

University of Warwick

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2016-17

The University's Research Governance & Ethics Committee is responsible to University Council and Senate for all institutional matters pertaining to Research Integrity. The Chair of the Research Governance & Ethics Committee for the period 2016-17 has been Professor Lawrence Young (Academic Vice President) and the Secretary has been Ms Jane Prewett (Deputy Director, Research & Impact Services, and Head of Research Governance).

During the reporting period, the University has demonstrated its continued commitment to high standards of research integrity, by progressing a number of structural, process, and training developments. These include the creation of a new central Research Governance & Quality Assurance Team, to provide consolidated expert practitioner support to all academic departments, comprising clinical, biomedical, humanities and social sciences research.

This new team is situated within Research & Impact Services and one of its responsibilities is the provision of central secretariat support to the Research Governance & Ethics Committee, the Sponsorship Committee, the Biomedical & Scientific Research Ethics Committee, and the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, and during the review period it has worked with each Committee Chair on a number of discrete projects.

These have included, for the Sponsorship Committee, working in close collaboration with the Warwick Medical School and the Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, the development of new processes for the application, review, and oversight of sponsorship applications. In addition, under the leadership of a new Committee Chair, a new membership has been recruited to the Committee, consisting of academics and practitioner experts selected to ensure a wide range of skills are represented, such as, statistics, NHS R&D experience, pharmacy expertise, health sciences, participant recruitment, and with expertise on matters pertaining to insurance, contracts, and oversight.

The Sponsorship Committee meets on a monthly basis, and is chaired by the Chair of Faculty (Medicine). It receives and considers sponsorship applications from across all four Faculties of the University. In addition, the Committee delivers an institutional oversight function, receiving regular quality assurance updates from the University's Clinical Trials Unit.

As part of the University's continued investment into this area, during the review period an investment was made into the purchase of Q-Pulse, an electronic Quality Management System that is recognised across the sector as providing a high quality, and efficient system for the development, review, and agreement of Standard Operating Procedures for Clinical Research Governance. The University's investment into this new capital infrastructure has supported a more collaborative approach to this area, working within the University's new Sponsorship framework.

The Research Governance & Ethics Committee has continued to take a leadership role with regards to Research Integrity training and development, supporting the University-wide take up of the Epigeum Research Integrity online training module, and initiating an innovative approach to Research Integrity training, via the development of a series of illustrated case studies that will be trialled and launched in the next review period. In addition, the Committee has facilitated two 'Research Integrity' information and briefing sessions, these being attended by administrators and academics, and ensuring that there is an ongoing dialogue with regards to external policy and sector developments in Research Integrity at the University.

Mr Jamie Arrowsmith, Programme Manager, Universities UK and Chair of the Research Integrity Concordat Working Group, in January spoke about the Progress Report on the Concordat and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology POSTnote on Integrity in Research and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology Research Integrity Inquiry that had just been launched.

Mr James Parry, Chief Executive, UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) presented in June on good practice in investigations of research misconduct, drawing on UKRIO's extensive work in this area and based on recent developments in research integrity. This included an update with regards to the recent Parliamentary scrutiny of Research Integrity and a discussion around the UKRIO guidance document, 'Good practice in research: internet mediated research'.

Training has also been a key priority for the new central Research Governance & Quality Assurance Team, which has delivered a series of group and 1-1 training sessions, to staff and students, from a wide range of academic departments, and including researchers and support staff. The Team has also delivered a number of informal training sessions as part of a regular programme of information sharing within the central research office. Support to deliver the programme of training events has been provided via the University's Learning & Development Centre.

The University has supported the newly established Research Governance & Quality Assurance Team to attend a series of external courses, relevant to both clinical and non-clinical research integrity matters. This is to ensure that an 'up to date' knowledge of relevant regulatory requirements and relevant sector developments is present within the Team and is therefore available to all University researchers, and to the members of the relevant University Committees. The Team will be supported to maintain this level of current knowledge going forward, having been provided with a budget for training and development to ensure the University remains connected across the sector to secure a forward thinking approach.

This connected approach is also evidenced by the University's active membership of the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum, which is active from a policy perspective and, during the review period responded to the 'Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology Research Integrity Inquiry' and the 'Revised RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct'. In addition, the University continues to subscribe to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

As such, the University responds in a timely and appropriate manner to ongoing sector development, and during the review period has added into its standard pre-award research support processes and research ethics application forms, some additional questions in respect to 'Prevent', and with regard to 'security sensitive research material'.

With respect to the requirement to report formal investigations of research misconduct, the University can confirm that there have been three formal investigations of research misconduct arising in 2015-16. These have been progressed under the University's Policy for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.

In summary, the University takes seriously its commitment towards the principles outlined in the Concordat, and in collaboration with its academic community has been able to deliver a number of key projects and initiatives during the review period.