UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Annual Research Integrity Statement

From: University Executive Board   **Date: January 2019**

INTRODUCTION

The University of Southampton ('the University') is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012) ('the Concordat') to create a comprehensive framework for responsible research conduct and governance. The principles and commitments include:

- Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.

- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

- 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.

- Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.

- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

In compliance with the Concordat, the University is publishing a Statement on Research Integrity on an annual basis. The following Statement covers the period from **1 August 2017** to **31 July 2018**[1] and summarises the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlines the actions and activities undertaken, and framework in place in support of fostering a culture of research integrity. It also provides a high-level summary of investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken by the University.

UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A CULTURE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The University of Southampton recognises the importance of undertaking its activities responsibly with the highest ethical standards. The Simply Better Strategy launched in May 2016 identifies the University's core principles as collegiality, quality, internationalisation and sustainability. These fundamental principles are underpinned by the values of excellence, creativity, community and integrity. The University

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[1]The reporting period of this Statement has been changed from the calendar year (1 January – 31 December) to the academic year (1 August – 31 July) to align it with other University reports.

fully recognises its responsibilities to researchers and the wider community, and is strongly committed to fostering a culture and understanding of good research conduct and governance, and integrity and probity across the full spectrum of its research activities.

LEADERSHIP ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Concordat including the oversight of research policies, research governance and ethics, and training and development opportunities provided by the University to its staff and students. The following groups and/or committees support the Vice-President on matters relating to research integrity:

- **Research and Enterprise Executive Group (REEG)**
- **Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC)**
- **University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)**
- **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)**

The Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) reports regularly to the University Executive Board (UEB), Senate and the University Council on matters of research integrity to ensure institutional oversight.

Deans of Faculties have an overall responsibility for the performance management of academics and researchers in their respective Faculties. Deans are supported by Associate Deans Research (ADRs) who represent their Faculty on REEG and RIGC and are responsible for championing research integrity and implementing research policies within their respective Faculties.

NAMED PERSON IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT

The Named Person in accordance with the Concordat is Professor Mark Spearing the Vice-President (Research and Enterprise).

Queries or concerns about research integrity and/or reports of research misconduct should be made through the Research Integrity and Governance (RIG) Team which reports to the Head of Contracts, Policy and Governance, Research and Innovation Services (RIS).

Contact: researchintegrity@soton.ac.uk
Telephone: 02380 596846

RESEARCH POLICIES

The University has a number of policies and processes in place to meet the Concordat, including the Code of Conduct for Research, which can be found here.

To ensure that the University's policies and guidance are up to date, and that new policies are developed if required, a Research Policies Action Plan is maintained by the RIG Team and regularly reviewed by the Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) in consultation with RIGC, UREC, REEG and AWERB.

Before official release, each new or revised Policy is widely consulted with the University community. Changes to existing policies, or introduction of new policies and procedures, are communicated to staff and students via a number of various communication channels, in line with the comprehensive Research Policies and Guidance Dissemination and Communication Plan. The University aims to review and update its Research Policies every three years, or sooner where necessary in line with any changes to relevant legislation, available guidelines, codes of conduct or requirements of regulatory bodies.

RESPONSIBLE COLLABORATION / RESEARCH FUNDING

The University is committed to the highest standards of research integrity and ethics across all its activities including research, education and enterprise. The University has in place a [Statement of Responsible Collaboration](#) which states the University's position on considering research opportunities and funding in relation to potentially contentious organisations and sectors.

RESEARCH ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE

University Research Ethics Committee

The University has an overarching [Research Ethics Policy](#) and a number of ethics sub-policies. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), chaired by the Vice President (Research and Enterprise), has the overall responsibility for the process of ethics review at the University, and for oversight, development and review of policies and guidance related to research ethics and governance. Each University Faculty has a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) which is tasked with providing ethics reviews and approvals for research projects undertaken within the faculty. All FRECs report annually to UREC and all FREC Chairs are UREC members.

ERGO - Ethics and Research Governance Online

Since 2012 the University has been using an internal online platform ERGO (Ethics and Research Governance Online) which is an integrated system for obtaining ethics review, sponsorship and appropriate insurance cover, and allows the RIG Team to provide research governance and monitoring. All staff and student projects (including undergraduate and postgraduate students) which may require an ethics review must be registered, reviewed and approved through ERGO. Some Faculties use a comprehensive ethics and governance checklist which needs to be completed by staff and students at the inception of every research project. Retrospective ethics review is not allowed under any circumstances and where ethics approval was not obtained, this will constitute a breach of the University Research Ethics Policy and therefore a breach of academic/research integrity.

