Research Strategy Office guidance 2015-16: Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The UUK *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, compliance with which is a requirement of HEFCE and RCUK funding, requires the University to abide by the following 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.

As part of efforts to ensure that the University maintains high standards in research integrity, the Research Policy Committee have recommended some actions that should be taken by all Departments and Faculties.

1. An integral part of ensuring compliance with the Concordat is to raise awareness among the research community of the Concordat, as well as University policies and procedures designed to ensure that research is conducted according to best practice. As such, the Research Policy Committee have agreed that **Faculties and Departments should incorporate all relevant research integrity statements and guidelines into the induction process for academic staff, postdocs and PhD students**. This should include the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the following University policies and statements:

- Research Integrity Statement
- Good Research Practice Guidelines
- Misconduct in Research
- Policy on the Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data
- Policy on the Use of Animals in Research (where appropriate)
- Any other policies and procedures relevant to the department/faculty's research

2. The Concordat also requires all researchers to have access to guidance on research ethics and integrity issues. The Research Policy Committee have agreed that, to facilitate access to such guidance, **all Departments and Faculties should provide a link on their local website to the University's central research integrity website**.

3. Under the requirements of the Concordat, the University is also required to have clear management systems for the implementation of research integrity procedures and a robust approach to investigating allegations of research misconduct. The Research Policy Committee therefore wish to **remind Heads of Department and Faculties that they hold the responsibility for research integrity and ethics matters in their institution, including the implementation of the University's research ethics and integrity policies**

and procedures at a local level. This includes taking responsibility, under the [Misconduct in Research policy](#), for any investigation into an allegation of research misconduct within their institution and reporting all such investigations to the Academic Secretary, Registrary or Director of Human Resources as appropriate (where it is inappropriate for the Head of Department/Faculty to act in such a role, the matter should be referred to the Head of School).

Departments and Faculties are also encouraged to take further actions to address the commitments of the *Concordat*. To assist this, a set of recommendations have been developed by the Research Governance and Integrity Officer. **Not all of these recommendations will be applicable to all departments and faculties.** If you require further guidance please contact the [Research Governance and Integrity Officer](#).

Recommendations

Dissemination of University and School policies

1. Take actions locally (for example highlighting policies online, in departmental handbooks or through direct communications) to make staff and students more aware of the *[Concordat](#)* and the following University policies:
   a. [University Good Research Practice Guidelines](#)
   b. [University Research Integrity Statement](#)
   c. [University Policy on the Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data](#)
   d. [University Animal Welfare policies](#)
   e. [University Financial Regulations](#)
   f. [Misconduct in Research Policy](#)
   g. ['Whistleblowing' Policy](#)
   h. [Policy Against Bribery and Corruption](#)
   i. [Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy](#)
2. Provide the [University's Research Integrity leaflet](#) at induction and training events
3. Disseminate School integrity and ethics policies at a local level. Departments and Faculties in the Clinical School are particularly encouraged to make colleagues aware of the guidance provided on the School's [Research Governance website](#).

Research Ethics

1. Identify a local contact for research ethics issues. This could be either an individual or group who can act as an initial contact point for queries regarding research ethics. Make your School and the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) aware of the identity of this contact so that they can receive information on changes to ethical requirements.
2. Develop a Departmental or Faculty research ethics webpage that provides:
   a. Contact details for any local ethics contact and information on how to seek further guidance at School or University level
   b. Discipline specific guidance on research ethics issues
   c. Details of how to seek ethical review of a research project
   d. Links to School- and University-level processes and guidance

3. Where ethical approval for research projects is provided at a departmental or faculty level, ensure that written procedures for this are reported to the UREC.
4. Where ethical review is undertaken at School-level, provide clear links on the departmental or faculty website to School-level guidance.
5. Where Departments or Faculties regularly undertake research that falls under the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care, provide guidance on the requirements of the Framework. Guidance for departments and faculties in the Clinical School is provided on the School's [Research Governance website](#).

Research Integrity

1. Where required, develop local policies or implement School-level policies and external guidelines on research integrity issues (for example, discipline-specific authorship guidance or good practice in discipline-specific practices, such as the presentation of gels and blots or the handling of archaeological artefacts).
2. Identify a senior member of staff to lead on the promotion of a culture of research integrity in the department or faculty.

Research Misconduct

3. Raise awareness among members of the department or faculty of their responsibility to report incidents of misconduct under the [Misconduct in Research](#) policy.
4. Raise awareness, potentially by providing contact details on the departmental website, of how to report misconduct to the Head of Department or Faculty.

Support for researchers

1. Develop discipline-specific training for researchers in research ethics and integrity.
2. Incorporate research integrity issues into existing training programmes.
3. Encourage PhD students and postdocs to utilise University [research integrity training](#).
4. Encourage research degree supervisors to familiarise research students with integrity policies and processes. A document designed to assist this is provided [here](#).
5. Encourage senior staff and group leaders to discuss research integrity and ethics issues with more junior staff.
6. Arrange talks or events focusing on research ethics and integrity issues.

Collaboration, development and review

1. Where appropriate, work with other departments and faculties, or at School level, to develop training, guidance and other support for researchers.
2. Periodically review and update any existing local ethics and integrity policies.
3. Report any concerns or comments regarding University-level policies to the Research Governance and Integrity Officer.
4. Ensure that any local research ethics committee reports annually to the UREC.
5. Consider, and implement where appropriate, examples of good practice at other departments highlighted as part of the research integrity reporting process. For the first annual report see [here](#).
6. Encourage administrators to build their awareness of research ethics and integrity issues through training or attending relevant talks and events.