

Queen Mary University of London

Code of Practice for Research Staff

Introduction

This Code of Practice has been developed for people who are employed on to undertake research at the University, primarily postdoctoral research staff. The guidance is also applicable to a wider range of researchers, such as academic staff, some of whom may have additional considerations as managers, supervisors, educators, etc., and is relevant to researchers of all disciplinary backgrounds regardless of career expectations and intentions.

It was developed by the Researcher Development Concordat Implementation Group with input from the Vice Principals for People, Culture, and Inclusion; and Research and Innovation, the Director of Research Services, the Faculty Deans for Research, the SMD Deputy Dean for Research Integrity, the Lead on Queen Mary Ethical Research Committee, and the Research Integrity and Assurance Officer. It is [available online](#) and will be distributed with new employment contracts.

The guiding principles of this Code are informed by the Queen Mary's [Strategy 2030](#), Queen Mary's [Values in Action](#) Behavioural Framework, the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (2019), and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019). Though each of these stipulate responsibilities in terms of a variety of research stakeholders, here, the focus is on interpreting the responsibilities of research staff in the context of Queen Mary's policies.

Visit www.qmul.ac.uk/research-staff-cop or scan this QR-code to access this Code of Practice online with hyperlinks to the relevant Queen Mary policies and support mentioned in this document.



1.0 Research Environment and Culture

Queen Mary produces world-leading research outputs that drive innovation. Excellent research requires positive and inclusive research environments and cultures. Queen Mary offers researchers a world-class research environment, with sustainable and accessible research facilities focused on our strengths, to enable them to flourish. A supportive research culture is central to our values, where innovation, collaboration, development, engagement, entrepreneurship, and impact to address global and national challenges are innate parts of our research activity. All researchers are encouraged to engage in entrepreneurial activities and academic staff can spend up to 30 days per year on consultancy or other entrepreneurial activities per Queen Mary's Consultancy Policy. For support with these activities, visit the '[Collaborate with us](#)' and contact the appropriate group.

In addition to their research activity, research staff should recognise and act on their role as key members and stakeholders within Queen Mary's vibrant research community, as well as their wider disciplinary community. This includes actively contributing to and leading the local research culture through promoting activities like journal or reading clubs, seminar series, and staff or student associations; School or Institute committees like research committees, equality diversity and inclusion efforts, or recruitment panels; and engaging internally and externally with other researchers, as well as with the public about their work. Staff members should also review the guidance on how to use the [Our Values in Action Framework](#) to support any local efforts.

Raising Queen Mary's reputation is a priority in our University. Research staff should ensure all presentations and work products are [correctly branded](#), and should look for ways raise awareness of their work and Queen Mary through attending academic conferences, and working with the [communications team](#) to raise awareness with other audiences, including the public, where appropriate.

All staff should ensure they act in accordance with our policies related to [dignity at work](#), and [equality, diversity and inclusion](#), and our policies on research conduct and integrity (see section 2.0). The University has received [external recognition](#) for its work in celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion. Research staff should actively contribute to the development and maintenance of a supportive, fair, and inclusive research culture and be a supportive colleague, particularly to newer researchers and students. This could include joining or promoting [staff networks](#), contributions to local and institutional [Athena Swan](#) or Race Equality Groups who help to drive positive and inclusive cultures. Research staff should consult with their line management and research managers to find out about the local opportunities available to them. They should also use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour, particularly in relation to discrimination, [harassment, bullying](#), and research conduct.

Research staff should take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health and should refer to [HR wellbeing guidance](#). Support for staff on emotional matters, life challenges, workplace effectiveness, and wellbeing and stress management can be found through the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

2.0 Research Integrity and Ethics

Research staff must act in an appropriate manner, always maintaining the expected standards of rigour and integrity relevant to their research work. The University has a responsibility to ensure the confidence of funders. In accordance with both Concordats, they must conform to all ethical, legal, and professional obligations relevant to their work; and use transparent, robust, and fair processes to make

decisions concerning data openness. All research staff should be aware of the “[Responsible Research & Innovation](#)” framework, committed to engaging the public in a dialogue around concerns and issues related to their research. Wherever possible, researchers should aim to be proactive in anticipating perceived challenges (from the public) about their research and mitigating these wherever possible.

Queen Mary is committed to producing and promoting high quality research that is conducted with the highest standards of integrity, and all staff should ensure that they act in accordance with our [research integrity policies](#). The University grants that our research staff are able to exercise freedom in their academic choices and must also accept responsibility for the decisions that they make. Thus, the primary responsibility for ensuring that research staff act with honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect to their research subjects, and with accountability in all aspects of their research work, including peer review, lies with the individual researcher. Researchers will be supported in this by their line-managers and School or Institute.

