

Annual Research Integrity Report to Council 2021/22

1. Introduction

City, University of London is committed to ensuring continued compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and to support and embed a culture of research integrity.

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity “seeks to provide a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance”. Universities UK developed the Concordat to Support Research Integrity with the funding and research councils, the Wellcome Trust and a number of government departments. It was launched on 11 July 2012. Compliance with the Concordat has been a prerequisite for receiving funding from the UK research councils and higher education funding councils since 2013.

In 2017/18, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee held an inquiry into research integrity in the UK (the report was published on 11 July 2018). In response to the report, the signatories to the Concordat have made revisions. A consultation on the revised Concordat closed in April 2019 and the final version launched in October 2019.

By acting in accordance with the revised Concordat, the research community can demonstrate that they:

1. Uphold the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
2. Ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards.
3. Support 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. Use transparent, timely, robust, and fair processes to handle allegations of research misconduct when they arise.
5. Work together to strengthen the integrity of research.

Compliance with the Concordat requires institutions to produce a short annual narrative statement to their own governing body that provides:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews);
- assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

The annual report will highlight good practice and procedures as applicable to the year in question and will report on issues, developments, and enhancements relevant to the

institutional governance and operational framework for research integrity. The reports will be designed to be independent of previous years, and some repetition can therefore be expected in the reports. Note that in this report research ethics is treated as a subdivision of research integrity rather than as a component of it.

2. Governance of Research Integrity at City, University of London

City expects its staff and students to seek to maintain the highest achievable standards in their research conduct. Support and guidance in achieving research integrity are provided through several routes:

- City, University of London Framework for Good Practice in Research
- Research Ethics Framework
- Research Governance through City's Research & Enterprise Committee, which is responsible for the strategic direction and oversight of research and development of City research policies
- School and Departmental Research and Research Ethics Committees
- Other City policies and guidance that relate to research, including, Conflict of Interest, Intellectual Property, Research Data Management, Data Protection and Information Compliance.

The Vice-President (Research) is the senior lead for research integrity at City, and is the institutional contact should anyone has concerns, comments, or questions about research integrity at City. This information and the contact details for the Vice-President (Research) are clearly signposted on City's research integrity webpage. In addition, City's whistleblowing policy can be used by members of the public to highlight any concerns regarding research undertaken by City staff and/or students.

The Vice-President (Research) is supported by the Research Governance, Ethics, and Integrity Manager (formerly the Research Integrity Manager) within the Research & Enterprise Directorate. The Research Governance, Ethics, and Integrity Manager manages the Directorate's responsibilities in this area and provides support and advice to the Vice-President (Research) and the Chair of Senate Research Ethics Committee. The Research Governance, Ethics, and Integrity Manager also liaises with other professional service departments, including the Graduate School, and Schools as necessary on matters relating to research integrity and research ethics.

i) Research & Enterprise Committee

The Research & Enterprise Committee is an advisory Committee to the Vice-President (Research & Enterprise). It advises the Vice-President (Research) on the development and review of institutional policies and procedures in relation to research and enterprise and monitors their implementation. The Committee makes recommendations to Senate and reports, as appropriate and necessary, to the Executive Committee, Senate, and Council. Research integrity is a standing item on the Research & Enterprise Committee's agenda to ensure that it is discussed at the appropriate levels of City's governance structure.

ii) Senate Research Ethics Committee

Senate Research Ethics Committee (SREC) is ultimately responsible for research ethics across the institution and for overseeing adherence to the policies and procedures set out in its Framework for Delegated Authority by City's local committees which sit in Schools and Departments across the University. The system of delegated authority was implemented across City in 2011, to develop a coherent and consistent approach. The institution does not insist on Schools setting up local sub-committees of SREC where the volume of research is minimal, but policies and procedures to address research involving human participants, materials and/or data not in the public domain must be in place and agreed with SREC. The local research ethics committees are required to submit an annual report to SREC. The Chair is an ex-officio member of the Academic Governance Committee and Senate. The Academic Governance Committee approves minor amendments to the terms of reference and composition of SREC as well as scrutinising its regulations, policies, and procedures ahead of approval by Senate. SREC reports directly to Senate.

