

Annual Research Integrity Report to Council 2013-2014

The mission of the University of Cambridge is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. The University recognises that the pursuit of excellent research and the fulfilment of our responsibilities to participants in research, research users and the wider community require the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethics. As such the University supports and is committed to upholding the Universities UK *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*.

This statement has been made to the University's Council to demonstrate that measures are being taken to sustain and further enhance the integrity of the research undertaken at the University. It is in fulfilment of recommendations made by the *Concordat* for annual reporting on research integrity to the University's governing body and covers the academic year 2013-14. As recommended by the *Concordat* this statement will be made publically available online.

Governance of Research Integrity at the University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge recognises that supporting and strengthening the understanding and application of research integrity issues requires clear senior leadership. To ensure that research integrity is governed at a high level within the University, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research was appointed as the senior academic lead on research integrity matters within the University in October 2013. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor is responsible for providing academic leadership on research integrity and acts as the first point of contact for anyone with comments, concerns or questions regarding research integrity at Cambridge, fulfilling a recommendation under Commitment 3 of the *Concordat*.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor is supported by the University's Research Strategy Office (RSO), from whom she receives reports on research integrity matters. In March 2014 a full-time Research Governance and Integrity Officer (RGIO) was appointed to manage the RSO's responsibilities in this area. The new post supports the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Head of the Research Office and University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) to oversee the University's research ethics and governance systems and foster a culture of research integrity across the institution. The RGIO is tasked with ensuring that actions are taken to embed the commitments of the *Concordat* into the University's research environment and ensuring that systems, practices and processes across the University are periodically reviewed so that they remain fit for purpose and reflect best practice in research integrity. The RGIO also provides researchers and staff with a clear point of contact for advice, support and guidance on research integrity, research ethics, legal requirements, and professional obligations and standards. This is a permanent position and is central to the University's ongoing commitment to strengthen research integrity at Cambridge.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor is also advised, particularly in relation to Commitment 2 of the *Concordat*, by the UREC. The UREC has responsibility for the co-ordination of the continual development and dissemination of the University's research ethics policies (excluding animal research) and has oversight of local and School-level Research Ethics Committees. The University's research ethics committees report annually to the UREC so that potential concerns can be identified and addressed and the UREC provides the committees with

advice and guidance. The UREC undertakes continuous review and monitoring of the University's ethics system to ensure that it meets best practice standards and provides a streamlined and effective service for researchers. From 2014-15, the UREC will also provide annual training for those responsible for undertaking ethical review at Cambridge.

To facilitate a joined up approach to research governance, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and the UREC receive reports on research integrity matters from the RSO. From 2014-15 UREC will also have a formal role in advising the Pro-Vice-Chancellor on research integrity issues.

The University also has management procedures to ensure that consideration of the 3Rs (the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research) are embedded into all aspects of our strategic operation management and a well-developed governance system for animal welfare. The Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body, currently chaired by the Establishment Licence Holder, has regular meetings with the University's three Named Veterinary Surgeons and Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers and actively/directly oversees the management of governance. University Policies developed by the AWERB are implemented in all research facilities. Further details on animal welfare at the University are available here: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-at-cambridge/animal-research/our-policies/animal-welfare>.

Policies and procedures for supporting research integrity

Under Commitments 2 and 3 of the *Concordat*, the University is required to have clear policies and procedures to support research integrity.

In April 2014 the University published a *Statement on Research Integrity*, which is publically available on the University website. The *Statement* has been developed from the *Concordat* and sets out the University's commitment to uphold the principles contained in that document. It also explains the ways in which the University will support researchers to maintain the highest standards of integrity in research and publically highlights the role of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research as first point of contact for anyone with comments, concerns or questions regarding research integrity at Cambridge.

The *Statement on Research Integrity* has been designed to complement existing University policies and guidelines for supporting the highest standards in research. The University's *Guidelines on Good Research Practice* set out principles of good conduct that all those engaged in research at the University are expected to follow. It covers a range of issues including openness, supervision, training, intellectual property, the use of data and equipment, the publication of research results, and ethical practice. The *Guidelines* provide a more comprehensive introduction to good research practice at Cambridge than the *Statement on Research Integrity* and highlight links to further guidance on key issues.

The University's approach to the governance of the ethics of research and the ethical review process are set out in the *Policy on the Ethics of Research involving Human Participants and Personal Data*. This policy provides guidance on the University's expectations of ethical practice in research, setting out guiding principles by which all research activities undertaken by University employees, or on University premises, must abide. It also offers clear guidance for those seeking and those undertaking ethical review of a project and the governance arrangements for the University's ethical review process.

As required by the *Concordat*, these policies will be subject to periodic reviews to ensure that they remain 'fit for purpose'. The *Guidelines on Good Research Practice* are currently under review and a revised and expanded version is expected during the coming academic year. The Ethics Policy is scheduled to be reviewed in 2015 and the *Statement on Research Integrity* will be reviewed in 2017.

The University is also committed to ensuring that policies relating to research integrity are implemented across the University. The UREC is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the ethics policy, which is carried out primarily through their monitoring of local ethics committees and surveys of and consultations with departments. The ethics policy states that Heads of Department and Chairmen of Faculty Boards have responsibility for implementing the policy at a local level and individual researchers and supervisors of research students are responsible for familiarising themselves with their responsibilities. Given the recent introduction of the *Statement on Research Integrity* and planned revision of the *Guidelines on Good Research Practice*, the RGIO will monitor their implementation across the University and report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and the UREC.

The University also recognises that its position globally as a centre of research excellence comes with the associated responsibility of ensuring that all research with animals is undertaken with a priority in achieving the highest welfare standards. This underpins *the University Animal Welfare Policy*. The regulatory/operational framework governing animal research underwent a review, concluding in August 2014, to strengthen this position, details of which are available online: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-at-cambridge/animal-research>.

The policies listed above, together with other policies relevant to research integrity, are freely available online. Up to date links to these policies will be published as part of each Annual Research Integrity Report:

- Statement on Research Integrity: <http://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-integrity/research-integrity-statement>
- Guidelines on Good Research Practice: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/research/documents/research/Good_Research_Practice.pdf
- Policy on the Ethics of Research involving Human Participants and Personal Data: <http://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-ethics>
- Animal welfare policies: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-at-cambridge/animal-research/our-policies>
- University Financial Regulations: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/finance/regulations/finregs/index.shtml>
- 'Whistleblowing' Policy: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/whistleblowing.html>
- Policy Against Bribery and Corruption: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/secretariat/bac/>
- Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/policy/safeguarding/>

Supporting and strengthening the understanding and application of research integrity issues

The *Concordat* requires institutions to take actions to maintain awareness among researchers of, and help them to comply with, institutional policies and processes relating to research integrity and ethical approval and the wider funder, professional and legal standards expected of them.

Expert support and guidance on research integrity is offered throughout the University. Centrally the RGIO and the Clinical School's Research Governance Officer support researchers to understand and conform to standards of research ethics and integrity, as well as legal, professional, regulatory and funder obligations. Additional support and guidance on specific issues can be found throughout the central administrative offices, including the Research Office, University Biomedical Support Services, Health and Safety, Human Resources, the Information Compliance Office and the Legal Office. Research ethics committees provide an additional source of support for researchers and complex questions can be brought to the UREC for advice.

The dissemination of research ethics and integrity policies and procedures has been identified as a key focus for strengthening the understanding and application of research integrity issues at Cambridge. In September 2013 the University launched a central research ethics website to better disseminate information on the ethics policy and review process and to provide guidance on research ethics issues. These pages also act as a hub to enable researchers to more easily access guidance provided by Schools, departments and administrative offices.

In October 2014 these pages were integrated into the University's new Research Integrity website (<http://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/>). These pages bring together central guidance and policies on research integrity, ethics and misconduct so as to create a single hub for anyone seeking information and guidance on research integrity issues at Cambridge. This, and future, annual reports on research integrity will be made available on these pages. The Research Integrity website will be monitored and developed as a resource by the Research Strategy Office.

The University's *Statement on Research Integrity* has also been developed as a means of building awareness of research integrity. The Statement has been designed to act as a brief introduction to research integrity for new staff at Cambridge. It sets out the standards by which the University expects all its researchers, research students and visiting researchers to abide and provides links to other University policies that relate to research integrity. As well as being available online, from 2014-15 the *Statement* will be provided as a leaflet to new staff at inductions and integrity training sessions. A similar document for research students is also being designed and will be available during the coming academic year.

Training has also been identified as a priority for the University's work to support research integrity. Centrally the University already provides online or face-to-face training in areas such as good research practice, working with human subjects, data protection and health and safety. Training is provided by the University Biomedical Support Services for those seeking Home Office Licences. From 2014-15 the RGIO will also provide face-to-face research integrity and ethics training that will be available centrally to all research staff and

research students. Existing ethics training aimed at University administrators will also be expanded to include research integrity for 2014-15. Online research integrity training is also planned and is expected to be available during the 2014-15 academic year.

Many of the University's departments and Schools already offer subject-specific training in research integrity issues. During the latter part of the 2013-14 academic year, the University Research Ethics Committee undertook a departmental survey to build central awareness of what was offered locally and identify demand for additional training or guidance. This information will be used to better advertise existing courses and guidance to researchers and guide efforts to improve provision for the future. Examples of specific integrity courses include a training course on research ethics offered by the University's Social Sciences' Research Methods Centre and lectures on good research practice and misconduct offered to research students in the Department of Genetics. Other departments, such as the University's Computer Laboratory have integrated research ethics and integrity training into wider research skills courses. The University's Clinical School has also enhanced the research ethics training available to its researchers by arranging training sessions with the Human Research Authority for 2014-15.

Mentoring plays a key role in building awareness and understanding of policies and procedures at Cambridge. The University formally requires that all its institutions make arrangements for the mentoring of newly appointed staff and runs schemes for peer and developmental mentoring. Mentoring is a vital tool for passing on good practice, as such the RGIO will be working with colleagues in Human Resources during the coming academic year to identify means through which integrity issues can be better integrated into training and guidance offered to mentors.

The University is also committed to raising the profile of research integrity matters through hosting relevant talks and events. In September 2014, the University hosted a joint event on the Culture of Scientific Research with the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. This event addressed a range of research integrity issues and was part of an ongoing project by the Council to understand how "elements of current research culture may be undermining efforts to maintain ethical conduct in science and produce high quality, valuable, accessible research" (see <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/project/research-culture/background/>). In 2014-15 the University Research Ethics Committee will convene its first annual research ethics event, at which internal and external speakers will discuss major research ethics issues and provide training to individuals responsible for undertaking ethical review. The event will also feature a discussion session designed to stimulate debate on research integrity issues at the University. Video extracts from the event will be made available online and the discussion will provide material for a question and answer page on the University's integrity website.

During 2014-15 the RGIO will be working with departments and faculties to explore how they can better integrate the *Concordat* into their systems and examining further means of measuring awareness. The RGIO will also work with colleagues from across the University to find more ways to engage directly with researchers at the college, research group and individual level. The University is committed to the continuing and ongoing improvement of its processes for supporting and strengthening the understanding of research integrity at Cambridge and future efforts will be reported on in subsequent annual reports.

Addressing research misconduct

As required under Commitment 4 of the *Concordat*, the University has a *Misconduct in Research* policy and procedure that sets out a transparent, robust, confidential and fair process for dealing with allegations of research misconduct. The policy provides a clear definition of research misconduct and the responsibility of members to report incidents of misconduct, whether these have been witnessed or are suspected.

The investigation procedure sets out a thorough process through which allegations are investigated by individuals with appropriate authority, qualifications and experience and no conflict of interest in the case. The procedure is clearly linked to disciplinary procedures contained within the University's Statutes and Ordinances to ensure that appropriate action can be taken when concerns are upheld. The procedure also ensures that allegations are investigated in an appropriately confidential manner.

The University is committed to ensuring that it meets all obligations to provide information on investigations of research misconduct to funders of research and professional and/or statutory bodies as required by conditions of grant and other legal, professional and statutory obligations, and will support researchers to do the same.

The Misconduct in Research policy is freely available on the University website (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/misconduct.html>) and is advertised on the University's integrity website and in the Integrity leaflet to be provided to new researchers in 2014-15. Individuals seeking advice on the University's misconduct procedure are able to contact the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, the Research Governance and Integrity Officer, their Head of Institution and/or the relevant HR Consultant/Officer for the institution concerned.

The policy is appropriate to the needs of the University and, as part of the University's commitment to ensuring this continues to be the case, is currently under review. A revised policy will come before the central committees during the coming academic year.

Whistleblowers making allegations in good faith are protected from being penalised or suffering adverse treatment for doing so under the University's 'Whistleblowing' policy (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/whistleblowing.html>). Under the 'Whistleblowing' policy disclosures may be made to the Academic Secretary (in the case of Institutions under the supervision of the General Board) or the Registry (in the case of all other University Institutions).

There have been no formal investigations into allegations of research misconduct during 2013-14.

External engagement

The *Concordat* recognises that a key part of successfully supporting a culture of research integrity in universities is for institutions to learn from each other and disseminate good practice. The sector has responded to this impetus and Cambridge has actively engaged with the resulting collaboration and sharing of good practice. The RGIO, Head of Research Office and members of the University's Research Operations Office have been active participants in conferences and workshops organised by bodies such as the UK Research

Integrity Office, the League of European Research Universities and the UK Council for Graduate Education. The RGIO is also a member of the Russell Group's Research Integrity Working Group, which has provided valuable opportunities for institutions to learn from one another and support shared efforts to foster a research environment that nurtures research integrity