Annual Integrity Statement 2020/2021

Excellence in research underpins all of Royal Holloway's activities and aspirations. We aspire to produce world-leading research that substantially advances the knowledge base, and that fosters transformational impacts for individuals, society, and the environment. We also aspire to give our students an education that is informed by the highest standards of research and scholarship. Royal Holloway is committed to upholding the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK, October 2019)

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

Promotion of research integrity

Research integrity at Royal Holloway is promoted through intranet pages, an external facing website, and through the provision and delivery of research ethics training. Royal Holloway subscribes to an online research ethics training programme provided by Epigeum, and professional services staff from the Department of Research & Innovation (primarily the Research Ethics and Integrity Manager), provide training via:

1. Termly research ethics sessions for postgraduate research students

2. An annual research ethics session for probationary staff

3. An annual research ethics session for all staff

4. Ad-hoc meetings with School PGR leads to promote research ethics and address any common issues

5. Training by external research ethics experts. In 2020/2021, this was delivered by David Carpenter (Independent Consultant and Trainer in Research Ethics -HRA, ARMA, UKRIO; Chair –South Central, Berkshire NHS REC; Chair –Google DeepMind Human Behavioural Research Ethics Committee; Member – BPS Ethics Committee)

Process Reviews

In 2019/2020 there was a recommendation that a new ethics review system be purchased and implemented, with a view to making the review process more efficient. As a result of the ongoing impact of Covid-19 there has been a continued delay to the implementation of a new ethics review IT system.

There have been attempts to improve the integrity and ethics review processes in other ways. In July 2021 a Task & Finish Group, made up of academics representing the various departments at Royal Holloway as well as members of professional services (Research & Innovation), convened to

improve research ethics processes and revise Royal Holloway's research ethics policy document. At the time of writing the Task & Finish group has not concluded its activities.

There have also been more minor process improvements. Most notably there has been an overhaul of the intranet pages that support the writing and submission of research ethics application.

Misconduct Allegations

An investigation into one allegation of historical research misconduct commenced in 2020/2021 and continues to be investigated. No allegations of research misconduct have been upheld.

Reporting Misconduct

The College maintains a dedicated email address for addressing integrity-related queries, integrity@rhul.ac.uk, which is monitored by the Research Ethics and Integrity Manager / Research Ethics Officer. This email address is listed on the College's externally accessible Research Ethics intranet pages, externally facing 'Research Culture' webpage, with a statement that the email can be contacted 'For research integrity related queries or complaints'.

Process for dealing with allegations of misconduct

At Royal Holloway allegations of misconduct are initially received by the Research Ethics and Integrity Manager / Research Ethics Officer, discussed with the Director of Research and Innovation, Alicen Nickson, and ultimately escalated to Senior Vice-Principal for Academic Strategy and Research. This is currently Professor Ken Badcock (ken.badcock@rhul.ac.uk).

Ongoing Impact of Covid-19
As mentioned above, Covid-19 continues to have an impact upon the implementation of a new system for reviewing research ethics at Royal Holloway.

Policies, regulations and guidance

Relating to Research Integrity include:
- Statement of Expectations
- Code of Research Practice
- Conflict of interest
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding in Research
- Research Ethics Policy (n.b. under revision)
- Open Access Policy
- Data Management Policy
- Statement on responsibilities
- Data Protection Policy
- Guidelines on Relationships involving Staff, Students & Others
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Due Diligence Policy (n.b. under development)
- Code of misconduct (n.b. under development)