



**SENATE
ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

Paper Title	UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity – report from the Task and Finish Group
Background	<p>The Concordat to Support Research Integrity provides a national framework for good research conduct and its governance.</p> <p>Compliance with the Concordat is a condition of HEFCE grant.</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group was established by the Vice-Principal’s Research Advisory Group (VPRAG) to map the commitments in the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity with QMUL practices and to identify actions to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The attached report from the Task and Finish Group indicates the main outcomes of the mapping exercise and areas for action.</p>
Outcome requested	Senate is invited to note the main proposed actions in section 3 of the paper.
Regulatory/statutory reference points	HEFCE, RCUK and other funding bodies expect research organisations to meet the five commitments for assuring high standards and integrity in research set out in the Concordat (see annexe A). HEFCE and RCUK will monitor compliance with the concordat.
Strategy and risk	Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The QMUL Strategy 2014 Strategic Aim 2: to achieve the highest standards in research• The draft statement of QMUL Values states that “Our values shape and influence all that we do, guiding our activities and behaviour. They underpin our Strategy and will inform other key developments and policies for the institution.

	<p>[The value relating to integrity states that]</p> <p><i>“We act with integrity and to the highest ethical standards in all that we do.</i></p> <p>QMUL and its staff commit to operating ethically across the full range of our activities, reflecting the best traditions of this institution and the wider sector and protecting the future reputation of both.”</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Compliance is a condition of HEFCE funding and funding by other signatories to the Concordat, e.g. the UK Research Councils, the Wellcome Trust, National Institute for Health Research, Department for Employment and Learning. QMUL must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Concordat with effect from 2014-15.</p>
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	This report is provided for information. It accompanies the paper from the Ethics of Research Committee recommending the adoption of new policies on research integrity and for research involving human participants.
Authors	Mary Childs, ARCS, Secretary to VPRAG
Sponsor	<p>Professor Joy Hinson, Chair, Task and Finish Group on the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity</p> <p>Professor Bill Spence, VP-Research</p> <p>Ms Elizabeth Hall, Chair, Ethics of Research Committee</p>



SENATE ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Report from the Task and Finish Group on the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity

1. Purpose

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in July 2012 by Universities UK. It was developed in collaboration with HEFCE, Research Councils UK, the Wellcome Trust and Government, and in consultation with HEIs and others with an interest in research. The Concordat seeks to provide a national framework for good research conduct and its governance. The five commitments in the Concordat are shown in annexe A.

The Task and Finish Group was established by the Vice-Principal's Research Advisory Group (VPRAG) [minute 2013.20 in the VPRAG action note of 14 Oct 2013 refers]. The main purposes of the Task and Finish Group were to:

- (i) map the commitments in the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity with QMUL practice, with particular reference to the commitments for QMUL as an employer of research staff and the commitments for QMUL research staff; and
- (ii) identify action that may be needed to ensure compliance with the Concordat.

It was agreed with the Ethics of Research Committee (ERC) that formal responsibility for ensuring that QMUL is compliant with the Concordat rests with VPRAG. The role of the Ethics of Research Committee is to advise on the work of the Task and Finish Group.

2. Membership and meetings

The membership of the Task and Finish Group is drawn from staff working in relevant areas of Professional Services. It was agreed by VPRAG and ERC that the Group should be chaired by a member of academic staff.

The members are:

- Chair: Professor Joy Hinson, Academic Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development and then Director of the Doctoral College during 2013-14
- Centre for Academic and Professional Development: Dr Rui Pires Martins (Postdoctoral Researcher Development Adviser)
- Human Resources: Samantha Holborn (HR Partner Science and Engineering)

- Joint Research Management Office:
 - Coleen Colechin (also providing input from the Russell Group forum on research support)
 - Hazel Covill, Ethics Facilitator, JRMO (Secretary to the Ethics of Research Committee and its sub-panels)
 - Katherine Ouseley, Governance Approvals Advisor (and Acting RSU Manager)
- Principal's Office: Carol Rennie (Executive Officer – Research)
- Research Degrees Office: Dr Rhiannon Thompson
- ARCS: Mary Childs (Task and Finish Group co-ordinator)

Three meetings were held to discuss draft mappings and to consider actions.

3. Main outcomes of the mapping exercise

The mapping exercise indicates a number of improvements to communications, documentation and web pages that can be made without approval from other committees, and members of the Task and Finish Group are taking such action.

The more substantial recommendations are summarised below:

- (i) responsibility for research integrity should be clearly embedded in the duties of research related roles in schools and institutes and in Professional Services:
 - the VP-Research has responsibility for the oversight of research integrity;
 - the first points of contact for each of the various research areas and ethics approval processes should be clearly identified on the web;
 - roles in schools and institutes with research responsibilities should include research integrity;
 - the VP-Research and Director of Research Services and Business Development are considering where best to locate the responsibility for the co-ordination of internal developments concerning research integrity and the monitoring of advice on compliance with the Concordat and good practice from HEFCE, RCUK and other external bodies;
- (ii) a schedule should be established for the regular review of QMUL research-related processes and policies to align with the Barts Health NHS Trust research policy review cycle and the review of policies on the QMUL Policy Zone. In reviewing such policies, explicit reference should be made to the Concordat on Research Integrity;
- (iii) training and related resources for staff and students undertaking research should include explicit reference to the Concordat on Research Integrity and address the issues raised. The new Head of Researcher Development, Dr Janet de Wilde, Centre for Academic and Professional Development, is taking this forward in developing the training provision for researchers;
- (iv) the Concordat mapping should be reviewed annually by VPRAG and ERC. The secretary to VPRAG will co-ordinate the annual update. The Task and Finish Group will re-convene in 4-6 months' to monitor progress on

actions. An action plan based on the mapping is being developed to aid monitoring and actions will be reported to the Ethics of Research Committee (ERC) and the Vice-Principal's Research Advisory Group (VPRAG);

- (v) there should be an annual report to Senate and Council's Audit and Risk Committee that summarises action and activity to support research integrity issues, including a high-level summary of alleged cases of misconduct in research investigated each year. The draft report should be approved by VPRAG and ERC;

The Concordat includes a requirement to make an annual public statement. However, there is ongoing discussion between sector groups and HEFCE and RCUK about the purpose of the public statement and its contents, and whether such a statement is necessary. The VP-Research and Director of Research Services and Business Development will decide on the question of making a public statement in the light of the outcome of the sector discussion. Any such statement would also be discussed at the Queen Mary Senior Executive.

- (vi) agreements for collaborative research activity, joint research programmes, and research contracts, should include a standard statement on expectations concerning research standards and research integrity, and adherence to QMUL and UK guidelines and regulations as the minimum expectation for the conduct of research.

The full mapping is available from Mary Childs, m.childs@qmul.ac.uk

M Childs ARCS
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UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The Concordat sets out five commitments for assuring high standards and integrity in research and outlines the responsibilities of researchers, employers of researchers, funders of research and other organisations in fulfilling each commitment. HEFCE requires that institutions, as the employers of researchers, will act in accordance with the commitments and the related responsibilities for employers of researchers as outlined in the Concordat. This includes fulfilment of the expectations held by funders of research for employers of researchers, where these are stated in the Concordat.

The five commitments are:

1. To maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
2. To ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
3. To 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. To use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
5. To work together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly

The Concordat is available at

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf>