

School of Advanced Study, University of London

Research Integrity Annual Statement

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 here <https://sas.ac.uk/research/research-office/research-integrity-policy>

Governance

The School of Advanced Study, at the University of London has a governance structure which reviews its policies as well as its operations as follows:

- The School Research Committee, which acts on behalf of the central University of London
- The School Research Ethics Committee, which also acts on behalf of the central University of London, reports to the School Research Committee;
- The Academic Quality and Standard Committee which assures the quality of the teaching and supervisory experience for the School of Advanced Study;
- The business of the above committees is reported to the School Board, which is part of the University of London's governance structure.

Policies

The relevant institutional policies for research integrity, which are also the overall policies of the University, are as follows:

- Code of Good Practice in Research, publicly-accessible here: <https://www.sas.ac.uk/research/research-office>
- Research Ethics Policy , publicly-accessible here: <https://www.sas.ac.uk/research/research-office/research-ethics>
- Data Protection Policy , publicly accessible here: <https://london.ac.uk/about-us/how-university-run/policies/data-protection>
- And Data management policy, publicly accessible here: <https://sas.ac.uk/research/research-office>

- Employment Policies, publicly available here: <https://london.ac.uk/about-us/how-university-run/policies>
- Student Academic Misconduct Policy, publicly available here: <https://www.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Policies/Academic%20Misconduct%20Policy.pdf>

Those policies set out the standard of expectations for all researchers working under the auspices of the School and the University. The policies are reviewed formally every three years or when new Government policy dictates earlier revision.

Any revision of these policies is done through consultation. The School policies are reviewed and approved by relevant internal committees. Employment policies are reviewed by the Human Resources Department.

Communication of these policies is done in several way including:

- Staff and student handbooks,
- Intranet communications and briefings,
- Inductions and staff meetings

Key Achievements

All the policies have been reviewed within the last three years.

Introduction to Research Ethics is now part of the induction programme to students.

Workshops for supervisors have also been organised.

A new ethical approval process was introduced in May 2016, which has strengthened everyone's awareness of ethical implications within research design and methodologies. The process is managed by the Research Services in collaboration with all departments and Registry.

Statement for 2015-16 and 2016-17

(data for 2017-18 not yet fully available)

Academic misconduct is reported annually through the submission of the SAS quality assurance and teaching activities report. The report is submitted to the Academic Quality and Standard Committee (AQSC) and then the School Board for review.

The 16/17 report is currently being prepared. We can however report that out of 220 students including 87 PGT and 133 PGR, 30 had received ethical approval as per the new policy. Some students were following older policy using internal procedures within their own institutes. We seek to embed the new policy further and aim to achieve higher levels of alignment.

The 15-16 report stated: 'During the period in question there were no cases of academic misconduct reported. There were no cases reported in 2014-15'.

Since 2016, academic misconduct has been managed by the University Of London Worldwide on behalf of the School. This followed the combination of the School's and University Of London Worldwide's academic misconduct procedures into one single policy and set of regulations (see Student Academic Misconduct Policy). This policy was reviewed at the highest level through the University's governance structure including acceptance by the Collegiate Council.

A self-assessment exercise of our current policies and practices based on the UKRIO self-assessment tool has been undertaken and the following recommendations are:

- There is a need for greater transparency of cross-referencing between all the relevant policies;
- Additional material and resources are needed to increase awareness to students and supervisors – the Research Ethics Committee has recommended the use of the Virtual Learning Environment platform for this;
- Additional roadmaps of our practices will be made publicly available and will be circulated to cover ethical approval, as well as relevant practice related to the new data protection regulations (GDPR);
- The statement on misconduct in the Code of Conduct in Research requires some revisions;
- The statement on the penalty, if ethical approval is not sought, requires further clarification;
- There is a need to strengthen our internal monitoring systems;
- The School should also review how to communicate any individual details on allegations of misconduct when/if funders require such information;

It should be noted that our policies cover our research activities as well as those relating to our funded remit of research promotion and facilitation and include events, training, public engagement, networking, and set clear standards for all of our fellowship schemes. We are partners with VITAE and had been organising events on the ethical implications in research and teaching in the past couple of years.

Our policies have been established to ensure that they uphold the ethical standards of our institution as well as comply with all the funding bodies and regulatory bodies in the UK and abroad.

31st May 2018

Head of Management Information and Research Services.

Statement was discussed and approved by the Research Committee on 13th May.