In March 2018, the RIG Team and the University's IT department iSolutions, successfully completed the roll-out of ERGO II – a new and improved version of ERGO. The aim of ERGO II is to improve and streamline the ethics review process across the University, making it more intuitive and user-friendly, as well as to broaden the scope of ethics review to new areas requiring ethics consideration.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND GOVERNANCE TEAM

The University's Research Integrity and Governance (RIG) Team was established in March 2016 and is based within the Research and Innovation Services (RIS). Its responsibilities include:

- Leading on the implementation of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity through facilitating review and development of research and governance policies and guidance, and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

- Oversight of research governance through the University's ERGO II system, and review and monitoring of high risk research projects.

- Providing expertise and advice on research ethics and governance, studies involving NHS staff and patients, and sponsorship of clinical trials, in line with legal and ethical requirements and available guidance and codes of conduct.

- Providing advice, training and drop-in sessions to staff, students and ethics reviewers on all aspects of good and responsible research conduct including research integrity, research ethics and clinical governance.

- Ensuring that any allegations of research misconduct are investigated in a fair and timely manner in accordance with the University's Procedures for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research (applicable to all staff), or passed to the relevant Curriculum and Quality Assurance (CQA) Team for an investigation by Academic Integrity Officers (AIOs) under the Regulations Governing Academic Integrity (applicable to all students).

- The RIG Team actively participate within the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum (RGRIF) which aims to share best practice in the area of research integrity among the Russell Group Universities, and regularly attend other events devoted to research integrity such as an annual conference organised by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

RESEARCH INTEGRITY ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

Training and professional development

- It is the University's policy that all researchers receive appropriate training and development opportunities in order to enable them to conduct research to the highest standards.

- Each University Faculty is regularly organising various induction, training and awareness raising events for both staff and students on research integrity and University policies and procedures. Examples of these include: good research conduct, research ethics and research governance, ethical issues in research with human participants, Good Clinical Practice (GCP), good laboratory practice, animal research ethics, academic integrity, journal authorship, and data management. Training sessions are delivered both in-person and through online training modules. Information and advice is available on Faculties' Intranets and via regular newsletters and blogs.

- Leadership on training and personal development for postgraduate researchers is provided through the University's Doctoral College. The University strongly supports the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and holds the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award for its ongoing work in implementing the Concordat.

- University staff and students can also access a wide range of online skills training including technology, business and creative thinking through the University's subscription to Lynda.com .

Researcher Portal

- The Researcher Portal (Intranet) developed by the Research and Innovation Services (RIS), and launched in 2015, is a one stop portal of information for staff and students on all aspects of the Research Project Lifecycle (from research funding through to enterprise and commercialisation) with 'how to' guidance and signposting to important sources of information both elsewhere in the University and externally. It also contains comprehensive guidance on all aspects of research integrity, ethics and regulatory compliance.

University Library

- The University's Library has developed wide-ranging resources offering advice and support on the University's Research Data Management Policy (RDM), and the Open Access Policy. To promote and foster best practice among staff and research students, library staff have been holding regular lunchtime sessions, briefings and workshops on data management, research outputs storage and general compliance issues. These courses can be booked via Gradbook (open to Post Graduate

Researchers) or Staffbook, and other bespoke training sessions and talks can be arranged on request.

Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC)

- The University's Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC), established in December 2015, meets regularly three times per academic year to provide leadership on policy development in line with the Research Policies Action Plan, and monitoring of implementation of regulatory compliance across the University. Its core responsibility is to foster and develop a culture of research integrity and responsible research conduct amongst the University's academic community. Associate Deans Research who sit on RIGC provide an Annual Research Integrity Report which is considered by RIGC at the beginning of every academic year.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD 1 AUGUST 2017 TO 31 JULY 2018

- Through ERGO II, in academic year 2017/2018, the Faculty Research Ethics Committees reviewed and approved the following number of staff and student research projects:

  - Faculty of Business, Law and Arts: 1429
  - Faculty of Engineering and the Environment: 202
  - Faculty of Health Sciences: 169
  - Faculty of Humanities: 241
  - Faculty of Medicine: 201
  - Faculty of Physical Sciences and Engineering: 187
  - Faculty of Social, Human and Mathematical Sciences: 711
    - ❖ Psychology Sub-committee: 381

- In addition, the RIG Team jointly with the Insurance Team approved 514 ethics submissions and amendments of high risk/complex research projects, and the University of Southampton sponsored studies. Out of those submissions, 453 constituted the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) reviews.

- The University's AWERB reviewed and approved 10 ASPA project licence applications and 15 applications for amendments. It also reviewed and approved 73 applications for non-ASPA research, and 11 project licence holder progress reports.