Professor Corinna Haenschel, Department of Psychology, was appointed interim Chair for a period of one year, in agreement with the Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) in September 2022. Corinna takes up the post from Professor Richard Ashcroft, who has been appointed Dean of the City Law School on an interim basis and stood down as Chair of SREC on a temporary basis in July 2022. As Corinna previously held the role of Deputy Chair, a ballot was held amongst SREC members to determine a new Deputy Chair. Dr Nicholas Drey, Senior Lecturer in Health Services Research in the Department of Nursing received the most votes and was recommended as Deputy Chair to Senate in November 2022.

The 2021-22 programme of work for SREC was undertaken between May 2021 and 2022. Further details regarding the work that was completed are detailed in section 4 of this report. The 2022/23 SREC programme of work is currently under development. This has been delayed to accommodate the arrival of the Research Governance, Ethics, and Integrity Manager who came in to post in October 2022. The 2022/23 programme will reflect topics discussed by SREC in the 2021/22 year and matters that have been noted in previous reports, such as ongoing efforts to free up the time of the Committee to consider guidance and best practice in addition to reviewing high risk ethics applications.

SREC meeting dates 2022/23

SREC has returned to face-to-face meetings for the 2022/23 year.

- 22 September 2022, 14:00-16:30, (business and review meeting)
- 16 November 2022, 14:00-16:30, (review only meeting)
- 25 January 2023, 14:00-16:30, (business and review meeting)
- 23 March 2023, 14:00-16:30, (review only meeting)
- 03 May 2023, 14:00-16:30, (business and review meeting)
- 14 June 2023, 14:00-16:60, (review only meeting)

3. Covid-19 Guidance on face-to-face research

Given the exceptional nature of the situation arising as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Senate Research Ethics Committee (SREC) issued instructions that required all ongoing research to make changes to how participant interactions are conducted. The SREC Guidance took effect from 23rd March 2020 where all face-to-face research activity involving human participants was suspended. This was in place until September 2021.

i. Guidance following the relaxing of Covid-19 restrictions – October 2021

New guidance on coronavirus guidance for face-to-face research was issued in October 2021. Staff and students were issued with instructions that they can now undertake research projects in the UK which require face-to-face interactions with participants. Requirements such as the wearing of face masks, social distancing, ensuring adequate ventilation and the cleaning of surfaces must still be maintained. A risk assessment must be undertaken with the Health and Safety Office before any research can restart. The approved risk assessment should be uploaded on the Health & Safety section when you submit your ethics application. Each project application should now have a risk assessment that shows what is being done to address COVID risks.

ii. Current guidance regarding Covid-19

From the 1st April 2022, many of the remaining requirements for staff and students were lifted, with risk assessments for research only required when working with “flammable, explosive and oxidising substances; lasers, unsealed sources and X-rays; electromagnetic fields; the use of chemical or biological agents; and heavy machinery” as was protocol prior to the pandemic. The University’s current guidance can be found in full here: <https://www.city.ac.uk/about/guidance-on-coronavirus/latest-updates> .

4. Developments and activities during 2021/22 to support research integrity

Research ethics

During 2021/22 the following projects have been undertaken to support research ethics at City:

i. Online application workflow management system

The online research ethics workflow management system went live across the institution in October 2018. The system was implemented to help streamline the practices across the university; provide the tools to audit the local RECs to ensure that best practice, legislation, and university policies and ensure that procedures are followed; speed up the approval process for students and staff; and reduce the time burden on research ethics committee members, chairs and administrators. It also ensures the appropriate standard of applications, by for instance requiring supervisor signoff for student applications. The risk level of applications is determined based on the applicant’s responses and is automatically routed to the correct Committee. Since going live, approximately 3000 applications have been processed using the system.

In the 2021/22 year, a total of 768 applications were submitted in the online ethics system, a breakdown of these applications by level of study is as follows:

- 122 were from Undergraduates
- 366 were from Postgraduate

- 91 were from Doctoral Researchers
- 189 were from Staff

The user feedback from applicants, administrators and research ethics committee members continues to be positive, with any issues resolved in a timely fashion. In 2021, Haplo who provide the online research ethics system were acquired by a Cayuse, an US based company who specialise in research administration software. During the transition period between the two companies, there had been some delays in updates and changes that could be made to the ethics form. However, since this transition period the Research & Enterprise directorate have built a good working relationship with the Cayuse support team and have worked effectively together to resolve any system issues. City has input in the development of the system through a User Group which meets twice a month. Further internal review to develop system improvements will continue in the 2022/23 year.

ii) Research ethics reviews

The Chair of the Senate Ethics Committee has initiated several reviews:

Review of undergraduate research policy. SREC developed a policy stating that the default for undergraduate research should be to undertake research that is of low risk, with medium risk applications considered in exceptional circumstances. High risk research should not be initiated by undergraduates. SREC adopted the policy on undergraduate research, which was then sent to Senate for final approval.

