

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2019

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. In 2013, HEFCE (now Research England) included compliance with the Concordat as a condition for receiving research funds and it is a requirement for receipt of UKRI 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 is now available on the University's website and 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. An online version of the Ethical Quick Test had been introduced and is available through the Research Office website. This will enable greater monitoring of engagement with the ethical processes.

A process review of ethical approval procedures for investigations involving human participants was 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 the implementation of an online system has been agreed. An implementation process is now being undertaken to include the processes for approval of investigations involving human participants and security sensitive research. It is anticipated that this will be introduced during Summer 2019.

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.

Loughborough University continues to develop its processes for sponsoring 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 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 2018.