

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Annual Statement on Compliance with The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

2013-14

1. Annual Statement on Compliance

Queen's University Belfast is a Russell Group University whose mission is "To enhance internationally recognised, globally competitive and sustainable research areas". In 2012-13 the University commenced a programme to enhance its research governance structures, establishing a small dedicated team, to support staff and students by ensuring robust policies, processes and systems were in place for research governance. Since then, the Team has continued to build upon and enhance existing regulations and policies, to ensure they meet the requirements of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

2. Supporting and Strengthening Integrity

During 2013-14 there has been a significant review and revision of existing Regulations, Policies and Code of Practice. This has included:

- 2.1 The revision and rebranding of the University's Code of Good Conduct and Integrity in Research, which was first developed in 2003. A Research Integrity leaflet was also developed and distributed to all new academic staff, post-doctoral, postgraduate research and postgraduate taught students. All established staff have been notified via email.
- 2.2 Revision of the Regulations Governing an Allegation of Misconduct in Research, and review and approval of a revised pool of senior academic staff to be involved in investigations that may arise.
- 2.3 Revision and updating of the Regulations on Research Involving Human Participants and the Policy and Principles on the Ethical Approval of Research. The Code of Good Conduct and Integrity in Research, the Regulations Governing an Allegation of Misconduct in Research and the Policy on the Ethical Approval of Research were each considered by Research and Postgraduate Committee and Academic Council, before being ratified by Senate in April 2014.
- 2.4 Ensuring all academic and contract research staff inductions clearly articulate the Concordat's Commitments and the University's requirements and processes, to ensure compliance. PhD supervisors, students and staff based within our Schools, are informed of the Concordat through talks delivered at local level.
- 2.5 The delivery of training programmes on Research Ethics, Human Tissue Act Compliance (compulsory), Data Management and Informed Consent to research staff and students. Additionally, a series of audits were undertaken on a random selection of research studies, involving human tissue and/or patients or clients of the health and social care sector, to ensure compliance with University policies and procedures. The audit programme also includes studies funded by the Research Councils.

- 2.6 Review and revision of the name, terms of reference and membership for the University's Committee responsible for research governance. The revisions to the Research Governance and Integrity Committee were approved by Senate in April 2014.

3. Addressing Research Misconduct

- 3.1 During 2013-14 the University's Regulations Governing an Allegation of Misconduct in Research were updated and approved, as detailed above. A pool of 41 senior academic staff was identified from across the University, representing the diversity of staff, to be called upon and participate in investigations or panel hearings, in the event of an allegation of misconduct in research.
- 3.2 This year, three concerns were raised regarding researchers within the Faculties of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences and Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. All issues related to concerns around authorship.
- 3.3 On careful review of the evidence, one concern was dismissed at an early stage. A further two resulted in the members of staff being interviewed by an initial screening panel to gather more evidence. The evidence and supporting documentation were considered and it was determined that there were no substantive issues of misconduct in research in either case.

4. External engagement

As a member of the Russell Group, the University has been actively involved in developing and shaping the requirements to enhance the research integrity agenda. The Head of Research Governance recently completed a mapping exercise of Russell Group universities to identify current training programmes being delivered, that address and/or contribute to the research integrity agenda. This has resulted in a collective identification of the core elements for inclusion in research integrity training, the development of which is ongoing.

The University has also taken the opportunity to respond to consultations on a variety of issues, which may directly or indirectly impact on the research integrity. Following engagement with Understanding Animal Research (UAR), and the consultation on the Concordat on the Openness on the Use of Animals in Research, the University has become a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on the Use of Animals in Research and, also, the Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiment (ARRIVE) guidelines.