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Code of Research Good Practice
2020/21

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Note

1. All sections of this document are available online. The online version is the current definitive version and takes precedence in the event of any discrepancy. The Code is available at the website address below:

   https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance

   IMPORTANT: The Code of Research Good Practice takes account of the Universities UK *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO's) *Code of Practice for Research* and researchers should be familiar with both (links are provided at the end of the University's Code of Research Good Practice as follows below)

Code of Research Good Practice

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1 Introduction

1.1 The University of Westminster is committed to conducting its business in accordance with the seven principles identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life[1]; the five commitments outlined in the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity (UUK, 2019)* [2]; and the principles contained within UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO's) *Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct* [3]. The University is responsible for ensuring that its research is carried out in line with legal and regulatory requirements. The University is committed to strengthening the integrity of research.

1.2 The University is committed to 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]

1.3 The University expects all those engaged in any research activity, including its academic employees, doctoral researchers, postgraduate students, visiting researchers, and in addition any other staff undertaking research on behalf of the University, to observe these principles.

1.4 It is also recognised that Undergraduate students carrying out major research projects and/or dissertations are primarily engaged in developing research skills. It should be recognised that a key feature of research skills development is the ability to meet acceptable standards of research ethics and integrity, and so any undergraduate project that involves human participants, potentially sensitive personal data or which may have an impact upon others, including the environment, must also comply with the requirements of the University's research governance, including the *Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research.*

1.5 This Code is only one element in the University framework of research governance, which is also informed by the following policies:

- *Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research* (Research Ethics Code);

- Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing Policy);

- Human Resources policies (disciplinary, grievance, staff contracts, conflict of interest policies etc.);

- Regulations and supporting guidance for Research Degree Programmes;

- *Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct* (staff and student procedures);

- The University's *Open Access Policy;*

- The University's *Research Data Management Policy*.

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[1] Selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life

[2] https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/the-concordat-for-research-integrity.asp https://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/

1.6.   The University is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity and rigour are applied to research.

1.7.   The University supports the principle of academic freedom and researchers must take responsibility for acting in accordance with all aspects of research good practice.
2 General Principles

2.1.   Sponsors, stakeholders, the public, research participants and the research community can reasonably expect the University to ensure that an appropriate governance framework exists that promotes good research practice, that embeds integrity and rigour in research and that creates a culture in which the following general principles can be understood and observed. The University is committed to maintaining and strengthening a research environment that helps to develop good research practice and embeds a culture of research integrity.

2.2.   The University has clear policies, processes and systems for management of research good practice, provides training in research integrity and ethics, raises awareness of standards and behaviours expected from researchers and has clear processes in place for those with concerns about the integrity of research to raise these concerns.

2.3.   Research at the University is conducted to the highest ethical standards and this document should be read in conjunction with the University's Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research.

2.4.   The University obtains funding from various bodies, including government departments, Research Councils and charities. Such bodies have defined expectations as to the standards of research good practice in funded projects. In drawing up its own standards of good practice in this Code, the University has drawn extensively on the codes of practice and standards articulated by relevant external bodies and stakeholders. Foremost amongst these are the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*; the UKRIO *Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct*; and RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct.

2.5.   The University is a subscribed member of the UK Research Integrity Office and obtains advice and support when necessary, including around its own framework and implementation of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

2.6.   The University has systems in place to periodically review its policies and processes and to reflect on its work in supporting and strengthening research integrity. Research integrity, ethical practice and standards are an integral part of the University's *Research Strategy*.

2.7.   In addition to adhering to the University framework governing good practice in research, University of Westminster researchers are also expected to be familiar with their obligations in relation professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and to keep up-to-date with developments in these areas.

2.8.   The University recognises that an essential element of research governance and maintaining good practice is a mechanism for addressing allegations of suspected research misconduct, via a transparent, timely, robust and fair process. The University Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct is publically available along with the Named Contact for receiving such allegations. There are

separate Procedures for managing staff and student research misconduct allegations. In addition the University publishes contact email addresses for queries around the Procedures. The University has a published named contact for enquiries around research integrity. In the case of taught programme students, staff supervisors need to recognise their critical role as the Principal Investigator and their responsibility for ensuring the principles of this Code are complied with.

2.9. Academic Council will be advised of proposed changes to this Code.

3.   Integrity

3.1. The University expects that researchers apply honesty "in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings" [5]

3.2. Researchers are accountable to multiple bodies and need to balance their obligations to society, their professions, the institutions where the research is taking place, the staff and students involved and any sponsor or facilitator of the research. All those engaged with research must ensure that researchers and organisations are held to account when standards fall short of the expected behaviour.

3.3. Care and respect must be provided to the research participants, subjects of research, users and beneficiaries of research including humans, animals and the environment and cultural objects, as well as for the research record itself.

