Most Faculties have an Ethics and/or Research Integrity Champion/Co-ordinator who leads on ethics, governance and research integrity matters. Some Faculties already have, or will be introducing, a comprehensive ethics and governance checklist which needs to be completed by staff and students at the inception of every research project.

- Leadership on training and personal development for postgraduate researchers is provided through the University's [Doctoral College](#). The University strongly supports the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and holds the European Commission's [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) for its ongoing work in implementing the Concordat.
- The University's Library has developed wide-ranging [resources](#) offering advice and support on the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#) (RDM), and the [Open Access Policy](#). To promote and foster best practice among staff and research students, library staff have been holding regular lunchtime sessions, briefings and workshops on data management, research outputs storage and general compliance issues. These courses can be booked via Gradbook (open to Post Graduate Researchers) or Staffbook, and other bespoke training sessions and talks can be arranged on request.
- The [Researcher Portal](#) (Intranet) developed by the Research and Innovation Services (RIS), and launched in 2015, continues to provide a one stop portal of information for staff and students on all aspects of the Research Project Lifecycle (from research funding through to enterprise and commercialisation) with 'how to' guidance and signposting to important sources of information both elsewhere in the University and externally. It also contains comprehensive guidance on all aspects of research integrity, ethics and regulatory compliance.
- The University's Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC), established in December 2015, meets regularly three times per academic year to provide leadership on policy development and monitoring of implementation of regulatory compliance across the University. Its core responsibility is to foster and develop a culture of research integrity and responsible research conduct amongst the University's academic community. It provides an oversight of the Research and Enterprise Policies Action Plan and has been consulted on the development of the new policies including Code of Conduct for Research and review of the Conflicts of Interest Policy. Associate Deans Research who sit on RIGC provide an Annual Research Integrity Report which is considered by RIGC at the beginning of each academic year.
- Since May 2016 the RIG Team has been providing regular drop-in sessions to Medicine and Health Sciences staff and students on all aspects of research ethics and research governance.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2017 TO DECEMBER 2017

- In October 2017, after a wide consultation process, the University launched a newly developed [Code of Conduct for Research](#) and a new version of the [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#). The Code of Conduct has been designed as an overarching document which covers the whole Research Project Lifecycle, and contains links to relevant sources of further information. Some of the areas covered within the Code include: institutional and individual responsibilities, research principles, research funding, research ethics, conflicts of interests, research data management, IP and copyright, data protection, and authorship and publication. In line with the Conflicts of Interest Policy all staff are expected to recognise and appropriately disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict situations. The University also holds a central Register of Interests which needs to be completed by all staff at Level 4 and above on an annual basis.
- Through the University's online ethics review system ERGO, the Faculty Ethics Committees and the RIG team reviewed 3915 staff and student research projects in 2015/2016, and 4255 projects

in 2016/2017 academic year. This is an increase of around 8.7 %. Between January 2017 and December 2017, the RIG team jointly with the Insurance Team approved 688 ethics submissions and amendments of high risk/complex (Category A) research projects and University of Southampton sponsored studies.

- The RIG Team is regularly organising 'Community of Practice' events which are devoted to the latest considerations related to research ethics. The most recent Community of Practice took place in June 2017 and was dedicated to ethical challenges associated with new forms of digital data. The speakers invited to provide presentations on this topic included the Director of Web Science Institute (University of Southampton), Professor of Clinical Genetics and Co-ordinator of Ethics and Law teaching Southampton Faculty of Medicine, and the Associate Director of the Administrative Data Research Centre for England. Earlier, in May 2017, the University Ethics Committee released a new [Guidance on Internet-mediated Research](#) (IMR).
- In December 2017 the RIG Team and the University's IT department iSolutions, successfully launched ERGO II – a new and improved version of the online ethics and governance system ERGO. The aim of ERGO II is to improve and streamline the ethics review process across the University, making it more intuitive and user-friendly, as well as broaden the scope of ethics review to new areas requiring ethics consideration such as cultural heritage, research involving impact on natural environment, and research into dual-use technology and security-sensitive issues.
- In November 2017 the University's annual Assurance Statements to President and Vice-Chancellor for the period of 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017 were presented to the University's Audit Committee. The Assurance Statements are signed by Faculty Deans and by the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the Professional Services. They cover a range of financial, legal compliance, health and safety, and environmental questions and specifically obtain assurance on matters of research integrity, ethics, research data management, conflicts of interest and information security.

A RICH ENVIRONMENT PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The University has a number of academic lead groups, centres or initiatives which develop and support aspects of ethics, integrity and good research practices including:

- [Health Ethics and Law \(HEAL\)](#) (established in 2005) is an interdisciplinary research group which explores the nature of health care law and its impact on society. It actively promotes engagement between academics, health professionals and policy makers, and makes substantive contribution to theory and practice. The group holds monthly events hosting external speakers on a variety of ethics topics which are widely attended by staff and postgraduate research students (PGRs).
- [Southampton Ethics Centre \(SEC\)](#) (launched 2013/2014) brings together a large community of researchers including PGRs working on ethics and ethics related issues across the University. The Centre provides newsletters and information on national events and hosts events locally.
- [Clinical Ethics and Law at Southampton \(CELS\)](#) (established in 2010) is a multidisciplinary research group that explores the application of ethics and law in clinical practice through conceptual and empirical research, innovative teaching and public dialogue. It is actively engaged in national debates through its work with groups such as ELSI Research Group, Institute of Medical Ethics (IME) and UK Clinical Ethics Network (UKCEN).

EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIPS

To ensure that the University keeps abreast of best practice in matters related to the Concordat and research integrity, it is a member of a number of external bodies including:

- [UK Research Integrity Office \(UKRIO\)](#)
- [Association for Research Managers and Administrators \(ARMA\)](#)
- [Understanding Animal Research \(UAR\)](#)
- [The Russell Group Research Integrity Forum \(RGRIF\)](#)

WORKING ACROSS THE SECTOR AND COLLABORATION

- In April 2017 the University hosted the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum (RGRIF) which aims to share best practice in the area of research integrity among the Russell Group Universities. Following every RGRIF, feedback and examples of best practice are shared with the members of the University Ethics Committee and the Research Integrity and Governance Committee.
- In 2004 the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) set up the [National Centre for Research Methods](#) (NCRM) at the University of Southampton, which it now run in partnership with the University of Manchester and the University of Edinburgh. The Centre provides training and capacity building activities in social science research methods which includes topics on good research practices and ethical issues. NCRM also works closely with WISERD in Wales, ARK in Northern Ireland, and the Department of Methodology at the LSE.

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIONS OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

When investigating allegations of research misconduct, the University follows its [Procedures for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research](#) (applicable to staff), or [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#) (applicable to all students).

The table below sets out the high level details of investigations and findings in relation to research misconduct covering both staff and post graduate research (PGR) students.

	Number of allegations for which an investigation has been undertaken (Academic Year)			Number of allegations upheld (in whole or in part) (Academic Year)		
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018 (August 2016 till the end of December 2017)	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018 (August 2016 till the end of December 2017)
Fabrication						
Falsification						
Plagiarism	1 (2)	0 (3)	1 (0)	1 (2)	0 (2)	0 (0)
Misrepresentation						
Breach of Duty of Care	0 (1)	0 (2)		0 (1)	0 (1)	
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct.						
Other e.g. ethics/unprofessional behaviour	1 (4)	0 (2)		0 (4)	0 (2)	

*Staff and PGR students numbers are reported. Number outside of brackets reflects staff, and number within brackets indicate PGR students.

** Blank box indicates no cases.