Manchester Metropolitan University

MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY ANNUAL STATEMENT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2015-2016

Background

The Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity was developed to provide a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. As part of the HEFCE Annual Assurance Statement, UK Higher Education Institutions are required to confirm compliance with the Concordat as a condition of the HEFCE Grant for 2016-2017. Compliance with the Concordat requires that organisations present to their governing body a short annual report that provides:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
- assurances of processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct, processes which are transparent, robust, fair, and of continued appropriateness for the needs of the organisation;
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

This report was approved by the Board of Governors on the 25th November 2016 and will be publicly available on the University's Research Governance web page to provide assurance that measures are being taken to support consistently high standards of research integrity. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange is responsible for research governance within the University.

Statement for 2015/2016

During 2015/2016, the University has undertaken the following actions and activities to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity.

Ethics and Research Governance Managers

We have increased our resources by expanding our Ethics and Research Governance Team this year. Our three Ethics and Research Governance Managers will support the implementation of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Online Ethics System

We are making a significant investment in a system that will standardise ethics applications across the University. The University has made a substantial financial commitment to secure the purchase of a new online research ethics application system. This system will streamline the ethics approval process, whilst also providing appropriate guidance to researchers through links to current legislation, related Manchester Metropolitan University guidance and Standard Operating Procedures

(SOPs). The requirements of the system are currently in development, with an expectation that the system will be live in April 2017.

Research Integrity Training

To drive forward the University's commitment to research integrity, a research integrity training module has been purchased and has been rolled out across the University. The module is available for use by all staff and students, but is mandatory for all Postgraduate Research Students. Plans are in place to make completion of research integrity training mandatory for all research staff across the University.

The University Graduate School also runs a classroom workshop 'Introduction to Research Ethics' twice yearly as part of the Research Skills Development programme.

Research Ethics and Governance Committees

A review of the University's committee structure took place during Summer 2016, resulting in a number of changes which were implemented at the start of the 2016/2017 academic year. The changes included the discontinuation of the Academic Ethics Committee and the establishment of the Research Ethics and Governance (chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange) and Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committees. The new structure aims to standardise and streamline the processes to enhance research integrity across the University.

Policies, Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

During 2015/2016 a number of SOPs have been prepared and published across the areas below. These ensure good research conduct and consistency across all research taking place at the University:

- Document Control SOP
- Protocol Development SOP
- Patient Information Sheet and Consent Form Development SOP
- Case Report Form Development SOP
- Ethics and External Approvals SOP
- Study Master File and Site-File Set Up SOP
- Sponsorship SOP
- Informed Consent for Research SOP
- Protocol Deviations, Violations and Adverse Event Reporting SOP
- Monitoring and Audit SOP

All of the above are accessible via the University's Ethics and Governance web pages.

Processes for Handling Allegations of Misconduct

The Procedure for the Investigation for Misconduct in Research provides assurance that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of research misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

Formal Investigations of Research Misconduct

High-level Statement on Research Misconduct

Following the Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research:

- Two cases of potential staff research misconduct were informally considered during the academic year 2015/16. These did not proceed to formal investigations of research misconduct.
- One formal investigation of research misconduct in one Postgraduate student during 2015/16. This investigation is currently in the process of formal investigation.

Research Integrity Statement 2016-17

The next Annual Statement will be published in November 2017.