



Statement on Research Integrity 2019/20

As an outstanding UK research-intensive university, the University of Exeter recognises that the highest standards of scientific, scholarly and professional integrity must be maintained and promoted. We aim to give due consideration to the ethical, social and environmental issues arising from our activities and are actively working to ensure that research integrity is embedded in the University's research culture and environment.

We are committed to acting in accordance with the principles described in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and have developed a policy framework which aims to maintain the safety, rights, welfare and dignity of all members of the University and their research participants, and to maintain public trust:

- Ethics Policy
- Research Ethics Framework
- Policy on working with animals
- Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research
- Misconduct in Research
- Codes of Conduct
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy

In 2019/20, actions undertaken to promote and embed research integrity included the following:

- The University's Research Ethics Framework was substantially revised and approved, alongside the procurement of an online research ethics application and review system. The framework revision and use of an institution-wide system is intended to further strengthen common standards and to provide additional assurance on the high quality of ethical review.
- Regular training sessions for research and CPD students, early career researchers, academic and professional services staff were developed and delivered, alongside introductory online training modules and bespoke teaching for groups of undergraduate and masters students.
- An additional programme of induction for Research Ethics Committee members was introduced and the annual training day for ethics committee members held successfully. Feedback was sought on all sessions delivered and remains very positive.
- Guidance and support for researchers and research ethics committees was developed and provided as quickly as possible following the onset of the pandemic and suspension of some research. We continue to work to ensure that ethical and regulatory implications are addressed in the current circumstances.
- Additional training, templates and guidance on data protection and online research for researchers were provided and promoted, along with the provision of advice and data management plan review for individual research projects where required.

- Active involvement in national networks and events to share best practice and promote research integrity, for example as part of the Russell Group research integrity forum and national research integrity forum.
- The University agreed to become an institutional supporter of the UK Reproducibility Network; the appointment of an academic lead is underway and a local group of researchers continued to work on related initiatives.
- University groups on the responsible use of metrics, researcher development and open research continue to develop proposals to enhance the research culture at the University. The University became a signatory to DORA and to the Concordat to support the career development of researchers. The leads on research culture and research integrity work closely together to prioritise and develop plans on embedding a positive research culture.
- The University Ethics Committee and the Dual Assurance portfolio on Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance continues to provide oversight of activities and assurance for the University's governing body.
- The University's internal auditors reported on the Institution's readiness for compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. A number of areas of good practice were identified along with some suggested actions to enhance work already underway.
- Ongoing implementation of improved research governance and regulatory compliance processes, particularly on health research sponsorship, clinical trials, human tissue and animal research.
- The Research Ethics and Governance Team continue to work with colleagues across multiple departments and teams on, for example, compliance, quality assurance frameworks and data management.
- Resource for research governance and compliance is provided on a recurrent basis

During the year, a review of the circumstances surrounding a correction to a published paper took place; no further action will be taken. At time of writing, an allegation of research misconduct has been received; a preliminary review has been set in motion but additional information is awaited from the complainant. Two investigations on plagiarism involving postgraduate research students are underway with outcomes awaited.

Advice and support has been provided in response to a number of researcher queries, for example in relation to authorship practice. Varied routes for researchers to seek advice and for reporting concerns are promoted although this will be a target for further work in 2020/21.

The procedures for investigating and reporting misconduct are considered to be transparent and generally appropriate to the needs of the organisation. The Universities Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research and the Misconduct in Research process is currently under review (summer 2020) in order to ensure that it meets the requirements of the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity and reflects lessons learned. This includes, for example, ensuring that any informal action taken at a departmental level to provide mentoring and development for researchers in response to concerns on research practice is recorded and monitored.

A programme of ongoing improvement is in place to ensure that continued progress towards our all our goals is maintained. Developments, risks and progress are regularly monitored by

the Dual Assurance Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance portfolio and by the University Ethics Committee.

For further information on research integrity at the University of Exeter, please contact the [Research Ethics and Governance Team](#)

GMS v2.0 18th June 2020;

Approved by: University of Exeter Council July 2020