

# The University of Nottingham

## Annual Statement on Research Integrity to the Council

---

### 1. Context

This is the University of Nottingham's Second Annual Statement on Research Integrity to the Council.

Following the publication of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity in July 2012, HEFCE made compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity a condition of receiving research grants from July 2013 and requires the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to confirm compliance through the University's annual assurance statement to HEFCE, the 2014/15 assurance statement being due in December 2015.

HEFCE requires, in line with recommendation 5 of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity<sup>1</sup> (the Concordat, hereafter), the University of Nottingham (referred to as 'the University' hereafter) to present a short annual statement to its governing body on the actions and activities the University have undertaken to sustain and further enhance integrity in research and subsequently publically release the annual statement for accountability and assurance on activities undertaken in support of research integrity. In accordance with this recommendation, this is the second annual statement on Research Integrity to the Council (the University of Nottingham's governing body) on the actions and activities the University have undertaken during 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015 to sustain and further enhance research integrity, thus meeting compliance with the HEFCE requirement.

This annual statement provides a wide ranging summary of actions and activities undertaken across the University to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity, including addressing allegations of misconduct and has been developed following the guidelines and suggested structure of the statement from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). Information for this annual statement was collated through a survey of activities supporting research integrity conducted across all academic Schools and relevant Professional Services Departments (Human Resources, Graduate School and Academic Services) in the University. All academic Schools from all 5 faculties have responded to the above-mentioned Survey. This annual statement provides an overarching summary of the responses received from the Schools and Professional Services in line with UKRIO's recommended reporting format.

### 2. Supporting and Strengthening Research Integrity

#### *i. Overview of institution's strategy and objectives to strengthen understanding of research integrity*

The term "research integrity" refers to a range of activities, policies and processes that underpin the responsible conduct of research and serve to protect and value individual researchers, research subjects and the research organisation and contribute to the

---

1

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf>

quality and excellence of research. The University of Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (referred to as 'The Code' hereafter) provides a comprehensive framework for good research conduct and the governance of all research carried out across the University. The Code underpins the University's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, rigour and excellence in all aspects of our research, and for all research to be conducted according to the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks and standards.

*ii. Introduction or revision of research integrity policies and procedures, requirements, process reviews or support mechanisms*

The Code and its implementation are reviewed on an annual basis by the University's Research Ethics Committee and on a triennial basis by consultation across the institution. These reviews take into account changes and recommendations from external research funders, Acts of Parliament and other legislations. All reviews are undertaken by the University's Research Ethics Committee in conjunction with and ratified by the University's Research Board, and coordinated by Research and Graduate Services department.

The Code was reviewed in 2013 to make it consistent with the recommendations and requirements of the Concordat and is the basis for applying research integrity across the University. The Code was further updated in January 2015 as part of the annual review process. A Research Integrity Working Group, chaired by the Director of Research and Graduate Services, has been formed with members representing academic Schools and relevant Professional Services departments to steer the delivery of the requirements of the Concordat in a coherent and consistent manner.

*Examples of revision/introduction:*

In the School of Geography, small changes were made to the UG ethical checklist and the new Staff/PGR research ethics checklist was revised following discussion within the School's ethics committee. This year, for the first time, a 5% penalty was imposed for non-submission of the UG Ethics Proposal forms (and also Risk Assessment forms) at the time of submission of the Dissertation proposal. This resulted in almost 100% submission rate. The majority of outstanding cases related to extensions and extenuating circumstances.

In the School of Sociology and Social Policy, a review and update of its Research Ethics procedures at all levels from UG students to staff as well as a review of School research data management and storage were conducted during 2014-15. As a result, School research Ethics Officer now sits as Cross-faculty member on the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee.

School of Pharmacy Research Ethics Committee is a newly formed committee and has planned a Research Ethics and Integrity workshop for postgraduate students in October 2015.

*iii. Summary of education and training provision, communication or awareness raising activities undertaken by Schools and departments within the University*

A wide range of education, training provision, communication and awareness raising activities are undertaken by Schools across the University.

In all academic Schools across the University, Research Integrity is central to staff induction processes, PhD programmes (via different modules which are delivered as a part of the taught component) and the work of School Ethics Committee, which monitors and ensures high ethical standards across all areas of School research activity. Each School has a Research Ethics Officer with the responsibility of ethics approval, raising awareness of and providing training on research integrity and ethics, writing annual monitoring reports for Research Ethics Committees and keeping the School informed about the University policy on research ethics and integrity. Research integrity forms part of the termly staff meetings agenda for Schools as regular reminder of the importance of Research integrity in their research, especially, in terms of the collection, storage and use of research data. Additionally, University's Research Ethics Officers' Forum provides opportunities for sharing of best practice amongst the Schools across the University.