- As part of the RCUK Funding Assurance Programme, in November 2017 the University successfully undergone an external assurance audit. As part of the pre-visit, self-assessment questionnaire, the University was required to provide information on its processes for governing good research practice, including research integrity and ethics, and investigations into unacceptable research conduct where such research was funded by the RCUK.

- In November 2018 the University's annual Assurance Statements to President and Vice-Chancellor for the period of 1st August 2017 to 31st July 2018 were presented to the University's Audit Committee. The Assurance Statements are signed by Faculty Deans and by the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the Professional Services. They cover a range of financial, legal compliance, health and safety, and environmental questions and specifically obtain assurance on matters of research integrity, ethics, research data management, conflicts of interest and information security.

- In May 2018, Southampton Law School in partnership with HEAL and PCL hosted the 'Big Data and Healthcare' event. Its aim was to explore how Big Data affects health, life sciences and insurance companies, and whether data protection law is the appropriate fix to Big Data ills.

- In June 2018, the University in collaboration with the Science and Engineering South Consortium, hosted a conference exploring the ethical dilemmas of data mining. The conference focused on cross-disciplinary practice of data mining and its implications including privacy issues, ethics, management of data when undertaking mining projects, and linking with the idea of open data.

- In June 2018, after a wide consultation process, the University Research Ethics Committee approved a new [Ethics Policy on Cultural Heritage](#). The Policy aims to help both staff and student researchers working with cultural heritage to consider the impact of their research, including the potential loss or damage to tangible cultural heritage, provenance and acquisition of artefacts, and working with human remains more than 100 years old. In line with the Policy, researchers working with cultural heritage must check whether their study requires an ethics review from their Faculty Research Ethics Committee. Where review is required, it must be obtained through ERGO II before the study can commence.

- Also in June 2018, the Research Integrity and Governance Committee approved the creation of a new role of Research Integrity Champions (RICs) to be appointed for each Faculty in academic year 2018/2019. Research Integrity Champions will be expected to support Faculty Deans and ADRs in championing, promoting and fostering a culture of research integrity within the disciplines relevant to their respective Faculty.

A RICH ENVIRONMENT PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The University has a number of academic lead groups, centres or initiatives which develop and support aspects of ethics, integrity and good research practices including:

- [Health Ethics and Law (HEAL)](#) (established in 2005) is an interdisciplinary research group which explores the nature of health care law and its impact on society. It actively promotes engagement between academics, health professionals and policy makers, and makes substantive contribution to theory and practice. The group holds monthly events hosting external speakers on a variety of ethics topics which are widely attended by staff and postgraduate research students (PGRs).

- [Southampton Ethics Centre (SEC)](#) (launched 2013/2014) brings together a large community of researchers including PGRs working on ethics and ethics related issues across the University. The Centre provides newsletters and information on national events and hosts events locally.

- [Clinical Ethics and Law at Southampton (CELS)](#) (established in 2010) is a multidisciplinary research group that explores the application of ethics and law in clinical practice through conceptual and empirical research, innovative teaching and public dialogue. It is actively engaged in national debates through its work with groups such as ELSI Research Group, Institute of Medical Ethics (IME) and UK Clinical Ethics Network (UKCEN).

- [National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM)](#) (established in 2004) provides training and capacity building activities in social science research methods which includes topics on good research practices and ethical issues. It was set up by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) at the University of Southampton, and is now run in partnership with the University of Manchester and the University of Edinburgh. NCRM also works closely with WISERD in Wales, ARK in Northern Ireland, and the Department of Methodology at the LSE.

EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIPS

To ensure that the University keeps abreast of best practice in matters related to the Concordat and research integrity, it is a member of a number of external bodies including:

- **UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)**
- **Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA)**
- **Understanding Animal Research (UAR)**
- **The Russell Group Research Integrity Forum (RGRIF)**

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIONS OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

When investigating allegations of research misconduct, the University follows its Procedures for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research (applicable to staff), or Regulations Governing Academic Integrity (applicable to all students).

The table below sets out the high level details of investigations and findings in relation to research misconduct covering both staff and post graduate research (PGR) students.

	Number of allegations for which an investigation has been undertaken (Academic Year)	Number of allegations upheld (in whole or in part) (Academic Year)
	2017/2018	**2017/2018**
Fabrication		
Falsification		
Plagiarism	1 (3)	0 (3)
Misrepresentation		
Breach of Ethics	1 (0)	0 (0)
Breach of Duty of Care		
Other e.g. unprofessional behavior.		

*Staff and PGR students numbers are reported. Number outside of brackets reflects staff, and number within brackets indicate PGR students.

** Blank box indicates no cases.