



Statement on Research Integrity 2017/2018

As an outstanding UK research-intensive university, the University of Exeter recognises that the highest standards of scientific, scholarly and professional integrity must be maintained and promoted. We aim to give due consideration to the ethical, social and environmental issues arising from our activities and are actively working to ensure that research integrity is embedded in the University's research culture and environment.

We are committed to acting in accordance with the principles described in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and have developed a policy framework which aims to maintain the safety, rights, welfare and dignity of all members of the University and their research participants, and to maintain public trust:

- Ethics Policy
- Research Ethics Framework
- Policy on working with animals
- Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research
- Misconduct in Research
- Codes of Conduct
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy

In 2017/18, actions undertaken to promote and embed research integrity included the following:

- New University-wide template participant information sheets, informed consent forms and privacy notices were developed and disseminated in order to ensure compliance with current data protection regulations.
- Regular training sessions for research and CPD students, early career researchers, academic and professional services staff were further developed and delivered, alongside introductory online training modules and bespoke sessions for groups of taught students.
- The annual training day for research ethics committee members was successfully delivered and was found to be useful for attendees
- The University Ethics Committee and the Dual Assurance portfolio on Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance continues to provide oversight of activities and assurance for the University's governing body
- Ongoing review and implementation of improved research governance and regulatory compliance processes, particularly on health research sponsorship, clinical trials, human tissue and animal research.
- New policies on Due Diligence and Conflict of Interest have been developed and approved; implementation and training plans are underway.
- The Research Ethics and Governance Team continue to work with colleagues across multiple departments and teams on, for example, compliance and quality assurance frameworks.

- Active involvement in national networks and events to share best practice and promote research integrity, for example as part of the Russell Group research integrity forum and providing written evidence to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry into research integrity.
- Resource for research governance and compliance is provided on a recurrent basis

During 2017/18, a number of allegations of research misconduct were received:

1. A member of staff was alleged to have misrepresented their role in a multi-author publication. A preliminary investigation found that a genuine error had been made and additional bespoke training was provided for staff and postgraduate students in the research centre.
2. A complaint was received about a member of staff regarding correspondence in a publication; a preliminary investigation found that the member of staff had engaged in a scientifically justified attempt to validate results published by another team and confirmed that, according to the research misconduct policy, '*research misconduct does not include [...] honest differences in interpretation or judgement in evaluating research methods or results*'.
3. An allegation of plagiarism was made in regard to a PhD thesis. A preliminary investigation found no evidence of plagiarism in the thesis and no further action was taken.
4. An allegation of plagiarism was made against a member of staff in regard to work undertaken at a previous institution. A preliminary investigation has established that there are grounds for taking the case forward to formal investigation. At the time of writing, a formal investigation has been commissioned and an investigating officer and panel appointed. The outcome of the investigation will be reported in 2018/19.
5. An allegation of plagiarism was received about a member of staff in regard to a published paper. A preliminary investigation has established that there are grounds for taking the case forward to formal investigation. At the time of writing, an investigating officer has been appointed and preparations are being made to commission the investigation and appoint a panel. The outcome of the investigation will be reported in 2018/19.

The procedures for investigating and reporting misconduct are considered to be transparent, robust and generally appropriate to the needs of the organisation. The Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research and the Misconduct in Research process were extensively reviewed and updated during the autumn of 2016 to ensure that the definitions, process and reporting routes are clear and consistent and the processes continue to be actively reviewed and updated where required.

A programme of ongoing improvement is in place to ensure that continued progress towards our all our goals is maintained. Developments, risks and progress are regularly monitored by the Dual Assurance Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance portfolio and by the University Ethics Committee.

For further information on research integrity at the University of Exeter, please contact the [Research Ethics and Governance Team](#)

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Approved by: University of Exeter Council, 12th July 2018