Research Integrity Annual Statement 2022-23

Introduction

The University is committed to meeting the Commitments of the Universities UK *Concordat to support Research Integrity*. As part of that commitment, the PVC Research provides an annual report on research integrity to the University Court which includes:

- a summary of key activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues;
- a statement on how the institution creates and embeds an environment of research integrity;
- a summary of current processes for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct and a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place are transparent, timely, robust, 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 and a statement on lessons learned from any investigations;
- Governance structures relevant to the development and application of research integrity policy and guidance.

Key Activities in 2022-23

The following summary outlines actions and activity undertaken to support research integrity during session 2022-23:

- A soft roll out of the *Ethical Guidelines and Policies for Students, Staff and Research Ethics Committees* was undertaken, as agreed by the University Senate in June 2022. The Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee (REIS) gathered feedback from stakeholders which included online briefings for staff and students Schools/GCU London and consultation with the Academic Policy and Practice Committee.
- The REIS reviewed issues related to the use of secondary data in research and potential issues where data collected for a specific research purpose is re-used for other research. Subsequently it was agreed at University Research Committee that a review, and potential refresh, of the University *Research Data Management Policy* would be undertaken, led by the Library, with a view to improving awareness of the Policy and reinforcing best practice in research data management.
- University Research Committee reviewed the governance arrangements for the *Safepod* (a standardised safe setting that provides the security and controls for data that requires secure access for research), housed and managed by the Library. These arrangements were found to be robust.
- A draft revision of the *Academic Misconduct in Research Degrees* procedures was considered by the Research Degrees Committee (RDC).   With the RDC feedback incorporated, it is intended to seek approval via University Research Committee and Senate in session 2023-24.
- Discussion on electronic submission of PhD theses involving the Chair of the Research Degrees and Library colleagues and IS colleagues via the Pure Research Information System. Committee which would facilitate similarity checking of theses. It was agreed that this would be piloted during 2023-24 for subsequent roll out to all PGR students.

Current Formal Processes and Procedures

The University is confident that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

The *Code of Good Practice for Researchers* outlines procedures to be followed in cases of academic misconduct.

Other procedures relevant to staff:

- Research Data Management Policy
- Guidance for Researchers – Data Protection
- Conduct & Capability Policy - applies to current staff (but note that the University may continue the investigation to its natural end regardless of the complainant and/or the respondent resigning or otherwise withdrawing from the process; the complainant withdrawing his/her allegation; and/or an admission of guilt on the part of the respondent)
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- GCU Financial Regulations

   Other procedures relevant to students:

- Procedures for Academic Misconduct in Research Degrees (referenced in *Code of Good Practice for Researchers*)
- Advice on Safeguarding (referenced in *Code of Good Practice for Researchers*)
- Code of Student Conduct (also referenced *in Code of Good Practice for Researchers*)
- Student Attendance & Engagement Policy (Research Students)
- Research Data Management Policy

It should be noted that issues of research misconduct can be received via the University Complaint Handling Procedure and are referred to the procedures under the Code of Good Practice for Researchers.

Formal investigations

- No cases of research misconduct were reported during session 2022-23

Governance

The University Research Committee has overall responsibility for matters in relation to research integrity. The following subcommittees and groups have responsibility for supporting the processes, procedures, guidance and development for research integrity matters:

- Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee (REIS)
- Research Degrees Committee (for postgraduate research students) (RDC)
- Developing Academic Researcher Excellence (DARE) Steering Group