



2021/22 Annual report on research integrity

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| <p>Outcome requested:</p> | <p>The Audit and Risk Committee is asked to note the update and issues raised on research integrity. The paper also provides an update on the number and status of research misconduct cases over 2021/22.</p> |
| <p>Executive Summary:</p> | <p>Key developments in research integrity in 2021/22 include the appointment of a Research Integrity and Assurance Officer who started work at the beginning of the year.</p> <p>In October 2022, the Senate approved the new Research Misconduct policy for the University which codifies the investigative process that should be followed. Furthermore, it clarifies that it is the responsibility of the investigative panel appointed by the Research Integrity Committee to determine whether research misconduct has occurred.</p> <p>A new Research Integrity Committee has been appointed, following approval from the Research and Innovation Board (RIB). The Committee is chaired by Professor Andrew Livingston, the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) and is comprised of the three faculty research deans or their representatives, a representative from Governance and Legal Services, a student member, and a senior manager from the Joint Research Management Office.</p> <p>As of September 2022, new doctoral students are required to complete a core research integrity module on the Epigeum platform. The Doctoral School are responsible for implementing and monitoring this.</p> <p>We report 2 investigations into Research Misconduct in 2021/22 both of which have been concluded. In one case, it was found that the researcher recruited his own children to the study. The respondent was requested undergo the appropriate training and receive formal mentoring to ensure the right level of understanding of research ethics.</p> |
| <p>QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]</p> | <p>Research and Innovation Enabling Plan Research Quality and Income KPIs</p> |
| <p>Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:</p> | <p>Concordat on Research Integrity Various funders grant conditions The National Security Investment Act (2021)</p> |
| <p>Strategic Risks:</p> | <p>10 Maintain/increase research quality 13 Improve reputation</p> |

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| Equality Impact Assessment: | There are no specific equality and diversity issues that arise. |
| Subject to prior and onward consideration by: | Prior consideration by: Queen Mary Senior Executive Team |
| Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA | No, a version of the document will be uploaded to the external QM website in meeting our commitments under the Concordat |
| Timing: | Annual report to the Committee |
| Author: | James Patterson, Research Integrity and Assurance Officer |
| Date: | 22 nd September 2021 |
| Senior Management/External Sponsor | Andrew Livingston, Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) |

Report from the Research Integrity and Assurance Officer

Developments in Research Integrity at Queen Mary in 2022:

The University appointed a Research Integrity and Assurance Officer, who began work at the beginning of the year. The broad purpose of this role is to promote a culture of research integrity and to manage the research misconduct process.

In October 2022, the Senate approved the new Research Misconduct policy for the University, which replaces the previous one. The new policy codifies the investigative process that should be followed. Furthermore, it clarifies that it is the responsibility of the investigative panel appointed by the Research Integrity Committee to determine whether research misconduct has occurred. If applicable, a separate disciplinary panel would decide whether this was actionable. Before its approval, the policy was reviewed by Dr Rhys Morgan, of the University of Cambridge, who is an expert on the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*.

A new Research Integrity Committee has been appointed, following approval from the Research and Innovation Board (RIB). The Committee is chaired by Professor Andrew Livingston, the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) and is comprised of the three faculty research deans or their representatives, a representative from Governance and Legal Services, a student member, and a senior manager from the Joint Research Management Office. Its broad remit, as specified by its terms of reference, is to develop policy and to oversee research misconduct investigations. The Committee held its first meeting in October 2022 and discussed matters such as authorship and research data management, as well as reflecting on recent misconduct cases.

As of September 2022, new doctoral students are required to complete a core research integrity module on the Epigeum platform. The Doctoral School are responsible for implementing and monitoring this. Faculties, departments, and research centres have been contacted and offered Research Integrity training. Consequently, two introductory slide presentations have been delivered with others scheduled.

Investigation of research misconduct complaints in 2022:

1. QMRI-01

In February 2022, the University received a complaint about a project from a former collaborator. Much of the original complaint pertained to contractual issues, such as payment of collaborators and ownership of intellectual property, rather than research integrity. However, there was also an allegation of research bias, which the complainant was asked to provide substantiation of.

Over a period of some three months, the contractual and financial arrangements for the study were reviewed along with its ethics approval. Consequently, a financial agreement was forged between the University and the complainant to cover payment for contributions.

With regards to the ethics approval, the Research Integrity Committee determined there had not been a breach. However, the PI was asked to ensure, in future ethics applications, that all engagements are appropriately accounted for and to undertake appropriate training in procurement.

One particularly striking feature, in this matter, is the entwinement of research integrity with other issues. The resolution required a significant degree of collaboration between professional services teams.

2. QMRI-02:

In March 2022, a journal editor contacted the University regarding the proofs for a manuscript submitted by a staff researcher. They deduced that the researcher had conducted an experiment without obtaining the required ethical approval. The experiment involved the recruitment of children to play a language game. An examination of the relevant correspondence indicated that the experiment had been conducted before the researcher submitted an ethics application, that was rejected. Furthermore, the correspondence suggested that the researcher had recruited their own children.

A Named Investigator was appointed to conduct a preliminary investigation. To this end, the Named Investigator reviewed the relevant documentation and interviewed the respondent, who confirmed the timeline of events.

The Named Investigator was of the view that while the involvement of the children in this low-risk study was unethical, there was no reason to believe they had been harmed by it. The situation arose because the researcher had an insufficient understanding of research ethics.

Given their conclusions, the Named Investigator recommended that the respondent should undergo appropriate training and receive formal mentoring, particularly with respect to research ethics. The Research Integrity Committee agreed to accept these recommendations.

This case was dealt with relatively swiftly and efficiently, producing a judicious outcome. Therefore, it was not necessary to convene a panel after the preliminary investigation. Arguably, the case illustrates the need for more research ethics training.

3. Issues arising from a previously investigated case:

Further to a misconduct investigation that concluded in 2021, a researcher was asked to approach 20 journals or funders to ensure there had been no potential misunderstanding about data presentation. There is still an ongoing discussion with one of these. Further analysis has been carried out and supplied. Consequently, the lead author will decide whether a correction to a publication is required.

Other considerations:

The co-chairs of the new national Committee for Research Integrity (CORI), Professors Andrew George and Rachael Goberman-Hill were appointed at the beginning of the year. CORI was formed to promote research integrity following a report by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee in 2018. The broad remit of CORI, which is comprised of representatives from across the sector, is to develop a strategy to be delivered through collaboration between research organisations. The Committee, which held its inaugural meeting in May 2022 is being temporarily supported by the UKRI secretariat. Dame Ottoline Leyser, the Chief Executive of UKRI, gave evidence to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Reproducibility Inquiry in February 2022. She indicated CORI will seek to develop some straightforward measures of research integrity. The aspiration is to create a shared language across leading to solutions.

In September 2022, the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum discussed the Trusted Research agenda. This refers to due diligence initiatives, required by the UK government, to

protect the integrity of international research collaborations. An important consideration are threats to national security posed by hostile states. Funders such as UKRI have specified their own expectations of grant holders in relation to this. Arguably, there is some variation between institutions in their approaches to delivering on Trusted Research. However, there appears to be a consensus that raising awareness of risks among researchers is vital. Queen Mary will shortly be introducing a dedicated online training module for its researchers. There is also discussion within the Joint Research Management Office (JRMO) about delivering training presentations that integrate research integrity, research ethics and Trusted Research.