

## Research Integrity Annual Statement 2015-16

### Background:

In 2012 Universities UK published the Concordat to support research integrity<sup>1</sup> ('the Concordat' hereafter) which is a national framework for helping to ensure good practice and integrity. The concordat was written in collaboration with government departments and various funding and research councils, such as the Wellcome Trust, HEFCE and Research Councils UK. It applies to all disciplines and areas of research and was written to complement existing frameworks relating to good research practice.

As one of the signatories, HEFCE has also made compliance with the Concordat a condition of funding and incorporated it into funding agreements. Following publication, Goldsmiths approved the adoption of the Concordat and therefore the following five commitments contained within:

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 processes regularly and openly.

### Introduction:

In order to support *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity* the University has undertaken a variety of actions this year and identified areas where further support and work are needed. The focus has been towards the promotion of a 'value-based and trust culture' in which good research practice alongside open discussion on integrity issues and

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<sup>1</sup>

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf>, Universities UK, July 2012 – Currently under revision

compliance with standards, should be seen as common place and an accepted part of normal research practices.

Research integrity is not a standalone issue but one that encompasses many other areas such as publication and authorship, research data management, information security and funding ethics. Therefore to further establish a culture of research integrity, it is imperative that these areas be considered together by establishing the connection between research activities and development in the mind-set of those involved in research at Goldsmiths.

## **Communication and Awareness Raising**

The Goldsmiths Research Office REISC member has offered training workshops in integrity and ethics during open access week, October 2015 (2 sessions) focussing on data protection and open data requirements. These workshops were co-hosted by the data protection specialist and Library. As part of the Graduate School's Academic practice course, workshops on ethics were hosted in conjunction with the UK Research Integrity Office (2 sessions). Bespoke departmental training was provided to early career and doctoral students upon their request (2 sessions).

Some departments offer discipline-specific support and training to their research staff and students. The levels of engagement vary across the University however, and more could be done to improve this situation (see actions).

REISC members (2) interface with the Concordat Implementation Group (CIG) for the *Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers*, ensuring any training needs in ethics and integrity are identified and adequately supported.

## **Policies and Guidelines**

Goldsmiths has policies and procedures in place to ensure ethical conduct is encouraged and misconduct appropriately handled. The University, in order to sustain good practice and be responsive to new developments in integrity governance has been in the process of revising its HR policies and consequently codes of good conduct. It is doing so in line with recommendations made by UKRIO and the Association for Research Ethics (AfRE).

The university will be continuing this process of revisions and further creation of resources to ensure it is able to offer its staff and students the support they need for research ethics and integrity-related learning and compliance (see actions).

### Actions and activities to support understanding and application of research integrity issues

#### **Actions Completed:**

**1** - To demonstrate continued support for the implementation of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* the University has appointed an Academic Director of research policy (0.5 fte), who will take academic responsibility for integrity related matters. S/he will:

- Chair the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

- Lead on the development, dissemination, and implementation of processes and procedures which underpin research integrity.
- Lead on the investigation of allegations of research misconduct.

**2** - A Research Development and Policy post was created at Managerial level in the Research Office. This post is specifically designed to help improve the implementation and revision of research integrity policies and procedures and to provide additional support for training on integrity matters.

**3** – REISC changed its Terms of Reference and membership in order to reflect the wider remit outlined in the Concordat and the current University’s School structure. It now has two external members and student members as well.

**4** - REISC members have led good practice exchange events on research ethics and policy management in the arts, humanities and social sciences through, for example, the Association for Research Managers and Administrators (1 event)

**5** – REISC members (2) were in attendance at UK Research Integrity Office annual conference and the European Research Council’s ethics workshop in November 2015 (1), sharing good practice in the field.

**6** – In the guidelines for research grant applications and post-award procedures the formal turn-around for non-complex ethics applications was set at 15 working days.

**Planned Actions:**

In order to ensure compliance with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and to improve the transparency of ethical approval processes across Goldsmiths, the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (REISC) will need to undertake a variety of actions, University-wide. These include:

**1** – Creating a formalized road map to the enhancement of support for research integrity across the University with the input from all relevant stakeholders.

**2** - Amending ethical approval forms and monitoring processes in line with external compliance and other requirements to reflect changes in open access, data sharing and research integrity domains, as well as disciplinary variances.

**3** - Reviewing the Code of Practice on Research Ethics in line with advice provided by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and the Association for Research Ethics.

**4** – Creating interdisciplinary, central, online training resources for Departmental staff and students on Goldmine to share good practice across disciplines and research areas.

**5** - Implementing a communication system for ethics and integrity through Departmental and School contacts, thereby facilitating the sharing of relevant information about ethics and integrity policies, good practice, training events, ethical monitoring etc.

**6** – Beginning a familiarisation process with medically-related and USA ethical approval systems to promote interdisciplinary research integrity and international compliance.

7 – Implementing a training and research development programme for research ethics and integrity which reflects the disciplinary practices in evidence in Departments at Goldsmiths.

8 – Increasing the Research Office and REISC interface with the Graduate School, ensuring that all students and supervisory staff are familiar with best ethical practice in their fields

9 – Increasing the interface with HR to map out the relationship between the Code of Good Research Conduct and Misconduct policies and procedures.

#### Processes for dealing with allegations of research misconduct

Although Goldsmiths' current procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct appear to be adequate and in line with those of other HEIs, a review is underway to ensure that these procedures reflect existing best practice across the sector.

There have been no allegations or formal investigations of research misconduct this last year between May 2015 and May 2016.