COUNCIL *AND* RESEARCH STRATEGY, POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE *AND* ETHICS COMMITTEE

May 2017

2017 report on Research Integrity

1.   Purpose of this report

This report outlines the requirements placed on the University under the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (*the Concordat*) and the Research Councils UK Research Integrity Assurance questionnaire (*RCUK Questionnaire*).

The Concordat recommends that the University should present a short annual statement to its governing body (i.e. Council) that includes a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues.

This report forms the 2017 report, covering July 2016 – June 2017, and supports Commitment 5 of the Concordat.

2. Background

Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The Concordat was launched in 2012 with support from the Government, HEFCE and major research funders such as RCUK and the Wellcome Trust. The University has publicly stated its support for the Concordat.

The key provisions of the Concordat are enshrined in five commitments:

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

In line with the Concordat, this report will be made publicly available on the University website once approved. This report is being considered by Ethics Committee and Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee as well as Council.

Research Ethics and Integrity Training Group

REITG (Membership and Terms of Reference in Appendix 1) was set up in February 2016 as a successor to the Research Integrity Working Group, to take forward the work begun by RIWG. REITG reports to the University Ethics Committee and has a two-year plan of work, after which its future form and function will be reviewed.

During the 2016-17 academic year, REITG carried out activities in the areas listed below, which are summarised in the next section.

1. Updated websites following approval of revisions to the Research Code of Conduct;
2. Oversaw customisation and stage one implementation of online training;
3. Updated and circulated research integrity literature;
4. Ran a workshop for HR colleagues;
5. Attended external Research Integrity events;
6. Wrote the 2017 Annual Report on the implementation of the Concordat for Council;
7. Prepared responses to the RCUK assurance questionnaire.

Research Councils UK Integrity Assurance

Research Organisations in receipt of RCUK funding are required to have procedures for governing good research practice, and for investigating and reporting unacceptable research conduct, so as to meet the requirements set out in the Concordat and the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct.

As part of the RCUK assurance process, universities are expected to provide responses to six questions. Responses for 2017 are given in Appendix 2.

3. Work of REITG

1. REITG were responsible for a major review of the Research Code of Conduct which was approved by Senate in October 2014. Minor revisions to the Code were approved by RSPPC and Senate in June 2016. Following approval, the University's research integrity website was updated: http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/researchsupport/policyandstrategy/research-code-of-conduct-and-ethics-1/research-code-of-conduct-and-ethics. (Commitments 1,2,4)

2. In mid-2016, funding was released by the University for a three-year licence for online training courses in ethics, integrity and intellectual property, supplied by Epigeum. Work in 2016-17 has concentrated on the research integrity course, which includes five subject-oriented modules. These were reviewed by group members and the decision was taken to streamline some of the content, particularly video clips, to reduce the time required to complete each module, and to add in links to Leicester-specific codes and other materials. Working with an intern, effort has been concentrated on the social sciences module, which has now been trialled by a group of research students. Once the final format is agreed, making similar changes to the other four modules will take much less time. Discussions are continuing about the best way to launch the modules and encourage use. (Commitments 2,3,5)

3. The original dissemination material around research integrity was designed in 2015 and was now out of date. All materials were redesigned and the wording updated to reflect changes in practice and/or regulations. Departments have been sent posters to display, and booklets to give to all research and academic staff. In addition, the revised flyer and booklet have been supplied as pdf versions for inclusion in the new starter packs for research students (via Graduate School) and research staff (via Human Resources). Some of the revised material is attached as Appendix 3. (Commitments 2,3,5)

4. A workshop was run for members of HR, outlining the procedures for reporting and investigation of allegations of research misconduct and underlining the need to ensure that the Research and Enterprise Division is involved so that research funders can be contacted in line with regulations. (Commitment 4)

5. Dr Bailey attended the UK Research Integrity Organisation annual conference to learn about best practice and new developments in research integrity, including changes to RCUK policies on reporting of research misconduct which will feed into revisions to the Research Code of Conduct in 2017-18. The University is a member of UKRIO. (Commitments 1,3)

6. REITG have prepared this report as the annual report for the University on research integrity issues. (Commitment 5)

7. REITG completed the annual RCUK assurance questions relating to Ethics and Integrity. These are shown in Appendix 2. (Commitment 5)

4. Related Developments

The current report has concentrated on the work of REITG but other groups have carried out work relevant to research integrity. These developments are reported briefly here.

- The University Ethics Committee has reviewed the structure of its sub-committees, following several departmental mergers and an increase in international research following the launch of the Global Challenges Research Fund for work with developing countries. Some changes to the structure have been agreed and these will take effect from October 2017. (Commitment 2,3)

- The University Ethics Committee identified a need to recruit additional external lay members for the main and sub-committees, to ensure external representation meets funders' guidance. Some additional members have been appointed and recruitment for the rest is ongoing. (Commitment 2,3)

- The University Ethics Committee has thoroughly reviewed and updated both the Ethics Code of Practice and the online guidance. In addition, the online ethics review system has been reviewed and updates planned. (Commitment 2)

- The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (known as Prevent Duty) placed obligations on HEIs in relation to online research into sensitive, extreme or radical material. Following the publication of guidance by HEFCE, the University developed a policy to ensure relevant research was suitably reviewed and actions taken before work started. The policy was passed by Senate in June 2016 and, following the development of a review *pro forma* and establishment of a review group, formal review of relevant projects went live on 1 March 2017. Several workshops have taken place covering professional services, the review group and academic staff to bring the new policies to their attention. All material is also available on a new website. Oversight and monitoring around this area lies with the Prevent Steering Group although reports on research activity will be made to the University Ethics Committee. (Commitment 2,3)

5. Resource implications

Funding has already been secured for the licence for the online training module and implementation is being covered by existing staff. Costs of printing dissemination material were covered by Research and Enterprise Division. There ae no other resource implications.

6. Risk factors

There are potentially major reputational risks to the University if an incident of research misconduct were to take place and the University were perceived not to have appropriate systems and training in place, or failed to report this appropriately. The University has publically endorsed the Concordat and to be seen not to be adhering to the five principles would constitute a reputational risk.

Under the RCUK assurance requirements, failure to provide adequate responses to the assurance questions risks reputational damage with key funding bodies. Any block on access to research funding would have very serious financial and reputational implications.

7. Equality implications

Throughout its work REITG has sought to ensure that all those whom the Code covers are treated equally by its provisions. The Equality Officer reviewed the Code and their suggestions were incorporated into the revised version approved in June 2016.

8. Conclusions

REITG has continued to work to ensure that the University has the required procedures and policies in place to comply with the commitments of the Concordat, and that researching with integrity is understood.

The purchase and launch of the online training modules will directly support Commitment 5 of the Concordat (working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly) which was identified previously as the one where most work still needed to be done. Finishing the implementation and roll-out of the training, together with updating the Research Code of Conduct, will be major items for the coming year.

Relaunch of the dissemination material and circulation to relevant staff and students underlines the University's commitment to all aspects of the Concordat.

9. Recommendations

That this report be approved as the University's 2017 annual report on research integrity and be made publically available.

10. Actions required of the Committee

The Committee is asked to note the work of the REITG and approve the report as the 2017 annual report.

Lead Authors: Professor Mark Jobling, Chair, REITG & Department of Genetics & Genome Biology

Dr Juliet Bailey, Member and Secretary, REITG & Head of Research Strategy & Policy, Research and Enterprise Division

With contributions from all REITG members.

Date of report: 15 June 2017

Appendix 1: Membership and Terms of Reference

Membership:

Prof. Mark Jobling (Chair: CMBSP)

Prof. Jo Brewis (CSSAH)

Prof. Paul Cullis (CSE)

Prof Jose Miola (CSSAH)

Dr Meera Warrier (RED)

Ms Lynne Parsons (RED)

Mr Peter Alfano (RED)

Mr Howard Taylor and later Mr Matthew Martin (IT Services)

Dr Juliet Bailey (also Secretary; RED)

Reports to: Research Ethics Committee

Terms of Reference:

a)   To ensure the University's Code of Conduct for research is up to date;

b)   To ensure suitable training is available for all researchers on ethics, integrity and intellectual property;

c)   To communicate the Group's work broadly across the University;

d)   To report to Council on the implementation of the Concordat;

e)   To consider and record the potential equal opportunity impacts of decisions made by the Group (in accordance with the 'due regard' provisions of the Equality Act 2010).

Appendix 2: RCUK Assurance Questions: Research Ethics & Integrity

Research Organisations are required to have procedures for governing good research practice, and for investigating and reporting unacceptable research conduct that meet the requirements set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012)[1] and the Research Councils' Code of Conduct and Policy on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2009)[2] and any subsequent amendments. The reasons for collecting the information are:-

- *<u>Primarily</u> to provide assurance to the RCs that HEIs are complying with RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct:*

- *<u>But also</u>, to feed in to RCUK's narrative statement in meeting the requirements of the Concordat; and*

- *To allow RCUK to compare the data it receives from HEIs as part of the assurance programme with other information about research misconduct received by other routes, either from HEIs or from elsewhere.*

RCUK plans to make public annually:

- *Numbers of HEIs where the Assurance programme has received that the HEI has and has not complied with RCUK guidelines on statements/processes/name responsible persons*

- *Numbers of formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken in the past three years which relate to researchers funded by or responsible for funding from Research Councils (including Supervisors or postgraduate awards (Q11.5)*

- *Trend data on the above (following year one)*

No HEI will be named. It is recognised that numbers will need careful explanation as increases may be 'good' as they may reflect better reporting.

NB: The RCUK Policy and Guidelines requires Research Organisations to keep the relevant Research Council(s) informed of all allegations of research misconduct – at the time the allegation progresses to the formal investigation stage – whether the case concerns individuals and/or research awards funded by the Council(s).

QUESTION	RESPONSE
i) Please confirm that you have policies and procedures in place that meet Research Integrity and Ethics	We confirm that the University of Leicester has policies and procedures in place that meet Research Integrity and Ethics requirements, including processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct. The University's Code of Conduct for Research sets out the University's commitment to integrity in research. It is underpinned by a range of other codes, each of which lay out in more detail the specific responsibilities of researchers in these areas (e.g. ethics codes, intellectual property policy, sensitive research policy, etc.) The Code of Conduct for Research underwent major revision in 2011 and again

---

[1] www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf

[2] www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf

requirements, including processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct. How often are these reviewed and when were they last reviewed?	in October 2014, with minor updates in June 2016. Light-touch reviews are carried out approximately annually, with in-depth revisions less frequently. The University's processes for dealing with research misconduct by staff form part of the Discipline Ordinances which were extensively rewritten in 2011. They are based on the UK Research Integrity Office procedure. The Discipline Ordinances were reviewed by Human Resources at the same time as revisions to the Research Code of Conduct (autumn 2014 and spring 2016) and found to still meet internal and external requirements. The University's academic regulations for students make provision for the handling of cases of research misconduct under Senate Regulation 11: Regulations covering student discipline. http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/Senatereg11-discipline.pdf. This was last updated in December 2016.
ii) Please provide the publicly accessible web links to these policies and the name of the senior officer responsible for dealing with cases of misconduct.	The weblink to the Research Code of Conduct is http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/researchsupport/policyandstrategy/research-code-of-conduct-and-ethics. The Senior Officer responsible is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) Professor Iain Gillespie, who is also Chair of the Research Strategy, Policy & Performance Committee.
iii) How are these policies disseminated to staff? Please indicate if any special provision is made for new employees (including post-graduate students) and also how staff awareness is maintained.	Our range of posters and booklets were redesigned and updated in April 2017 and are available in pdf format via the above website. Posters were sent to all departments for display on departmental notice boards and, working with departmental administrators, a booklet was given to every member of staff with research responsibilities (academic, research, technical and administrative), around 1750 in total. Copies of the booklet were also provided to all staff in the Research and Enterprise Division. Pdf versions of the booklet are emailed to research students - masters and doctoral, both campus-based and distance learning – as part of the new starters' packs. The online induction resources for PGRs also point to the research integrity pages. Pdf copies of the leaflets have been supplied to Human Resources to be included in the welcome packs for all new academic and research staff. Policy updates, and general updates on ethics and integrity, are disseminated through the University Ethics Committee which has representation from ethics sub-committees and is the key link to staff and students based in the three Colleges. A quick link to the Code has also been placed in the University website A-Z to assist colleagues in finding information on integrity.

iv) Please outline any 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).	In February 2014 the University set up a task and finish group, the Research Integrity Working Group (RIWG), to review processes, actions and activities in this area. In January 2016, the Research Ethics and Integrity Training Group (REITG) replaced RIWG; this latter reports via the University Ethics Committee to the University's Research Strategy, Policy & Performance Committee. REITG has a 2-year programme of work including the 2016 light-touch update to the Code of Conduct, preparing the 2016 and 2017 annual reports to Council, customisation and implementation of online training material, and dissemination activities relating to integrity. The annual report for 2017 will be presented to Council at its July meeting.

REITG includes representatives from each of the three Colleges with expertise in relevant areas, alongside professional services colleagues with specialist knowledge. The group calls upon additional expertise when required.

The University approved funding in mid-2016 for the purchase of a 3-year licence from Epigeum for online training courses that will cover ethics, integrity and intellectual property. There are five subject-orientated modules on integrity. Delivery was taken in August 2016 and during the current year extensive work has been undertaken to customise and adapt the modules to meet our needs. Work started with the social science module and this has now been tested by researchers from outside REITG. Implementation of all modules will take place during 2017-18.

Colleges and departments have continued to offer their regular courses in aspects of research integrity such as plagiarism and authorship, data storage, intellectual property, etc. Some of these will be remodelled as the online modules are rolled out. In addition, centrally run courses including research integrity training, using case studies and scenarios, and emphasising the need for robust research data management systems, are offered to postgraduate research students.

The University implemented a new policy and review process for radical, sensitive or extreme research in March 2017. A website has been set up with access to the policy and review *pro forma*. A review group evaluates projects that meet relevant criteria, ensuring that appropriate risk assessment and mitigation have taken place. Several workshops have been given on this area, including professional staff, reviewers and research staff. Reporting on activity is via the Research Ethics Committee with monitoring also by the Prevent Steering Group. |
| v) The Research Councils expect that the research they support will be carried out to a high ethical standard. Please explain the arrangements you have in place for reviewing that any research funded by the Councils is planned and | Oversight of University ethical review and ethics policies lies with the University Ethics Committee.

When making an application for external funding, staff are required to indicate on their internal application approval form whether or not ethical review is required for their project, and whether approval would come from the University or NHS ethics committee. For projects falling within the remit of NHS ethics review, the University's Research Governance Office, which also sits within RED, provides dedicated expertise and has close links to the local NHS trusts and ethics committees.

In May 2015 an online review system was introduced for University projects. All staff and PGR ethics applications must be submitted via this system for consideration by one of five ethics sub-committees. Where an undergraduate or taught postgraduate research project is deemed risky, this may be escalated to the relevant ethics sub-committee for consideration. The system provides online video |

conducted in accordance with such ethical standards.	tutorials to take applicants through the questions and the ethical issues they need to consider under each section. This system will be updated during 2017-18.
	The sub-committee can approve the application without change, or request amendments to, for example, protocols or questionnaires. They can also request mid-point reviews or updates if they feel a project merits additional oversight. Any changes to the research design have to be communicated through the system with either an amendment to the online application, or a new application where there are significant changes to the original design.
	All Ethics Committees are required to include lay members who are independent from the University. A number of new lay members have been appointed in the current period and additional new members are being sought.
	All staff with responsibility for approving the ethics applications of undergraduate and taught Master's students, as well as those sitting on ethics sub-committees, must attend a training session prior to being able to authorise any ethics application.
	Research support staff will only allow externally-funded projects requiring ethical approval to proceed from award to activation stage once the PI has supplied the ethics approval code and the approval date. These are recorded as part of the project details within the finance system.
	The University Ethics Committee has extensively revised the University Ethics Code of Practice and the revised version was approved in June 2016. The webpages have also been extensively updated: http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/ethics.
	Following changes to departmental structures within the University, UREC is reviewing the structure of ethics sub-committees and a new structure will come into operation in October 2017.

vi) How many formal investigations of research misconduct have been undertaken in the past three years which relate to researchers funded by or responsible for funding from Research Councils (including supervisors of postgraduate awards)?
 	
Please complete the table below
	• *"formal investigation" should be as described in the RCUK Policy and Guidelines (Page 8)*
	
	• *The relevant date should be when the formal investigation is completed*
	
	• *By completing Annex 1, please give by academic year (1 Oct – 30 Sept), for the past three completed academic years (starting with the most recent completed year), the number of completed investigations*
	And for each instance:
	
	   o *Whether it was fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, misrepresentation, breach of duty of care of improper dealing with allegations of misconduct (as defined in the RCUK policy pages 6-7), or other (if other, please explain briefly); and*
	
	   o *Whether the allegation was upheld (in whole or in part). If in part, please give brief details in the final row*
	
	• *Names of individuals are not required*
	
	• *In terms of overall numbers, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers*
	
	There are no investigations to report for the period 1 October 2015 – 30 September 2016. This is the most recent full academic year for which figures are available.

Appendix 3: Research Integrity Poster

UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Research and Enterprise Division
Integrity Questions

For how long do I need to retain records?

Who owns intellectual property arising from my research?

Whom should I include as an author in my latest paper?

I suspect that one of my colleagues is falsifying their research data. What do I do?

What should I do about conflicts of interest?

Do I need to back-up my research data?

Who deals with Freedom of Information requests?

What responsibilities do I have as a new supervisor to my research students?

Where can I get help with my application for ethical approval of research?

Who can negotiate a confidentiality agreement?

How do I get approval for research into sensitive, radical or extreme materials?

How do I make my publications open access?

Answers to these and similar questions can be found in the Research Code of Conduct, the University of Leicester's comprehensive guide to good research practice and the standards expected of our researchers.

For more information, please visit:
www.le.ac.uk/researchintegrity