

Summary report on research integrity (2019-20)

1. General update

The UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity was revised in October 2019, primarily in response to recommendations from the Parliamentary Science and Technology Committees' report of that year, which concluded that the sector's compliance could be strengthened and a national committee formed to oversee implementation.

Our commitments under the Concordat remain the same but some new accountability requirements have been added. By 25 October 2020, we are required to:

1. Identified **a named point of contact** who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity, and ensure that contact details for this person are kept up to date and are publicly available on our website (www.qmul.ac.uk/research/principles-strategy/policies).
2. Provided **a named point of contact** or recognised an appropriate third party to act as confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under our auspices (www.qmul.ac.uk/research/principles-strategy/policies).
3. Published an **annual statement** on how we are meeting the research integrity requirements of the revised concordat (**by continuing to report details of research integrity and misconduct investigations**).

We are seeking to go well beyond basic compliance. Over summer 2020, we workshopped ideas that would enable us to provide the best environment on research integrity for our researchers. A range of actions have been identified for implementation over 2020/21 (e.g. the advice and training provided to PhD students and researchers, bringing disparate information together in a coherent Code of Practice). We will continue to present a short annual statement to the governing body which will be published on our website.

2. Summary of research misconduct investigations (2019-20)

Cases of potential research misconduct reported to the end of July 2020: Five

In April 2019, the University was notified of allegations that an article had been published without properly acknowledging the contributions made by others. The article was redrafted in August 2019 as per the conditions of the underlying grant.

In November 2019, we received a request for an investigation into the underlying data for a series of publications by a Queen Mary research group. The complaint involved an overseas collaborator and a considerable body of technical data. At this time, the investigation has not concluded, in part due to the different policies and procedures governing the work of the overseas collaborator. The case remains open until both the University's and overseas institution's investigations are concluded.

In November, Queen Mary was copied into a complaint made to the University of Sheffield about attempts by a researcher to confound the effects of a randomised clinical trial. The University of Sheffield concluded it would not investigate the complaint, as the member of staff was not aligned to them at the time of the allegation. Our position is the same.

In March 2020, a complaint of research misconduct was made against a PhD student. This was investigated and found not to be misconduct. The case was closed.

In April 2020, the University's Ethics of Research Committee escalated a potential issue of research misconduct by a fourth year undergraduate on research with a vulnerable group. The research team had been advised to submit their research topic and survey material for guidance and approval. The survey went ahead without approval from the Committee. An investigation was carried out by an independent investigator who concluded that not research misconduct had occurred but that good practice had not been followed. The issue was remedied by the data not being used in the research.

Cases with continuing ramifications: One

3. Other considerations

In last year's report, it had been noted that research funders were increasingly requesting information regarding investigations of any ongoing cases of misconduct before they were fully investigated. The issue has not progressed due to the pandemic. The Russell Group is working with funders to identify an appropriate way forward.

The UK government will be providing further information this year on their "Trusted Research" agenda. Trusted research aims to secure the integrity of the UK's open system of research collaboration whilst improving understanding and safeguarding of critical national infrastructure, intellectual property generated by UK Institutions, and protecting research from undue interference from foreign nationals or governments. With Queen Mary's Global Engagement Team, we are developing a proposal to enhance our governance and increase awareness amongst academics of the risks and support available. We are also redesigning our approvals processes for high-risk partnerships, creating better signposting of the risks and proposing a new level of scrutiny at Partnerships Board.

Sharon Ellis, Director of Research and Business Development

18th September 2020