Research involving animals. Committee members undertook a review to update the current policy on research involving animals at City. The new policy more clearly defines what we mean by animal derived tissue, and to make sure that the registration process is clear. The policy further extends to ensure that University has oversight over what projects its staff are involved in work with human and animal tissue at other institutions. Any work that a researcher at City is involved in at another institution has to be registered with the University to provide confirmation that the partnering institution has the appropriate approvals and permissions in place. SREC adopted the policy on undergraduate research, which was then sent to Senate for final approval.

5. Research Culture and Integrity

A paper on research culture at City was sent to the University Research & Enterprise Committee in June 2021 for consultation.

City expects its staff and students to maintain the highest achievable standards in research conduct and are committed to ensure that research is conducted responsibly, ethically, and in line with City's Code of Practice for Research and Researchers. In order to maintain and uphold the highest standards we continue to develop and enhance the relevant governance and operational frameworks and policies in relation to research integrity and ethics, and working together to strengthen the research environment and culture.

Defining what good research culture should look like is not an easy task, and it may be more helpful to consider the values the organisation aspires to along with its priorities. Achieving a good research culture is the responsibility of all staff and students at City, and cannot, solely, be achieved by the implementation of policies and procedures. Research culture encompasses the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes, and norms of research

communities. It influences researchers' career paths and determines the way that research is conducted and communicated.

This paper on research culture sets out some of the findings from the Wellcome Trust survey on research culture, changes to the UKRI CVs, the elements of the Concordat to Support Research integrity and discusses some possible starting points for improving the research culture at City. The University Research & Enterprise Committee was asked to discuss how to address the issues outlined in this paper and consider possible initiatives or measures.

6. Reproducibility and research integrity

The Science and Technology Committee, House of Commons has launched an enquiry into reproducibility and research integrity.

As the UK seeks to recover from the pandemic, research and innovation has the ability to drive economic growth, with UKRI estimating that every £1 spent on research and development delivers £7 in economic and social benefit. However, the integrity of research, especially medical and social science research, is at risk from what is known as the 'reproducibility crisis' (i.e. it being very difficult or impossible to replicate a scientific study).

As early as 2005, the issue of reproducibility was identified in Ioannidis' paper, 'Why Most Published Research Findings Are False,' and since then a large number of surveys or replication studies have been conducted that show the prominence of the issue.

The Inquiry was launched in July 2021 and the deadline for submissions was Thursday 30 September 2021. It is expected to deliver its report in 2022, but this had not been published at the time of writing. Following a recommendation from House of Commons Science and Technology in 2018, UKRI were asked to establish a national research integrity committee. UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI) held their first meeting in May 2022, with a strategy expected to be launched in Spring 2023. UK CORI has a 3-year plan, with the aim to have developed a governance strategy at the end of these 3 years. Annual reports will also be produced by UKCORI.

City has appointed Dr Steven Samuel, Department of Psychology as the local network lead for the UK Reproducibility Network.

The UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) is a national peer-led consortium that seeks to understand the factors that contribute to poor research reproducibility and replicability, and develop approaches to counter these, in order to improve the trustworthiness and quality of research.

The UKRN Local Network Lead provides the point of contact for UKRN, and represents the grassroots network of researchers at that institution.

7. Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research

Research misconduct is currently managed locally by Schools. A new university wide procedure was developed and implemented from the start of 2021. City is committed to ensure we are using a transparent, timely, robust and fair process to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

Allegations notified to the Research and Enterprise Directorate

No formal investigations were undertaken in 2021/22, under section 7 of the procedure for investigating allegations of misconduct in research. One investigation was carried out under

section 6 requiring an initial review of allegations to make recommendation for further action under section 7. The investigation under section 6 recommended no further action.

