

# **MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

## **RESEARCH ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

### **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2019/20**

#### **Background**

The Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity provides a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. Compliance with the Concordat requires that organisations present to their governing body a short annual report that provides:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
- assurances of processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct, processes which are transparent, robust, fair, and of continued appropriateness for the needs of the organisation;
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

The Statement will be publicly available on the University's Research Governance web page to provide assurance that measures are being taken to support consistently high standards of research integrity. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange is responsible for research governance within the University.

#### **Statement for 2019/2020**

During 2019/2020, the University has undertaken the following actions and activities to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity:

#### **COVID-19**

The University continued to set high standards of research integrity despite the changes imposed by the pandemic. COVID-19 guidance was published on the University website and updated regularly in line with changing Government guidance. All face to face research was initially paused, and new methods of recording online consent were outlined by the University, ensuring compliance with recommended standards for informed consent and information security.

Some studies were able to re-open safely during the summer of 2020. The University produced further guidance to ensure that participants were kept informed of their options and reassured that safety measures were in place. The University will continue to keep abreast of this changing situation, ensuring that ethical standards are not compromised during the pandemic.

#### **Update to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Research Ethics and Governance**

The SOPs have been updated to reflect the replacement of the Research Governance Framework with the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research, and the

recently introduced system of centralised, study-wide NHS approvals through the IRAS system.

### **New version of Research Integrity Training**

A new version of the University's research integrity training has been released. The revised training modules continue to thoroughly address the subject in a manner which may be considered more engaging than the previous modules. All members of staff have been strongly encouraged to take the training, and PGR students are expected to do so.

### **Actions undertaken in relation to the Human Tissue Act (HTA)**

To maintain compliance with the Human Tissue Act (2004) and regulatory requirements set by the Human Tissue Authority, the University has taken the following actions:

- Appointed a new License holder and a new Designated Individual; Professor Richard Greene and Professor Hans Degens respectively.
- Identified and purchased a new electronic tracking system for recording and managing the storage of tissue samples and the corresponding approvals and consent.
- Identified and purchased an electronic alarm system and new fridges along with a back-up in case of system failure, to ensure the safe and secure storage of human tissue samples.

The Code of Practice and Terms of Reference for the Human Tissue Act Committee (HTAC) have been formally approved by the Research Ethics and Governance Committee. The HTAC is now well established and meets on a regular basis to ensure legal and regulatory compliance for all relevant materials stored at the University.

### **Formal investigations of research misconduct**

Following the procedure for the investigation of misconduct in research:

- Two cases of allegations against PhD students were considered; both were resolved without a requirement for formal investigation.
- Two cases of allegations against staff members were considered; again, both were resolved without a requirement for formal investigation.
- One joint allegation against a member of staff and a PhD student is currently under formal investigation

### **Research Integrity Statement 2020-21**

The next Annual Statement will be published in November 2021.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the evidence presented, we believe that Manchester Metropolitan University complies with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.