The University, a member of the UKRIO, has access to training provision of UKRIO on research integrity and organised Research Integrity workshops for academic staff and research students.

Within the teaching and training activities of the Schools, Research Integrity is discussed as part of Research Ethics. Research Integrity is discussed in terms of good scientific practice, for example, observing high standards, compliance, honesty as a researcher, and bad practice, for example, misconduct, secretive working, self-interest. Research Integrity is also discussed in terms of supporting the good elements such as training, codes of conduct, UK Concordat implementation, mentoring, etc. as well as dealing with elements like procedures for investigating misconduct, whistle blowing, journal responses. School Intranet pages containing regularly updated guidelines on Research Ethics and Integrity and module pages in Moodle are also used as means of communication for academic staff, researchers and students.

*For Students:* Lectures on research integrity and ethics are embedded in most Under Graduate (UG) courses, Post Graduate Teaching (PGT) and Post Graduate Research (PGR) training programmes. Ethics talk and ethics 'master-class', presentations on research integrity and ethics and governance procedures to the students are provided by the School's Research Ethics Officer. Hard-copies of the Postgraduate Studies Handbook 2013/14 are given to all post graduates when they start their course, and the Handbook is made available on-line in a continuously updated version. The section on Research Integrity describes to whom, and to what, the University of Nottingham Code applies. Links are provided to the full Code, and a one page Recommended Checklist for Researchers is reproduced. Post Graduate Introductory Talks are given by respective School Director of Postgraduate Research in the first week of the academic year to all students starting postgraduate courses. Research Conduct and Research Ethics, as described in the handbook, are outlined in these talks.

*Examples:*

- All UG modules in the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies include written information, prominently placed at the top of the module pages in Moodle, along with in-class guidance and supervision advice on plagiarism and how to avoid it, including clear communication of penalties for carrying out research using human data without receiving ethics approval, and, all PGR students are

required to take core stage specific modules from the Research Skills Programme of the Social Science and Arts Graduate Centre (SSAGC).

- In the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, all year 2 UG students receive project specific guidance on the ethics of research during their research project selection process, and, year 3 UG research projects and all PG applications go through the same rigorous process of review as all staff research projects. School of Pharmacy offers a compulsory course 'Research Ethics: principles and Practicalities' to PGR students, and, UG students declare each year that they recognize, understand and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. All students receive significant teaching on ethics primarily related to the ethics of clinical practice as foundational for students considering a future career in research.
- The School of Law has a compulsory Research Methods module for all new PGR students that encourage honesty, rigour, openness, care and respect from the outset of planning, designing and delivering their PhDs. In School of Biosciences, new teaching has been embedded with the new MSc courses, e.g. Animal Nutrition MSc.

Schools are engaged in continual update of education and training provision, communication or awareness raising activities undertaken by them. For example, in 2013-14, the School of Life Sciences PGR team has reworked the Skills Portfolio requirements for PGR students to map onto the RCUK/Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and includes a requirement to demonstrate relevant training and understanding of:

- Understand the legal frameworks relevant to research practices and data Management
- Have a basic understanding of data ownership rules as they apply to own research
- Research integrity: understand and adhere to the rules and regulations concerning academics malpractice

This new portfolio requirement applies to all starters from 2014-15 academic year. During 2014-15, PGR supervision forms in the School of Computer Science were updated to include reminder/check on research ethics. School of Geography provides training to all second year undergraduate students in Research Ethics and Risk Assessment as part of the Dissertation Preparation module, and PhD students are required to undertake an ethical review of their project as part of their first year 'upgrade' review.

*For staff:* ethics and integrity website, regular email updates, a regular item on ethics and integrity in School meetings and in the School Research Ethics Committee meetings are various means of raising awareness and training on research integrity within Schools. School Research Ethics Officers play an important role in raising awareness and updating the researchers in the School with information about any change in either the University or the UKRIO policies and procedures.

*Examples:*

- In School of Biosciences, Research Integrity is discussed in terms of good scientific practice (e.g. observing high standards, compliance, honesty as a researcher), bad practice (e.g. misconduct in terms of FFP, secretive working, self-interest, dogmatic) and institutional responses supporting the good (e.g.

training, codes of conduct, UK Concordat implementation, mentoring) and dealing with the bad (e.g. procedures for investigating misconduct, whistle blowing, journal responses).

