Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2022

Background

Following its initial publication in 2012, a revised version of **The Concordat to Support Research Integrity** was published in October 2019 by Universities UK. The revised Concordat responds to recommendations set out in the Science and Technology Committee's report on research integrity, published in July 2018. Research England and UKRI require compliance with the Concordat as a condition for receiving research funding.

The Concordat requires institutions to make an annual statement on research integrity which is made publicly available and submitted to Universities UK. In accordance with this requirement this annual statement provides details of activities undertaken to enhance research integrity and demonstrate compliance within Loughborough University.

Summary of actions and activities undertaken to support research integrity

Universities UK Revision of Concordat

Following the publication of the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity in October 2019 the Research Governance Officer has undertaken a review to identify actions required in order to comply with the revised requirements. A Working Group was convened to ensure that appropriate actions were undertaken before the compliance deadline of October 2020. It was agreed that new internal and external facing websites would be developed, and a review of existing training provision would be undertaken once UKRIO release details of their online training program.

An external facing Research Integrity website has been created with links to our research integrity policies, annual statements, and contact details for the named person for receiving allegations of misconduct. An internal Research Ethics and Integrity website has also been launched.

UK Research Integrity Office

The University is a subscriber to UKRIO (UK Research Integrity Office) and Research Governance staff have attended their regular webinars and annual conference. The Chair of the Ethics Review Sub-Committee has joined UKRIO's Register of Advisers.

Loughborough University Policy

The University is committed to the principles outlined in the Concordat and to embedding research integrity within its research culture. The University has published a Code of Practice for Research which reiterates this commitment and provides additional guidance to staff. This Code of Practice is now available through the University's Policy Gateway and Research Ethics and Integrity website.

Ethical Approval Processes

The Research & Enterprise Office and Academic Registry have reviewed the Ethical Awareness Form for Taught Student Projects which gives guidance on processes for ethical review. This is now available through the [Research Ethics and Integrity](#) website.

The University's Ethics Quick Test for staff and doctoral student research has also been made available through the [Research Ethics and Integrity](#) website along with details of the University's ethics review processes.

The online ethics system, Loughborough Ethics Online (LEON), was introduced during 2020. This online system covers submissions for studies involving Animals or Animal Cells/Tissues and Security Sensitive Material as well as research involving Human Participants. A demonstration video and guidance notes are available to staff and students. Development work on the system continues in order to address any issues that arise and to enhance the experience for applicants. Simplified templates for Information Sheets and Consent Forms have been created which require less input from investigators to simplify the process. These are available through LEON.

UKRIO/ARMA Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations

In April 2020 the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) published guidance on [Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations](#), to support the research community in achieving high standards of research ethics review. A Working Group was established to make recommendations on implementing this revised guidance. This looked at:

- ❑ Constitution, structure and terms of reference of the existing Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee

- ❑ Decision making

- ❑ Standard Operating Procedures

- ❑ Training for Sub-Committee Members

The Working Group made a series of recommendations which were approved by the Ethics Committee. These recommendations have now been implemented. This involved changing the Sub-Committee name to the Ethics Review Sub-Committee and broadening its remit. Standard Operating Procedures have been introduced to ensure transparency of processes. Two Sub-Groups have been created and are now operational. Chairs have been appointed for the Sub-Groups. A programme of training for Sub-Committee members is under consideration.

Health Research Authority/NHS Research

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.

Creating and embedding a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct

Research Integrity Training

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 doctoral research students, e.g. Ethical Thinking in Research. The Doctoral College have continued their subscription to Epigeum's Research Integrity on-line training programme. This offers an enhanced training programme for research students and early career research staff/academics and a concise version appropriate for experienced staff.

A review of existing training provision would be undertaken once UKRIO release details of their online training program.

Contact Details

Contact details are available on the Research Ethics and Integrity website giving details of the process for reporting misconduct. Staff and students are encouraged to report concerns to the appropriate contacts within their Schools initially. The Research Governance Officer can also provide advice. These details are reiterated during training sessions.

As subscribers to UKRIO, staff and students also have access to their independent advice service.

Process for dealing with allegations of research misconduct

The Research Misconduct Policy has been updated to comply with the requirements of the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Policy is available on the University's Research Ethics and Integrity website and through the Policy Gateway. This Policy ensures that dealing with allegations of misconduct is transparent, timely, robust and fair. 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.

A further review of the Research Misconduct Policy will be conducted once UKRIO release their updated guidance in response to the revised Concordat.

Statement on formal research misconduct investigations

There had been no formal investigations by Loughborough University of alleged research misconduct by a research student or a member of staff during 2021. However, the University was notified of a third party investigation that relates to a University employee.