

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Name of institution: Manchester Metropolitan University	
Period under review: 2021/2022	
Date approved by governing body: 25th November 2022	Date made publicly available: 05th December 2022
Web address of statement: https://www.mmu.ac.uk/research/research-integrity	
Web address of institutional research integrity page: https://www.mmu.ac.uk/research/research-integrity	
Named contact points for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions/ information on research integrity: Professor Nick Brook, PVC Research and Knowledge Exchange: n.brook@mmu.ac.uk Concerns about research integrity/ research misconduct: Dr Justine Daniels, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange Justine.Daniels@mmu.ac.uk 	
Date statement sent to Concordat Signatories via Rlsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk: 01st December 2022	

1. Summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support research integrity issues

Outgoing Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange

We would like to acknowledge the significant contribution to the research integrity agenda of our outgoing Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, Professor Richard Greene who has played a leading role in a transformation of our capability, resources and confidence in research ethics and governance. Richard has been the chair of our institutional Research Ethics and Governance Committee since 2016 overseeing the recruitment of new staff and the introduction of significant resources – such as EthOS, our online system for managing ethics applications. Richard has been our named contact point throughout the period of review, and we would like to thank him for his leadership during this time. Richard is being replaced by Professor Nick Brook, who joined the University in September 2022.

Ethical approval and data protection legislation compliance

The Research Ethics and Governance (REG) team have continued to collaborate with central and Faculty teams across the University to strengthen Research Integrity. As part of such collaborations, the University Online ethical approval system has been updated to reflect updates in data protection compliance in research.

Specifically, questions have been added to make researchers aware of processes surrounding the use of software providers (e.g, Zoom, Survey Monkey and Qualtrix), and to provide assurance that data protection standards are assessed across all application routes. A further question has been added to raise awareness of the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) procedure in research.

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

An operational audit following the purchase of tracking software has been conducted and has shown compliance with the terms of the licence. Induction training for staff and students intending to work under the licence has been developed alongside on-demand training around the Human Tissue Act and Consent. All of the HTA related Standard Operating Procedures have been reviewed and updated where needed. The Designated Individual is a member of the University Research Ethics and Governance Committee inputting to the continuous strategic strategy to ensure compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Ethical Approvals

Over the past 12 months the University has processed 4988 applications for ethical approval including 621 full applications (236 for staff, 96 for PGRs, 279 for MSc students and 10 for taught students), 4346 approvals using the undergraduate and postgraduate taught route and 21 unit approvals.

Training

Over this academic year, the central and faculty-based REG teams have continued to run numerous and varied training and development sessions to strengthen compliance with the Concordat. These are run regularly and are flexible to the needs of respective teams, audiences, and knowledge of research integrity.

REF 2021

Research integrity was a distinctive feature in the University's successful submission to REF 2021. Our overall approach to supporting research ethics and governance was used extensively throughout the institutional environment narrative and we were able to provide granular detail at Unit of Assessment level particular in disciplines where we engage with human participants e.g. in submissions to Allied Health and Sport and Exercise Science. Improved scores for the research environment played a significant part in helping us to climb up both the rankings for power and quality and provide high levels of confidence that we have robust and supportive structures in place.

Beyond Compliance' sessions

The University Research Ethics and Governance Committee have continued to have a regular 'beyond compliance slot to invite speakers to discuss areas of emerging interest. Over the past academic year we have hosted Marcus Munafo, Chair of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN).

Contribution to national research integrity discipline

Members of the University Research Ethics and Governance Committee continue to make a significant contribution to the research integrity agenda at a national level where we play an important role in supporting the research manager community through leadership of the relevant special interest groups for the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA).

2. Assurance that our processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

The University's Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct (available here <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/research/research-integrity>) provides transparent, timely, robust and fair means of handling any alleged departure from the principle and practice of research integrity. To ensure continued relevance to the needs of the University, the procedure is currently under review.

3. Formal investigations of research misconduct

Over this academic year, the University has received two allegations of research misconduct against staff members. One allegation was resolved informally within the department at the discovery stage and did not require any investigation. The other allegation progressed to informal investigation and no case was found to answer.

4. Learning from formal investigations of research misconduct.

The main finding in both instances was that whilst the staff concerned were familiar with concepts around research integrity in general, they were less familiar with the application of our institutional procedures. We are working through relevant Committees (University and faculty level) to address this.

5. Statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct

The University has a central REG team (ethics@mmu.ac.uk) who support research integrity across the organisation, are the initial point of contact for research integrity queries. The REG team work in close collaboration with the University's research integrity contact, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Research to ensure research integrity is considered at a senior level. The organisation has a clear research governance structure, policies, procedures, training, guidance and website where research integrity related information can be found. The REG team works collaboratively with staff, researchers and students in order to enhance channels of communication about research integrity and research misconduct concerns across the research environment.

6. Information on periodic review of research misconduct processes:

We will review the current research misconduct process by July 2023. The day-to-day office implementation documentation is reviewed annually and improvements are generated and based on lessons learned from delivered cases.

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