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

May 2016

2016 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 2016 annual statement.

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 publically 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 publically 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 Research Ethics Committee and has a two-year plan of work, after which its future form and function will be reviewed.

During the 2015-16 academic year, REITG carried out activities in the four areas listed below, and its activities are summarised in the next section.

1. Review and update the Code of Conduct for Research;
2. Oversee procurement and implementation of online training;
3. Communicate widely about the initiative and what integrity and ethics mean for researchers;
4. Write the 2016 Annual Report on the implementation of the Concordat for Council.

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 (Appendix 2). This year RCUK are visiting the University to carry out a major audit during May and REITG have contributed to the documentation supplied.

3. Work of REITG

1. RIWG were responsible for a major review of the Research Code of Conduct which was approved by Senate in October 2014. REITG have overseen minor revisions to the Research Code of Conduct. As well as reflecting changes to the structure of the University, the Code has been amended to reflect new regulations relating to research into terrorism and sensitive materials as well as equalities issues. Input was received from within the group but also from a wide range of stakeholders from across the University. The revised Code is going to Research Policy Strategy and Performance Committee for approval on 12 May, following which it will receive final approval by Senate. Following that the revised Code will be publicised.

2. Following the recommendations in the 2015 research integrity report to Council, funding was obtained from the University for a three-year licence for three online training modules in ethics, integrity and intellectual property. These will be hosted on the University's e-learning site, Blackboard. The agreement for this will be signed shortly and REITG expect to begin implementation of the modules in June 2016. There will be a 'soft' launch at the start of the 2016-17 academic year, encouraging staff and research students to take the modules. For the remainder of the year, REITG will work to embed the modules as a core part of researcher training.

3. Members of REITG have made presentations on research integrity and the Concordat to all College Research Committees. In addition, both the Ethics Committee and the Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee have received regular updates on progress. Additional communication is planned for the launch of the online training.

4. REITG have prepared this report as the annual report for the University on research integrity issues.

5. As mentioned above, the University is subject to a scheduled on-site audit from RCUK in May 2016; these take place every 4-5 years. As part of the documentation requested, REITG completed the assurance questions relating to Ethics and Integrity. These are shown in Appendix 2.

4. Resource implications

Funding has already been secured for the online training module. The IT Services and other time costs linked to implementation are being covered from existing resources.

5. 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. The University has publically endorsed the Concordat and to be seen not to be adhering to the five principles would constitute a reputational risk.

With the new 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.

6. 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 has reviewed the Code and will continue to assist in reviewing future revisions.

7. Conclusions

REITG has continued the work begun by RIWG in ensuring that the University has the required procedures and policies in place to comply with the commitments of the Concordat.

The purchase and launch of the online training modules directly support the final commitment (working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly) which was identified in 2015 as the one where most work still needed to be done.

8. Recommendations

That this report be approved as the University's 2016 annual report on research integrity and be made publically available.

9. Actions required of the Committee

The Committee is asked to note the work of the REITG and approve the recommendations.

Lead Authors:	Professor Mark Jobling, Chair, REITG & Department of Genetics
	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: 4 May 2016

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)

      Dr Kate Hetherington (RED)

      Mr Howard Taylor (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:-

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

- *But also, 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 etc.) The Code of Conduct for Research underwent major revision in 2011 and again in October 2014. It is currently

[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?	undergoing light touch review which will be completed in May 2016. Light-touch reviews are carried out approximately annually, with in-depth revisions less frequently. The current review, as well as reflecting changes to the University' structure, has updated and expanded the sections relating to equality and diversity and the Prevent agenda. The revised version is scheduled to be approved by the University's Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee in May 2016 following which it will be ratified by Senate.

The University processes for dealing with research misconduct by staff forms 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 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 September 2015. |
| 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 Senior Officer responsible is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) Professor Iain Gillespie.

The weblink to the Research Code of Conduct is http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/researchsupport/policyandstrategy/research-code-of-conduct-and-ethics. |
| 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. | A range of posters and booklets were designed in March 2015, 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). Departments have been provided with spare copies to be placed in the induction packs for new staff; additional copies are available on request.

Copies of the booklet are also given to staff in professional services whose remit includes research, such as Research and Enterprise Division and the Graduate Office.

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 and are available at induction events in January and October each year. The online induction resources for PGRs also point to the research integrity pages.

A brief overview of research integrity and current developments was given to University and College Research Committees in academic year 2015-6, bringing the Code to the attention of members (college and departmental Directors of Research, PGR Directors etc.). The launch of the revised Code in 2014 was announced via the |

	University website and the weekly email bulletin and similar announcements will be made once the proposed revisions are approved. Policy updates, and general updates on ethics and integrity are disseminated through the University Ethics Committee that 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 it.
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. As part of its work, RIWG carried out the 2014 review of the Code, designed the booklets and posters mentioned above, ensured their dissemination to staff and post-graduate students and produced the website listed above. RIWG also carried out a review of current training provision and looked at the possibility of purchasing an online training package from an external provider, making recommendations to the University. Finally, RIWG presented reports to University's Council on research integrity developments and provision in 2014 and 2015. In January 2016, the Research Ethics and Integrity Training Group (REITG) replaced RIWG; this latter reports via the University Research 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 and dissemination activities relating to integrity. The annual report for 2016 will be presented to Council at its May 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; for example, suggestions for revisions to the Code have been sought from Equalities Office, Library (Open Access) and Information Assurance (FOI and Data protection), amongst others. On occasions additional experts attend group meetings to provide input in specific areas. In late 2015, the University approved funding for the purchase of a 3-year licence for online training modules that will cover ethics, integrity and intellectual property. The contract for this is due to be signed in May 2016, with supply commencing 1 June 2016. REITG will be working with IT Services and the provider over the summer to implement the modules and customise them to suit the University's needs. A 'soft' launch is planned for the start of academic year 2016-7, with staff and research students encouraged to take the modules. Work will take place during 2016-7 to embed these modules within training provision for students and staff and also, if required, to amend regulations to make completion compulsory. 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 currently being rolled out to postgraduate research students.

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 conducted in accordance with such ethical standards.	Oversight of University ethical review and ethics policies lies with the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

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 a new ethics online review system was introduced for University projects, with the aim of improving efficiency and increasing the transparency of the approval process. All staff and PGR ethics applications now must be submitted via the system for consideration by one of five research ethics sub-committees. Where an undergraduate or taught postgraduate research project is deemed risky, this is also escalated to the relevant research ethics sub-committee for consideration. The system provides online video tutorials to take applicants through the questions and the ethical issues they need to consider under each section.

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 have lay members who are independent from the University. A policy to ensure the ongoing recruitment and retention of appropriate lay members is currently being developed.

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, have to attend a training session prior to being able to authorise any ethics application.

RSS 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.

During the last year the UREC has reviewed its own work and the work and structure of its sub-Committees and has found that the current arrangements are working well. There are a few further developments required to the online review system which will be incorporated in the work IT Services delivers to University systems. UREC is currently revising the University Ethics Code of Practice to factor in changes to the ethics review system and updates to ethical review procedures (estimated completion: June 2016). |
| vi) | How many formal investigations of research misconduct have been | • *"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* |

| | 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 | *past three completed academic years (starting with the most recent completed year), the number of completed investigations*
And for <u>each</u> 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 <u>not</u> required*

• *In terms of overall numbers, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers* |

	Number of formal investigations completed			Number of allegations upheld (in whole or in part)		
	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
Fabrication	0	0	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Breach of duty of care	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Details of any allegations upheld in part	0	0	0	0	0	0