The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

Annual Statement 2018/19

Background

1. The University of Wolverhampton (henceforth The University) is committed to maintaining the highest levels of research integrity and adheres to the five principles of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*:

1. Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
2. Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
3. Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
4. Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct, should they arise
5. Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

The University's senior lead for research integrity is the Dean of Research (Professor Silke Machold), and the University's administrative lead is the Research Policy Officer (Ms Jill Morgan).

2. This annual statement reports on the University's compliance with the principles of the Concordat in the academic year 2018/19.

Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity

3. In line with the Concordat, all researchers[1] at the University are required to conduct research in accordance with the core elements of research integrity, namely honesty in all aspects of research, rigour in line with prevailing disciplinary standards and norms, transparency and open communication, and care and respect for all participants in and subjects of research.

4. The University provides Ethics Guidance (https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/about-our-research/policies-and-ethics/ethics-guidance/) to enable all researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours. The Handbook for Ethical Approval and Practice Procedures, which is revised annually and published on the University website, summarises good practice in relation to nurturing research integrity and outlines systems and procedures in relation to upholding research integrity.

Conduct of research according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

[1] We follow the guidance of the UK Research Integrity Office (2009) and define researchers as "…any people who conduct research, including but not limited to: as an employee; as an independent contractor or consultant; as a research student; as a visiting or emeritus member of staff; or as a member of staff on a joint clinical or honorary contract."

5. The Handbook for Ethical Approval and Practice Procedures outlines the policies and processes related to ethical approval. It is made available to researchers at induction and through ethics training.

6. In addition to the Handbook, the University has a number of policies and procedures which support the University's commitment to research integrity. We have reorganised our website to group all relevant policies under 'Research Policies, Procedures and Guidelines' https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/ for ease of use.

- Policy Statements on Equality and Diversity https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/policies-and-governance/policy-statement/
- Transparency Policy (including Anti-bribery, conflicts of interest, Fraud and Whistleblowing) https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/corporate-compliance/transparency/
- Data Protection https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/corporate-compliance/data-protection/
- Freedom of Speech https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/freedom-of-speech-/
- Health and Safety Policies https://www.wlv.ac.uk/staff/services/hsd/policies-procedures--forms/
- Intellectual Property Policy https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/office-of-the-vice-chancellor/documents/Intellectual-Property-Policy---Version-3---approved-July-2016.pdf
- Publications Policy, including Open Access https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/office-of-the-vice-chancellor/documents/University-of-Wolverhampton-Publications-Policy.pdf
- Policy for Use of Human Tissue for Research https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/about-our-research/policies-and-ethics/ethics-guidance/use-of-human-tissue-for-research/uow-policy-for-use-of-human-tissue-for-research/
- NHS Ethics https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/about-our-research/policies-and-ethics/ethics-guidance/nhs-research/
- Data Management Policy (including open data) https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/
- University of Wolverhampton Research Indicators (Metrics) Policy https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/
- Academic Authorship Policy https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/
- Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research (Staff) https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/

Embedding a culture of research integrity

7. Oversight of research integrity lies with the University Ethics Committee (UEC), a sub-committee of the University Research Committee. The UEC is chaired by the Dean of Research, who is also the senior institutional lead for research integrity.

8. Each Faculty has a Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC), a sub-committee of the Faculty Research Committee, which scrutinises and approves ethical submissions by researchers at subject level, and provides additional guidance in respect of subject-specific ethical requirements. FECs have lay person membership. Annually, each FEC provides a standardised report to UEC, which enables the monitoring of FECs and sharing of good practice.

9. Resources on research integrity are available through the website, and via the Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) – Research Staff Development Programme and Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme.

10. The University has made a commitment to supporting researcher development through subscription to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner. This assists with professional development and career planning and provides developmental resources.

11. Training on research integrity is provided by the Doctoral College. The programme is signposted to staff via the University's Organisational Development webpages, and to research students via the Doctoral College webpages. We run an annual Research Integrity Symposium for our research students.

12. Awareness of the Concordat is monitored through the bi-annual CROS and PIRLS surveys (at the time of writing CROS and PIRLS 2019 are still underway). Responses to the surveys have also informed the development of new initiatives, such as a research leadership programme.

13. We regularly review and update our policies and procedures in the light of national and international developments. For example, in 2018/19 we developed and approved an institutional policy on the responsible use of research indicators (metrics), and we have underway the development of new policies on animal research and a Code of Good Research Practice. We have approved a research strategy where we identify research integrity as an underpinning principle as well as identifying the development of a research culture that promotes rigour integrity and responsible research among the three strategic priorities.

14. We participated in the consultation on revisions to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, and discussed how the proposed revisions align with our current policies and procedures.

Research Misconduct

15. The procedures for handling allegations of research misconduct are described in the Handbook for Ethical Approval and Practice Procedures. For research students, misconduct processes are encompassed in the University's Regulations and Procedures for Academic Misconduct, whereas allegations against staff are investigated in line with the procedures outlined in the Transparency Policy. In the case of the latter, consideration may be given to taking action under the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

16. The University's Transparency Policy identifies the procedures of making public interest disclosures ('whistleblowing'), and how the University deals with disclosures. The contact email address is transparency@wlv.ac.uk.

17. In 2018/19, we reviewed our procedure for investigating research misconduct by staff, consulted with staff and a revised procedure was approved by Academic Board in May 2019. This will come into effect from 1 August 2019.

18. In the academic year 2018/19, there were no formal investigations of staff regarding research integrity.

19. We received one informal enquiry related to authorship. Resulting from this, we have developed an Academic Authorship Policy, approved by Academic Board in May 2019.

Commitment to Strengthening Research Integrity

20. The University is committed to reviewing policies, procedures and support towards strengthening research integrity, as evidenced in the initiatives already identified in this statement.

21. The University Ethics Committee takes the lead on research integrity in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders. Initiatives planned for 2019/20 include:

- Develop and embed best practice on research integrity related animal research (current research in animal conservation).
- Consider the outcomes of the revised Concordat on Research Integrity and review processes and procedures as appropriate.
- Enhance resources and training on research integrity.

Approved: Academic Board 6th June 2019