8. Training

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Report noted that some universities have made training in research integrity a mandatory part of doctoral studies and include it in their research supervisor training programme. At City, research integrity and ethics is included in the Research Supervision module run by LEaD. However, attendance is not mandatory across City so not all research supervisors attend the module. It also does not address training of more senior academics and this will need to be considered to ensure that staff are up to date with developments, changes to legislation and the internal and external landscape.

Although training on research integrity and ethics is provided both centrally and locally, it is recognised that further development and resources for training of both staff and students are required and that research integrity needs to be embedded into the existing research development training. Research & Enterprise will be able to support some local provision and will continue to provide institution-wide workshops and other training events.

New approaches to embedding training for research ethics and research integrity into both Doctoral Research training and also into taught programmes are required. This will require greater partnership with, for example, the Senate Research Committee.

Training activities provided annually in Schools/Departments:

- **Bayes Business School** provides workshops on research ethics and how to incorporate ethics into academic modules for all academic staff. Doctoral students receive training as part of their research methods modules. Specific guidance for supervisors is also provided.
- **School of Communication & Creativity** provides training on the taught programmes and for doctoral students on research methods. This includes research ethics and sessions on how to prepare a research ethics application.
- **School of Health & Psychological Sciences** arranges sessions on research ethics and governance for staff and workshops on research ethics, research governance, as well as sessions on research ethics approval for doctoral and Masters students. In addition, numerous undergraduate programmes have sessions on research ethics, governance, professional ethics and law.
- **School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering** organises workshops on research ethics for doctoral students, with some training available in parts of the School for Masters students on research integrity and research ethics.
- **The City Law School** provides research seminars for doctoral students where issues around research integrity, ethics and academic misconduct are discussed. Online training resources are made available to doctoral students and staff. Masters and final year undergraduate students have access to similar training, particularly around research ethics where students are undertaking projects involving human participants.

9. Planned developments 2022/23

i. Review of Ethics and Data Protection

A series of papers on data protection and research were presented to the June 2022 meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee, concerning City's application of data protection in research. It was agreed that the Chair of SREC would establish a Working Group to review current ethics processes and procedures, with a particular focus on areas of overlap between research ethics and data protection. The working group will also consider training and development needs in this area across the University.

An initial meeting to support the Working Group will take place in in December 2022, with the working group expected to continue throughout the 2022/23 year. The Working Group will aim to create a report and series of actionable recommendations. These actions will likely be reflected in other areas of work, such as system developments, developing training, and updates to documents and guidance.

ii. Training

Development of training will be a two stranded project, that will look at both the training needs of local research ethics committee members and the wider research governance, ethics, integrity training provisions across the University. Developing additional guidance and support that addresses the training needs of local REC members will be supported by the Chair of SREC, with further support and consultation being undertaken with local REC Chairs and administrators who provide additional support in this area.

iii. Annual report for 2022/23

To reflect the focus of the Research & Enterprise Directorate which now has a dedicated Research Governance, Ethics, and Integrity Manager in place, it is proposed that the next annual report for the 2022/23 academic year will be structured to reflect all three of these elements.

10. Committees, policies and guidelines supporting and promoting research integrity

- Research Integrity <https://www.city.ac.uk/research/integrity>
- Framework for Good Practice in Research
<https://www.city.ac.uk/research/integrity/framework-for-good-practice-in-research>
- Research Data Management <https://www.city.ac.uk/research/integrity/research-data-management>
- Senate Research Ethics Committee <https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/council-senate-and-committees/academic-committees/senate-research-ethics-committee>
- Research Ethics webpages <https://www.city.ac.uk/research/ethics>
- Intellectual property policy
http://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/77063/City-University-London-IP-Policy-v0.86-1410101.pdf
- Whistleblowing policy and procedure
https://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/358022/Whistleblowing-Policy-20170509.pdf
- Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Guidance
<https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/student-policies-and-regulations#accordion573807-header573821>

- Data protection and information compliance (It is now also internal)
https://intranet.city.ac.uk/staff/info_compliance/info_compliance.html
- GDPR information (internal) <https://staffhub.city.ac.uk/information-governance-gdpr-awareness>
- Copyright <https://libraryservices.city.ac.uk/support/copyright>
- Conflict of interest
https://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/394924/Conflict-of-Interest-Policy-for-Academic-and-Research-Staff.pdf