

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Annual Statement on Research Integrity: 2017/18

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Cardiff Metropolitan University is fully committed to supporting the highest levels of research integrity and governance in all its research activity. As a recipient of public funding, Cardiff Met recognises the importance of ensuring that its staff and students maintain exemplary standards of academic practice, integrity and honesty in all aspects of research.
- 1.2 80% of the research activity submitted to REF2014 by Cardiff Met was judged to be at least internationally excellent (97% was judged to be at least internationally recognised). In order to maintain and expand the University's research success, maintenance of a commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct in our research is paramount.
- 1.3 As a signatory to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Cardiff Met is committed to upholding and maintaining the commitments contained within it. In order to improve accountability and provide assurances that measures are being undertaken to support high standards of research integrity, the Concordat recommends that employers of researchers present a short annual statement to their own governing body which:
 - Provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues.
 - Provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust, fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation
 - Provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.
- 1.4 This Annual Statement on Research Integrity relates to the 2017/18 academic year. As recommended by the Concordat, this statement will be made publicly available on the University website.

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

- 2.1 Support and encouragement for research integrity is achieved via a number of underpinning quality processes, policies and guidance documents which are widely accessible both within and outside the University.
- 2.2 The University Director of Research (DoR) is responsible for the leadership of matters relating to research integrity, including the ethics agenda. The DoR is supported by the REF & Policy Manager who is a member of Research & Innovation Services (R&IS).
- 2.3 The University Research Integrity and Governance Framework (formally the Research Governance Framework) has been in place since 2009. It was most recently reviewed in

2017/18, the updated version receiving approval at Research & Innovation Board¹ in December 2017. The Framework is available publicly via the University website².

- 2.4 The Framework sets out the principles by which all Cardiff Met staff and students should abide when undertaking research. It makes clear that all staff and students should maintain exemplary standards of academic practice in all aspects of research by reading, understanding and incorporating the principles and practices set out in the Framework to their everyday work.
- 2.5 The Framework is relevant to all staff and students and also applies to persons not employed by the University but with permission to carry out research at Cardiff Met. It signposts researchers to other relevant University policies and procedures including those related to ethics approval, Research Data Management (RDM), publication of research, open access and research misconduct.
- 2.6 The Framework is subject to biennial review and will next be formally reviewed in 2019/20. An earlier review will be undertaken if it becomes clear that this is necessary for the Framework to remain fit for purpose.
- 2.7 The University Ethics Framework (UEF) (first introduced in June 2009) is intended to provide a reference point for all stakeholders on the implementation of the University's values. The Framework was reviewed in 2016/17 to better align it with the articulation of a new set of values in the University Strategic Plan 2017/18 - 2022/23. It was approved by the University Ethics Committee in February 2018 and endorsed by Academic Board in April 2018 and is available publicly via the University website³.
- 2.8 The University has robust procedures in place for ensuring that all research is subject to ethical review and approval. When undertaking a research project, staff and students are obliged to complete Part One of the Application for Ethics Approval Form⁴. This will determine if a full application for ethics approval is required. All projects involving human participants require completion of a full application which will then be scrutinised by a School Ethics Committee. Each School has developed a School Ethics Framework which sets out the processes via which ethics approval is operated within the School.
- 2.9 Overall responsibility for the research ethics process lies with the University Ethics Committee (UEC) which oversees the work of the School committees and ensures that ethics procedures remain fit for purpose. UEC reviews the Application for Ethics Approval Form and the associated guidance notes on an annual basis with amendments being introduced at the start of each academic year. In 2017/18, no amendments were required.
- 2.10 Specific policies and procedures are in place in relation to the requirements of the Human Tissue Act (HTA). HTA related activities are overseen by a named Designated Individual (DI) who is a member of UEC and provides regular reports to the committee. Contact details for the DI are available on the University website.

¹ Known as the Research & Enterprise Board until December 2018

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http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Documents/Ethics/Research_Integrity_Governance_Framework_v5_Dec2017.pdf

³ http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Documents/Ethics/Ethics_Framework_Feb2018_final.pdf

⁴ <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Pages/Ethics-Governance.aspx>

- 2.11 The HTA carried out a successful inspection of Cardiff Met procedures, premises, facilities and equipment in April 2018. The final report of the inspection commented on a number of good practices and strengths at the University, including, the practice of holding all human samples under the same governance arrangements, whether held under the HTA licence or a recognised REC, the use of Project Boxes for maintenance of key details relating to each study, a comprehensive suite of risk assessments against all licensable activities and the thoroughness of training processes.
- 2.12 Routine research ethics training is devolved to Schools and PDR to ensure familiarity with the local governance operation. Other ethics and research integrity related training activities held in 2017/18, led by the University Ethics Committee were:
- Horizon 2020 Ethics Training (September 2017)
 - Professional Doctorate Research Ethics Training (November 2017)
 - Staff development on the policy on work involving animals or animal tissue (December 2017)
 - Informed consent seminar with Cardiff School of Art & Design – a trial of a new method of information sharing and awareness raising (February 2018)
- 3. Assurance that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the need of the organisation.**
- 3.1 Cardiff Metropolitan University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct and has developed the Policy on Research Misconduct to deal with such allegations.
- 3.2 The policy endorses the definition of research misconduct provided by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and details a two stage investigative process to be undertaken when an allegation of research misconduct is made.
- STAGE 1: Allegations of research misconduct are made in writing to the Director of Research (DoR) who will undertake an initial investigation to establish whether a *prima facie* case of misconduct exists. Where it is not appropriate for the DoR to undertake the investigation, this will be conducted by the Deputy Director of Research.
- STAGE 2: Where a *prima facie* case is deemed to exist, the case will be referred to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) who may take immediate action or may instigate further investigation into the allegation. If further investigations are necessary, they will be carried out either by the PVC(R&I) or by an appropriate individual appointed by the PVC(R&I).
- 3.3 The policy states that Cardiff Met will investigate allegations fully and expeditiously and recommends that all incidences of alleged research misconduct are investigated within a 12 working week timeframe. An indicative timeline for the investigative process is appended to the policy.
- 3.4 Dissemination to Schools and the International Centre for Design & Research (PDR) is via Research & Innovation Board members as it is via this forum that the policy is reviewed and endorsed. The policy is also available publicly via the University website⁵.

⁵ http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Documents/Research_misconduct_policy_2016.pdf

- 3.5 The policy has been in place since 2007 and was most recently reviewed (and approved by R&IB) in September 2016. Both the development process and the review process were informed by benchmarking against sector norms. The 2016 review also took into account experience of administering the original process and of involvement with other similar processes in place at the University. The policy will next be reviewed early in 2018/19 in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, continues to comply with best practise and is robust and fair.

4. Statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

- 4.1 There were no allegations received under the University's Research Misconduct Procedure during 2017/18.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Board of Governors is recommended to note this report which was received and noted at Research & Innovation Board on 26th June 2018.