- In the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, new publications published through Nottingham's e-print repository are peer-reviewed internally and checked that they adhere to the appropriate standards of research integrity as formalized in the Universities UK Concordat. Early Career Researchers and new staff have experienced mentors assisting in the planning and conduct of individual research and its publication, including issues of research integrity. The Faculty of Arts ethics policy and procedures have undergone a thorough review in spring 2015.
- School of Sociology and Social Policy started a new regular School Staff Development series in 2014 to include Research Integrity, Open Access implications, Supervisor's role in the ethics process. Additionally, Ethics form was amended to include flowchart of the procedures for overseas travel, insurance and risk assessment leading to creation of new role of Fieldwork Risk Assessment Officer in the School of Sociology and Social Policy.
- School of Health Sciences promotes research integrity through peer review system; lone worker protocol; guidance on the responsibility of Principal Investigators including payment to research participants; guidance on good practice in research; risk assessment advice.
- School of Pharmacy staff attends the University of Nottingham short courses on "scientific ethics" and "Research ethics and the ethics review process for doctoral research".
- School of Education ran BAICE Workshop on Research ethics in international and comparative education: critical engagement for improved; CRELM Seminar 'New ways of thinking about ethics in education research and practice'; Ethics Workshop on 'Ethical issues of research involving social media and the internet'.
- In the School of Physics and Astronomy, staff in MRI undertake training in Good Clinical Practice provided by the Medical School.

Research integrity training is also integral to many of the central training and professional development programmes provided by the Graduate School for PGR students and early career researchers. It is explicitly addressed in the following courses:

- Introduction to Research Data Management
- Ethics of Human Tissue and Animal Studies in Research
- IPR in the research context
- Global research ethics and integrity
- Good clinical practice
- Research ethics and the ethics review process for doctoral research
- Open access; what researchers need to know
- Dealing with copyright issues in your research
- Exploring ethics in your research

Training for research ethics officers is also provided by Graduate School and the course 'Introduction to the ethics review process' for new ethics officers and panel members, also ran in 2014/15 with 14 attendees.

In total, these courses had 435 attendees over the period 2014-2015. The Graduate School also ran a series of events and activities including an ethics officer's online forum. The Graduate School's Annual Research Staff Conference in March 2015 included the Keynote 'Research Integrity: Why all the fuss? - Dr Andrew Rawnsley, Research Governance and Training Manager, Teesside University; Advisor, UK Research Integrity Office and Council, Association for Research Ethics', and was attended by c 160 staff.

*v. Any research into research integrity or related fields, such as research ethics, undertaken by members of the School*

There is a growing number of researchers across different disciplines in the University who are engaging in research and studies on Research Integrity on related fields. *Eight* Schools have reported to be undertaking direct research on research integrity or related fields. For example,

- Researchers in the School of Sociology and Social Policy continue to engage in studying and implementing 'Responsible Research and Innovation' (RRI) which is a central component of the Synthetic Biology Research Centre at the University. As part of the Making Science Public programme of research, work is conducted on 'responsive research'. RRI is a core interest and theme emerging through a number of the projects in the Making Science Public programme. Wellcome Trust funded research is conducted that explored research integrity in the context of biomedical research public-private partnerships.
- The School of Geography is active in research that sets out 'best practices' for the community to adopt – e.g. on the best practices in mapping from remotely sensed imagery for rigorous and credible support of major international policies such as UN REDD+.
- The Nottingham University Business School is actively engaged in research into innovation, based mostly in the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility.
- The School of Biosciences hosts the Centre for Applied Bioethics. This research group comprises of two academic members of staff, two honorary professors and one honorary lecturer, four research fellows / post-doctoral researchers and four PhD students. These researchers are conducting research in the field of applied bioethics focused on animal, agri-food and environmental management issues. Some of the current projects funded by The Leverhulme Trust, EC FP7, Wellcome Trust and BBSRC are examining themes of (i) Harm/Benefit in Ethical Assessment, (ii) the relationship between Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and Research Ethics, (iii) development of Ethical Tools to support decision-making in (animal) REC processes, (iv) openness and transparency in bioscience research. Other researchers in the School who have social science training are interested in research ethics questions related to their research topics (e.g. dietetics) but at present these are not externally funded projects.

