

## Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* was published in July 2012 by Universities UK, in collaboration with the funding and research councils, the Wellcome Trust and a number of UK government departments. It provides a national framework for good research conduct and governance, enabling the UK research community to undertake research to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

The core elements of **research integrity**<sup>1</sup> are:

- **honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings.
- **rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards: in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.
- **transparency and open communication** in declaring conflicts of interest; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes sharing negative results as appropriate; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the general public.
- **care and respect** for all participants in and subjects of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the stewardship of research and scholarship for future generations.

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* “recognises the different responsibilities of researchers, employers of researchers and funders of research”<sup>2</sup> and their respective responsibilities for fulfilling the following five commitments:

- **Commitment 1:** We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of the research.

The university achieves this through its *Research Strategy*<sup>3</sup> and its *Research Governance and Integrity Policy*<sup>4</sup> and *Research Ethics Policy*<sup>5</sup>, through which reflective and proportionate consideration of actions and consequences is encouraged. Responsibility for research integrity rests with the university’s Board of Governors, and operationally with the Vice-Principal (Research), who is supported in this role by the Research Committee, and its Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2012), page 11, [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2012), page 10, [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> [www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/strategy](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/strategy)

<sup>4</sup> [www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/policies/policies](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/policies/policies)

<sup>5</sup> [www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/policies/policies](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/policies/policies)

- **Commitment 2:** We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

In addition to the *Research Governance and Integrity Policy* and *Research Ethics Policy*, and the university's information governance policies (Freedom of Information, Environmental Information and Data Protection<sup>6</sup>) the university proactively engages with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, and has incorporated peer review processes into its research activities. The university has also developed, where necessary, more detailed procedures for specific activities, including the use of animals and genetically-modified organisms in research.

- **Commitment 3:** We are committed to 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.

The university looks beyond duties and rules to enable those engaged in research to follow good practice by providing guidance on desired characteristics and behaviours, raising awareness, enabling effective peer review, encouraging discursive consideration of ethics throughout the life of the research, and supporting and developing research careers.

- **Commitment 4:** We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.

The university's *Research Governance and Integrity Policy* defines research misconduct, and provides instructions for the appropriate handling of misconduct allegations involving staff, through the university's *Disciplinary Policy and Procedure*<sup>7</sup>, and involving taught and research students of the university through the university's *Student Misconduct Procedure*, as contained in *Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct and Appeals: Section 2*<sup>8</sup>.

- **Commitment 5:** We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

The university will, as recommended, present a short annual statement to its Board of Governors which, once approved, will be publicly available, in order to:

- provide a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example, postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews);
- provide assurances that the university's processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the university;
- provide a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.rgu.ac.uk/about/governance/information-governance](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/governance/information-governance)

<sup>7</sup> [www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/policies/policies](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/planning-and-policy/policies/policies)

<sup>8</sup> [www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations)