Annual Report on Research Integrity 2013-2014

Introduction

The University signed up to the Concordat for Research Integrity in 2012. As part of our commitment to implementing the principles of the Concordat, this is the first of our annual reports summarising our range of activities in this regard.

Since our becoming signatory, HEFCE now require those eligible to receive research funding to be compliant with the Concordat, which sets out five commitments as follows:

- Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
- 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;
- Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

Strategy and objectives

Our strategy and objectives are set out in two sets of policies and regulations - these are RE01 (Studies Involving the use of Human Participants) and RE02(Research Misconduct). Each year these are reviewed and revised as appropriate. These reviews are now informed by our membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) which provides expert advice and guidance about the conduct of research.

Additional policies and regulations are as follows:

Bribery and Corruption (Section 7.4.1. Conflict in Interest in Research) – UPR GV12

Data Management Policy (and Appendices i - iv) – UPR IM12

Data Protection - UPR IM08

Ethics Committees with Delegated Authority (ECDAs) – UPR RE01, Appendix II

Protocol for Reflective Practitioner Work by Academic Staff – UPR RE01, Appendix

Dr Susan Grey October 2014

Dissemination and awareness –raising activities and Points of Contact

In addition to the **University of Hertfordshire research ethics and good practice guidance: Guide to Good Practice in Research,** our web pages have been revised to highlight our structure and strategy on both Research Ethics and Integrity and to identify points of contact as in the following quote:

" *The University expects that staff, students and other individuals permitted to work in the University will, at all times, observe the highest standards of integrity in relation to any research work which is supported by the University and/or conducted on its premises.*

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) has been designated by the Vice-Chancellor as the senior officer responsible for ensuring good research conduct. The senior member of staff with oversight for research integrity and the first point of contact on research integrity matters is Dr Susan Grey. Dr Grey is also the point of contact for whistle-blowing.

Training and Development

During 2013 we have expanded training for its previous focus on Ethics to now also cover Research Integrity, particularly with a focus on the Concordat and its commitments. We also expanded provision beyond the Researcher Development Programme (RDP previously known as GTR training) with sessions for Research Staff and Research Degree Supervisors on both Research Ethics and Research Integrity. There are plans to roll this out even more broadly, in terms of both audience and content, in 2014.

Research Misconduct cases

This year saw currently two research misconduct cases under investigation, one from the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Research Institute and one from the Science and Technology Research Institute. At the end of 2013 they were in mid-investigation with outcomes due in 2014. In both cases, the alleged misconduct was plagiarism and both those accused were research degree students.

NHS Sponsorship

The new sponsorship approval process was implemented from April 2013. Since then there have been both revisions to policies and procedures and dissemination and awareness raising activities, in both cases, information gathering on external requirements and guidance has driven this. Specifically there has been (i) an expansion of SP1 form to cover situations where there is a co-sponsor or external sponsor and (ii) the introduction of the SP3 form where NRES Ethical approval is not required but a sponsor is needed for securing of NHS Management permissions.

Additionally there has been the development of the NHS information on StaffNet, and NHS briefings have been delivered to both staff (at School meetings, as part of supervisor training and an open event) and research students (through the Researcher Development Programme (RDP).