

# UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

## THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY

### ANNUAL REPORT

#### Academic Year 13/14

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#### 1. Introduction

The primary focus of Research Integrity at the University is to ensure compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity, published by Universities UK. The following report outlines progress the University is making towards this, through recent policies and committee meetings.

#### 2. Summary of actions and activities undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues

The five commitments are listed below with University actions described alongside.

***Commitment 1: We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research-***

The University has a governance structure which maintains a research environment that develops good research practice and nurtures a culture of research integrity.

The University Research Integrity Committee (URIC) was established in May 2013 and is responsible to the Research Committee (URC) for promotion of exemplary standards of integrity in research, and good management of the procedures to guarantee them.

The Terms of the Committee are:

- To promote the good governance, management and conduct of research at all levels
- To share good practice on how to address misconduct and unethical behaviour
- To review specific research projects and cases, where the issues raised have broader implications for the good management of research
- To streamline and harmonise regulatory procedures, with clear and proportionate guidance for all researchers and avoiding duplication of effort
- To raise awareness of the proper criteria for retractions in academic journals and remind researchers that good practice in research includes reporting concerns about the conduct of research, including its publication and dissemination
- To organise education, training and continuing professional development in the principles of good practice
- To advise on School procedures for ethical approval of research projects, as requested

- To seek clarification from external expert bodies, as necessary, on matters of ethical review policy and practice, and advise on and where necessary comply with external regulations and/or guidance on the ethical conduct of research
- To establish clear guidelines/policies for explicit consideration of ethical issues in all research projects and transparent lines of accountability
- To provide a University-wide interdisciplinary forum for discussion of important issues in research ethics and standards of professional integrity
- To consider risk assessment issues arising from the remit of the Committee and to recommend appropriate action where necessary

The committee is currently co-chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise and a senior member of academic staff from the School of Human and Health Sciences (currently a Reader in Applied Social Psychology). Membership also includes current Chairs of each School Ethics Panel, representatives from Human Resources, University's Legal Team, Research and Enterprise, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Committee normally meets twice per academic year and reports to the University Research Committee and to University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC) as appropriate. Wherever possible, business is conducted electronically to ensure appropriate and timely action. Open minutes are stored in WISDOM; closed minutes are held securely by the Research & Enterprise Directorate.

***Commitment 2:*** *We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards-*

Each School at the University has its own ethical process. Research and Enterprise are currently undertaking a gap analysis of ethical policies within Schools, with a view to adopting central common, processes; this will ensure clear policies are available to all researchers.

Research and Enterprise are currently developing a website to ensure that all researchers can access advice and guidance on ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards.

The University has recently appointed the University's solicitor to the Research Integrity Committee in an advisory capacity, to ensure compliance with any specific legal requirements.

***Commitment 3:*** *We are committed to 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-*

Research and Enterprise are currently evaluating the options for an online ethical approval process. This would identify potential ethical concerns at an early stage and mechanisms for providing support to researchers in need of assistance. It would also ensure that a central record is kept of every research activity and its assessment, even if the assessment results with no further action required.

**Commitment 4:** *We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise-*

The University has a duty to ensure that standards of integrity and honesty are maintained in all aspects of the University including research and scholarly activities. The University currently has a procedure which identifies how allegations of misconduct in research are reported and investigated. The procedures follow the requirements of UKRIO guidance 'Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research'.

<http://hr.hud.ac.uk/downloads/policies/pdf/1000297.pdf>

**Commitment 5:** *We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly-*

The University will review processes periodically to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. This will be achieved through regular Research Integrity Committee Meetings and an annual Research Integrity forum to gain contribution from the sector as a whole.

### **3. Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research**

The University currently has a procedure which identifies how allegations of misconduct in research are reported and investigated. The procedures follow the requirements of UKRIO guidance.

<http://hr.hud.ac.uk/downloads/policies/pdf/1000297.pdf>

The University has a Whistleblowing Policy (available on the university website <http://www.hud.ac.uk/hr/policies/policymenu/?id=1000102> ) in which we have several whistleblowing contacts for the University and the Pro Vice Chancellor has been nominated as a dedicated contact for all matters Research.

### **4. Formal investigations of research misconduct**

There were no formal investigations of research misconduct in the 13/14 academic year.

The most recent investigation was held in 2012, the details of which are below:

*An Academic Misconduct Committee was established on 21 June 2012 under Section 4 Assessment Regulation 9 Research Misconduct (Students' Handbook of Regulations, September 2011) for candidates registered on an approved course of supervised research. The Committee was convened to consider an allegation of academic misconduct against 'anonymous' with respect to his thesis which had been submitted in October 2010 and had resulted in the conferment of the award of EdD.*

*The School had investigated an allegation that the thesis submitted by 'anonymous' contained unreferenced material. The investigation had been undertaken jointly with the School of Human and Health Sciences. The initial investigation focussed on three articles and included a Turn-It-In report showing a 51% match.*

*Further investigations were conducted following the student initial meeting with the Dean in December 2011. These resulted in the identification of a full set of offending material which was discussed in a further meeting between the student and the Dean before being referred to this Committee.*

*The Committee concluded that the allegation should be upheld in full but accepted mitigation presented by the student. The Committee's recommendation to the University Research Committee was agreed and the following penalty was applied:*

- *The award should be revoked.*
- *The student should be given one calendar year to rewrite the thesis – with effect from the point when the penalty is confirmed*
- *The viva should be conducted by a new team of examiners*

## **5. Other on-going activities**

The University is in the process of application for a Human Tissue Licence. A Human Tissue Committee has been established to support this with representation from all Schools. The University is looking to submit for the licence in 2014. Consent and disposal policies will soon be available on the University's website.