Researchers must ensure they apply for, and comply with, the requirements for ethical approval of all research involving human participants or their data; typically from the [Integrated Research Application System \(IRAS\)](#) for clinical research, and [Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee \(QMERC\)](#), otherwise. Good practice involves ensuring that stakeholder engagement and Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) is embedded throughout their research design, delivery, and dissemination cycle. Consult the Centre for [Public Engagement](#) or the [Joint Research Management Office](#) for advice and guidance on stakeholder engagement and PPIE.

Some researchers will also need to be aware of Queen Mary’s obligations to uphold the [principles of Trusted Research](#): a series of principles which underpin international research collaboration, ensuring our research practice is safe and compliant with UK legislation (e.g., the [National Security and Investments Act](#)). The university will be introducing new policies that will provide guidance in this area, together with an online training module which will be mandatory for researchers working in an area subject to the [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\)](#). Researchers requiring advice, should email vp-trustedresearch@qmul.ac.uk for individual support.

3.0 Employment

Queen Mary recognises the importance of fair, transparent, merit-based recruitment, and the effective support and performance management of our research staff, as provision of good employment conditions will have positive impacts on our researcher wellbeing, and our research excellence.

The research contract for most researchers is modelled on a 35-hour working week, functioning around core hours of 10:00-16:00, Monday to Friday. It is understood that the nature of an individual’s research may require them to work outside these hours, or for greater than the standard work week’s hours on occasion. We support [flexible working](#) practices and encourage discussions between research staff and their line managers that should include any appropriate risk assessments to account for flexible, lone and out of hours working, while taking the researcher’s wellbeing into consideration.

Research staff must ensure that they work in accordance with Queen Mary [Human Resources policies and procedures](#), any relevant employment and visa legislation ([Visas](#)), as well as any requirements stipulated by their funders. These include understanding any relevant reporting obligations and responsibilities to Queen Mary (e.g., [Elements](#) to record impact and research activity); observing any [standard operating procedures](#) (SOPs) relevant to their discipline; and fulfilling any training requirements [mandated by Queen Mary](#), or other relevant local or foreign governing body (e.g.,

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency [governance training](#)), and to their funding body (e.g., [ORCID](#)).

Research staff should proactively engage with regular performance and development discussions as part of the [probation process](#) and annual appraisal cycle with their line managers and utilise the [Performance and Development Appraisal](#) scheme to record their plans for their career development.

Research staff are expected to handle potential instances of research misconduct in an appropriate manner, including reporting research misconduct in accordance with Queen Mary procedures. This also includes cooperating in good faith in the formal processes for handling allegations of research misconduct.

4.0 Data Management and Protection

Researchers should always take appropriate care to manage, categorise, store, and provide access to the data they generate while at Queen Mary in line with the requirements of funders, the project's Principal Investigator (or their line manager), as well as those outlined in the [Research Data Access and Management Policy](#). Researchers should make the requisite plans to archive their data such as to make it accessible to those who would need it after they have left Queen Mary. Support for this can be found through [IT services](#).

All clinical research and research involving human subjects that will collect personal or identifiable data should be compliant with Queen Mary's SOPs on [Data protection for research studies](#), [Trial data management systems](#), and Data management.

5.0 Professional and Career Development

Professional and career development are integral to enabling research staff to develop to their full potential. Queen Mary aims to attract the best research staff from all over the world and to support and develop them to become leaders in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and innovation. We support aspiration to excellence which includes improvement of research and professional skills and knowledge.

Research staff should positively engage in [career development reviews](#) with their line managers, and maintain an up-to-date professional and career development plan. Research staff should explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training, and secondments.

Research staff are encouraged to take ownership of their professional and career development and be proactive in identifying opportunities in conversation with and supported by their line managers to work towards their development and career goals, whether within or beyond academia. This support could come as part of the probation and appraisal discussions. Researchers should consider engaging in at least 10-days (*pro rata*) per year to professional development activity. This could include (but is not limited to):

- training in research methods and techniques;
- cultivating independence and growth of a researcher's profile, for example, acquiring research funding, networking and collaboration, organising, preparing for and attending conferences;
- training to enhance personal effectiveness – e.g., time management, self-confidence;
- being mentored by an off-line mentor, or mentoring others;

- opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system by, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement, and commercialisation;
- developing broader leadership and management skills;
- contributions to discipline's community and to local research culture;
- contributing to institutional decision-making processes;
- and teaching or educational development.

It is also understood that many of these activities listed form part of a researcher's day to day duties and that development may take many forms in addition to training courses. Researchers are encouraged to keep a record of their professional development activity.

Sources of this development activity and these training opportunities can include a researcher's local environment, the [Researcher Development](#) Team, [Careers and Enterprise](#), and other Queen Mary training [providers](#). Research staff are encouraged to engage with external training and development opportunities, where they have funding available to do so.