- The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science is actively engaged in research into bioethics, this work is centrally concerned across a variety of fields. For example, work in 2014/5 funded by the Leverhulme Trust (SVMS) explores the relationship between transparency and research using animals and involved interviews with key UK stakeholders. This project has led to a peer reviewed publication in a leading international journal, and several outreach activities.
- School of Medicine is actively engaged in researching Medical ethics.
- The School of Politics and international Relations currently provides training in research Ethics for the University's ESRC Doctoral Training Centre and in the context of the Professional Development Module for first year PGR students.
- The School of Computer Science is actively engaged in research into Ethical Implications of HCI, based in part on the Mixed Reality Lab's history of collaboration with artists and performers.

*vi. A description of internal monitoring and audit processes, including information on any revisions or developments*

The University Research Board has overall responsibility for monitoring research integrity, including application of the Code. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) undertakes an annual monitoring review of all ethics reviews and committees operated by Schools and Faculties. The current monitoring requires the annual collection of qualitative and quantitative data from Schools by Research and Graduate Services. These are then reviewed by a sub-group of UREC, who highlight any issues and make suggestions for new policies that need to be developed, identify training requirements, highlight good practice and areas for any other development. UREC receives a detailed report from the sub-group and signs-off the process. The University Research Integrity Working Group is currently responsible for monitoring activities in support of research integrity.

Risks associated with managing University research are considered in the Internal Audit Service (IAS) annual planning cycle. Audit coverage to date has focused on the overall governance framework for research, including policies relating to research conduct and ethics and responsibilities of key groups and committees.

### **3. Addressing research misconduct**

*i. Confirmation that the University has processes for reporting and investigating of allegations of research misconduct*

The University has relevant policies and procedures to respond to research misconduct; namely Regulations of Academic Misconduct, Staff Disciplinary Procedure, Code of Discipline for Students and Fraud Policy. These procedures have appropriate principles and mechanisms to ensure that investigations are thorough and fair, carried out in a transparent and timely manner, and protected by appropriate confidentiality.

These procedures can be found at:

Research Misconduct Policy for research student:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academic-services/qualitymanual/assessmentandawards/academic-misconduct.aspx>

Academic Misconduct Policy:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academic-services/qualitymanual/assessmentandawards/academic-misconduct.aspx>

Academic Misconduct Procedure:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academic-services/documents/qmdocuments/regulations-on-academic-misconduct---academic-misconduct-committee-hearings.pdf>

The University also has a number of resources on research misconduct which can be found at the workspace intranet pages for staff use.

As all these procedures and policies are reported into different administrative services, the Director of Research and Graduate Services has been identified as the single point of contact for reporting allegations of research misconduct and the Research Integrity Officer for the University as part of the revised procedure, who will refer these to the appropriate procedure dependent on the nature of the allegation.

*ii. Brief anonymised summary data on any formal investigations conducted by your institution into allegations of research misconduct*

Between 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015, formal investigations were conducted by the University on 1 member of staff for allegations of research misconduct.

Between 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015, due to confidentiality and Data Protection Act and the potential risk of getting the student(s) identified, the number of formal investigations conducted by the University on Postgraduate Research students for allegations of research misconduct is not disclosed in this report.

The University confirms that it fulfils all requirements to make reports to external bodies, including regulatory and professional bodies, regarding the initiation or completion of a formal investigation.

#### **4. External Engagement**

*i. Collaborations or initiatives with external organisations to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues.*

There are increasing numbers of researchers across a range of disciplines who have collaborations with or are engaged in initiatives with external organisations to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues. Research Integrity was one of the areas discussed at the 2015 Meeting of the Universities<sup>21</sup> Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies Meeting, Shanghai, April 2015 and at the meeting of their Research Collaboration Group, May 2015 at the University of Nottingham. *Nine* Schools have reported to have either collaboration, initiatives or memberships with external organisations. For example,

In Engineering, the Human Factors Research Group has close affiliation with Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors which informs work where human participants are involved in research.

Researchers in the School of Biosciences were involved in hosting a discussion event for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on "The culture of scientific research".

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science were involved with setting up LASSH, a new collaboration between academia and stakeholders (including government, charities and funders) to discuss key questions related to the use of animals as laboratory models. This involved workshops and joint publication writing to consider questions of ethical responsibilities in laboratory animal welfare and ethics. In 2014/5 staff member from the School acted as a guest editor for a special issue of an international journal (Animals) on the ethics of animal research policy and practice.

In Humanities a large proportion of the History Department are Fellows of the Royal Historical Society. They are also members of the REF2014 sub-panels, of the Ethics Committee of Helen and Douglas House, a hospice for children and young people and staff on the peer review college for the AHRC.

School of Education ran BAICE Workshop on Research ethics in international and comparative education: critical engagement for improved.

Geography has an external member on their Research Ethics committee to provide a non HEI perspective on their review activities. They have staff on RCUK, peer review colleges (including as panel chair).

Sociology and Social Policy have members of their professional associations with interest in Research Integrity and Ethics such as Social Policy Association, British, European and International Sociological Associations, European Association for the Study of Science and Technology, Society for the Social Studies of Science

Medicine has links with the National Patient Safety Agency Ethics Committee and the Trent Research Ethics Committee.

Researchers in the School of Health Sciences hold positions which impact on research integrity, for example, roles on editorial boards of journals, membership of funding bodies (NIHR, specific charities), membership of professional bodies.

*ii. Details of staff or student contributions or involvement in external events and activities in support of Research Integrity such as: Public Engagement Events, Conferences.*

Six Schools and Graduate School have reported to have either contributed to or be involved in external events and activities in support of research integrity. For example,

The School of Veterinary Medicine Staff attended Circling the Square II a high profile conference hosted by the University of Nottingham. The conference critically considered the relationship between academic research, the media and policy making, including discussion of research integrity.

In Sociology and Social Policy, researchers were invited to participate in the Woodrow Wilson Center (Washington DC) workshop on the 21st century innovation ecosystem in genomics and biology and with responsible innovation as one of the themes

In Geography, researchers made a number of presentations at international conferences (e.g. a number of the Geoscience theme presented at the INQUA congress in Nagoya, Japan in July 2015 and at the International Conference of Historical Geography, London, July). Many staff also serves on journal editorial boards, often as Editor or Editor-in-chief, and so often deal with a range of ethical issues (e.g. dual submissions, unattributed copying).

Engineering participated in Engineering Young Entrepreneurs Scheme. They also participated in STS 'Circling the Square' conference.

Members of Biosciences was involved the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (Tuesday 9 September 2014) discussion event on "The culture of scientific research" hosted by the University.

Life Sciences ran several public engagement events with particular focus on Responsible Research Innovation through the Synthetic Biology Research Centre.

Members of Graduate School were involved in Vitae International Researcher Development Conference, "Divergence and convergence in International research cultures and practices: implications for researcher developers" in Manchester on 9-10 September 2014, as well as in Going Global Conference, 'Navigating international research collaborations' in London on 1-2 June 2015.

*iii. Memberships of, or collaborations with, organisations with a particular interest in research integrity and related issues.*

Nine Schools and the Graduate School reported memberships or collaboration with organisations with a particular interest in research integrity and related issues. For example,

Researchers in Cultures, Languages and Area Studies have memberships with national and international subject associations of their various disciplines, which have particular interest in research integrity at national/international level.

In Engineering, researchers have membership of Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors, Institute of Mechanical Engineers, Royal Academy of Engineering, Institution of Engineering and Technology, Institute of Chemical Engineers, Royal Institute of British Architects, Engineering Council.

In the School of Medicine, researchers have memberships with the Patient Safety Agency Ethics Committee.

Member of School of English is a member of the AHRC Council.

In Geography, members serve on journal editorial boards and so linked to major publishers/learned societies, also contribute to RCUK work as reviewers, panel members and at times as panel chair.

Member of Nottingham University Business School is involved ARMA Special Interest Group (SIG) for research ethics and research integrity.

In Sociology and Social Policy, staff and students have memberships with Social Policy Association; British, European and International Sociological Associations; European Association for the Study of Science and Technology; and Society for the Social Studies of Science.

Staff members from Biosciences are members of The Nutrition Society, Society for Applied Microbiology, Society for Experimental Biology, British Ecological Society, British Society of Animal Science (BSAS).

Member of School of Health Sciences is a member of the Nottingham NHS Research Ethics Committee.

The University Graduate School is a member of UK Council for Graduate Education, Vitae.

### **Conclusion**

The annual statement on research integrity is a valuable opportunity for internal review of strategies, processes, activities and reflection. This annual statement on research integrity to the Council on the actions that the University have undertaken to sustain and further enhance research integrity confirms compliance with the recommendation of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the requirements of HEFCE.