

SEN17D016

Title: *UEA Annual Research Integrity Report 2016/17*
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Issue

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* recommends that employers of researchers present a short annual statement to their governing body concerning research integrity.

The Concordat also recommends that this statement is made publically available to improve accountability, and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity.

Recommendation

Recipients are invited to receive and accept the attached report summarising activities undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues in the period 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017, which was reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee on 18th October 2017 and by the University Research Executive on 19th October 2017.

That assurances be given to Council on the activities undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues across the University; that the processes¹ in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research are transparent, robust and fair and are appropriate for the University's needs; and that the very small number of formal investigations of research misconduct undertaken mean that it is not possible to identify any trends and further analysis is not warranted.

Resource Implications

Support for research integrity is provided by RIN and by the Schools which are responsible for the management of researchers and for the University's Research Ethics Subcommittees (S-RECs). Personnel are already in post within RIN and the Schools to provide training sessions on research integrity. The two-page summary of the report would be made available on the University's Research Integrity webpage: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/research/about-uea-research/our-research-integrity> and on the RIN portal page for Research Integrity: <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/rin/research-integrity>.

¹ The University's *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* are currently under review and have been presented to Senate for approval (SEN17XXXX).

Risk Implications

Failure to accept this report would compromise the University's Annual Accountability Return for 2017 to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which requires a statement of compliance with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* as part of its ongoing financial support.

Equality and Diversity

No equality and diversity issues are associated with this report.

Timing of decisions

Acceptance by Senate and recommendation of assurance to the Council will support the University's Annual Accountability Return for 2017 to HEFCE which is currently being compiled.

Further Information

For further information contact: Dr Helen Brownlee, Research Integrity Manager, Research and Innovation Services on 01603 593435 or h.brownlee@uea.ac.uk.

Background

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* encourages research active institutions to make an annual report to their governing bodies which:

“provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;

provides assurance that the processes that they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research are transparent, robust and fair and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation; and

provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken”.

This report summarises UEA's activities and issues relating to Research Integrity in the period 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017 in alignment with the university's academic and financial years.

There were two cases of misconduct in research in the reporting period; both have had the allegation of research misconduct upheld. With such small numbers of cases it is not possible to identify any trends and further analysis is not warranted.

In addition, the Concordat recommends:

“to improve accountability, and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity, this statement should be made publically available.”

The University's Annual Research Integrity Report has not been made publically available before.

Discussion

No discussion is anticipated.

Attachments

The annual report is attached. Please note Appendices 1 and 2 to this report are confidential.

Annual Research Integrity Report 2016/17

Summary

This short statement is produced annually for the University Research Executive to consider and is presented thereafter to the University's Senate and Council to approve. The report provides a summary of activities and issues relating to the support and implementation of research integrity, and processes relating to allegations of misconduct in research in the period 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017. This Summary will be made available to the public on the University's Research Integrity website.

The University is fully committed to ensuring that all research undertaken by staff and students is carried out to the highest professional standards of research integrity, and that all researchers uphold the principles set out in the Universities UK *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. The term 'Research Integrity' has been adopted internationally to describe "the core principles and responsibilities that should be common to all good research".¹

Responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of research integrity at the University rests with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation (PVC R&I). The University's Research and Innovation Services (RIN) support the PVC R&I in this area, and have a Research Integrity Manager who is also the first point of contact for any queries on the relevant policies or process to follow. RIN also has formal nominated representatives who act as legal representatives (under the Health Research Authority's (HRA) Sponsor requirements) for all NHS-related studies in accordance with the HRA's *UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research* (HRA Framework). RIN further advises on legal and regulatory requirements.

In addition, the University has an overarching committee, the University Research Ethics Committee (U-REC), to define the University's Research Ethics Policy and operational principles. It also has oversight of the University's Research Ethics Subcommittees (S-RECs). U-REC is led by a Chair appointed by the PVC R&I, and is constituted from the S-REC Chairs, lay members and co-opted experts.

The S-RECs provide ethics reviews of student and staff research projects and teaching modules. In 2016/17, they also undertook ethics reviews of internally-funded impact projects in support of the University's stance that ethics issues should be considered throughout the lifecycle of a project. Occasionally, ethics reviews have been undertaken by the S-RECs for academics in the Norwich Biosciences Institutes to facilitate efficient operations across the Norwich Research Park. During the reporting period, a total of 783 proposals were reviewed within the University of which 735 were given ethical clearance.

Governance arrangements in support of research at the University include a number of research integrity policies and guidelines. The University is also required to comply with UK legislation relating to research, as well as Concordats and codes of practice issued by funding bodies and collaborating organisations.

In 2016/17, the University became one of the 735 organisations which support the AllTrials Campaign, which "calls for all past and present clinical trials to be registered and their full methods and summary results reported" regardless of the research outcome.

¹ *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*.

The University has a rolling programme of reviews for its research integrity policies and guidelines. During 2016/17, reviews of the following policies and guidelines were initiated:

- *Guidelines for Good Practice in Research* (last reviewed and approved by Senate in November 2015)
- *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* (last reviewed and approved by Senate in February 2013)
- *Open Access Policy* (last reviewed and approved by Senate in June 2015)
- *Research Data Management Policy* (last reviewed and approved by Senate in November 2015)

The University's *Research Ethics Policy* was reviewed in 2015/16 and approved by Senate in November 2016.

To help researchers comply with institutional procedures relating to research ethics, and research integrity standards expected by the University, specific *Ethics Guidance Notes* covering a range of topics were issued by U-REC in 2016/17. These are available on the University's Research Integrity intranet. To further promote best practice within the University, it was agreed to include additional guidelines on ethical considerations for academics in the University's 'Module Online Guidance' when seeking Module approval.

A new *Policy for Approving the Integrity of UEA Research and Enterprise Related Activities and Funding* was approved by Senate and Council in March 2017 to ensure that any proposed research and innovation activity and acceptance of any associated external funding is consistent with the University's stated principles and standards of integrity and ethical practice.

The University has *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research*, which outline the actions to be taken when any allegation of misconduct in research is brought against any present or past member of staff of the University in respect of research undertaken while employed by the University and / or while registered as a student at the University. During 2016/17, there was one formal investigation concerning a member of staff and one concerning a student

Good data management is a fundamental aspect of the research process, and in light of the recent *Concordat on Open Research Data*, the University is now making research data gathered and generated by its academic staff openly available for use by others in the UK research community wherever possible.

Alongside U-REC, the University with the NNUH Trust operates a *Joint Research Governance Policy* (revised with effect from January 2017) together with joint *UEA and NNUH Standard Operating Procedures* (revised according to an agreed schedule), which apply to all healthcare research within the NNUH Trust and the UEA, under the HRA Framework. These documents are available on the NNUH website.

Professor Fiona Lettice
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation
October 2017