

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2021-22

Context

It is a key requirement that universities in receipt of Research England funding comply with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (2019) published by Universities UK. An annual, public statement providing details of activities that enhance research integrity within universities is integral to this compliance.

The University of Greenwich is committed to the principles outlined in the Concordat. Research integrity has a significant visibility within the University and forms part of the developmental sessions for all academic staff engaging in research activities, delivered by the Research and Enterprise Training Institute (RETI).

Public visibility of our Research Integrity processes is provided by the University [Research Integrity webpage](#) which contains the Code of Practice for Research, details of the staff and student procedures for investigating research misconduct, the Research Ethics Policy, the Ethical Research Collaboration Policy and Academic Regulations for Research Awards. The Postgraduate Research Students' and Supervisors' Handbook includes information on Research Integrity, including the Code of Practice, Research Integrity Checklist, plagiarism and how the University handles allegations.

Update on research integrity oversight

Staff undertaking or supervising research which requires ethical approval are required to complete two online ethics training courses, which must be refreshed every three years. Termly ethics workshops organised through the Research and Enterprise Training Institute are also provided and staff are strongly recommended to attend them. Research ethics is included in the mandatory Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme (PGRDP), the university's approach to personal development and skills training of postgraduate research students, who may also optionally complete the online ethics courses available to staff. Commencing in 2021/22, all applicants to the University Research Ethics Committee have been required to demonstrate that they have completed the online ethics training before their applications will be approved.

The Research Ethics Policy clarifies which procedures should be followed when investigating allegations of research misconduct involving staff, postgraduate research students and undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Communications on how research misconduct allegations are investigated and which procedure should be used were issued to staff during 2021/22 following policy changes approved in the previous academic year.

The University's research ethics procedures were reviewed by the University's internal auditors, BDO LLP, in 2021, with the report being considered by the University's Audit and Risk Committee. The review led to overall ratings of 'substantial' (the highest rating) for design and 'moderate' (the second highest rating) for operational effectiveness, with one medium and two low risk recommendations, all of which have been implemented.

Statement on formal research misconduct investigations

Staff

Allegations of research misconduct against staff are investigated under the University's [Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct](#).

During the year the University concluded a long-running research misconduct investigation relating to the authorship of a scientific journal article, where inclusion of a named individual as author had been alleged to be inappropriate due to lack of significant contribution. The investigation proceeded to the final stage of the University's Procedure and was not upheld by the Formal Investigation Panel on account of it being mistaken. The Panel recommended the development and implementation of a process to be followed where PhD supervision is being changed for any reason to include information about any papers / work in progress to support the resolution of any potential disputes at a later stage.

Postgraduate research students

There were two cases of suspected postgraduate research student misconduct reported via the University's [Student Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#) during 2021/22. Both the allegations related to a potential falsification of data and were investigated at the same time, using the same panel, due to similarities and connections between the cases. At first stage of the Policy and Procedure, the Faculty Research Misconduct Panel determined that the allegations could not be proven and the cases should be dismissed. The panel recommended that university guidance/advice to students could be improved to make students more aware of good practice around the tidying up/cleaning of data, and that students should be careful about cutting/pasting information and deleting information prior to the thesis being examined.

In addition to the above, and as a direct result of these two cases, it was identified that the penalties in the Student Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure need to be updated to ensure there is greater differentiation between the penalties that apply to MPhil and PhD level programmes versus penalties that apply to Master's by Research programmes.

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