3.4. Responsibility for ensuring that no misconduct occurs rests primarily with individual researchers. The University views plagiarism, deception, fabrication or falsification of results, or failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations as misconduct. Any person who has concerns around the conduct of research must report this in accordance with the University Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct.

3.5. Researchers must behave transparently and openly including declaring potentially competing or conflicting interests; reporting of data collection methods; analysis and interpretation of data and when making the research findings widely available including sharing negative or null results as a valuable part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers or the public.

3.6. Further guidance on conflicts of interest and declaration of personal interest is contained in the University HR Policies, the Financial Regulations and the Ethics Code (Addendum B).

4   Rigour

4.1. Researchers must employ rigour in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.

4.2. The University is committed to supporting researchers to understand and act according   to   expected   standards,   values   and   behaviours

4.3. Where research collaboration is proposed with international or interdisciplinary partnerships, a clear agreement should be articulated of the standards and frameworks the research would apply. The Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (World Research Integrity Conference,

2013), and The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) should be consulted for advice.

5   Openness

5.1. Researchers need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations relating to intellectual property, including ownership, copyright, design and patent legislation. Importantly, researchers may generate intellectual property in which the University, researcher or external collaborators may have a vested interest. This can be particularly relevant where there is the potential to exploit any new knowledge or practice commercially, which can then potentially be developed to form an element of the academic enterprise activity of the University. In these circumstances the University, unless agreed otherwise, should have the first opportunity to facilitate any potential commercialisation and this should be considered in advance of publication.

5.2. The University has an inclusive approach to Open Research, recognising the differences between disciplines and their research outputs. The University's Open Access and Research Data Management policies are inclusive of all forms of research, encouraging different levels of 'open' depending on the type of output acknowledging that there are ethical, legal and commercial reasons why some research outputs (or components thereof) cannot be made open. The University's institutional repository (WestminsterResearch) enables the capture and discoverability of all research – both text and non-text outputs and meets external standards for interoperability and the University of Westminster Press publishes open access monographs and journals. The use of persistent identifiers (e.g. ORCID iDs and DOIs) are encouraged where appropriate.

5.3. Responsible use of research indictors (metrics); any use of research indicators (also known as metrics) will take into account disciplinary differences and the career stage of the individual, and will be carried out in line with the guidance provided by the UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics and in line with the principles outlined in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), Leiden Manifesto and Metric Tide frameworks. No assessment will include use of journal impact factors or any hierarchy of journals.

6. Professional Guidance and Legislation

6.1. The University expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice set out in guidelines published by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), Research England, UK Research Innovation and, relevant scientific and learned societies, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and authorities, key examples of which are listed at Annex A.

6.2. Researchers are responsible for making themselves aware of any professional, statutory and regulatory authority requirements and supporting University policies and procedures, and keep up-to-date on any developments around these. The University will raise awareness of its own policies and procedures and provide training and development, resources and guidance on research ethics and will support researchers to adopt best practice in relation to ethical, legal and professional requirements.   The University has an online system for managing the ethical review of research.

6.3. Researchers must comply with University policies including those related to University Safety Health and Wellbeing requirements.

7.   Leadership

7.1.   The Vice Chancellor and the University Senior Management Team, including Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and Pro Vice Chancellor(Knowledge Exchange), , Heads of College, Heads of School, College Research Directors and Research Group/Centre Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the research environment and climate is conducive to the application of the principles laid out in this Code of Research Good Practice and the commitments of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

7.2.   Research leaders should ensure researchers access and have awareness of the policies and processes in place to govern research, provide access to training opportunities in research ethics and research integrity, as well as mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

7.3.   Research leaders are also required to ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision of researchers is provided, in accordance with the nature of the individual academic discipline. The researcher and research leader must ensure that the research includes rigour by applying disciplinary standards, when conducting research, using appropriate methods; adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; when drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and when communicating the results

8. Supervision and Mentoring

8.1.   It is the expectation of the University that appropriate mentoring, training and direction for research and supervision of researchers is available through the Colleges or other units with delegated responsibility for the management of standards and quality of the research.

8.2.   The University is committed to the continuous enhancement of its training programme for research supervisors through staff development sessions and through mentoring and leadership within Colleges.

8.3.   Guidance is available for supervisors covering doctoral supervision as well as all stages of the research process, including outlining or drawing up a hypothesis where appropriate, preparing applications for funding and research ethics review, the design of experimental or research protocols, data recording and data analysis, thesis writing and assessment/progression stages.

8.4.   The University and research leaders are responsible for ensuring there are mechanisms in place for supporting researchers in need of support and assistance regarding issues relating to research conduct and ensuring there is dissemination and awareness of relevant research policies and guidance.

9. Training and Development

9.1.   Doctoral researchers will be given opportunities to receive an induction and training and development in accordance with the University Doctoral Researcher Development Programme, which aims to meet the requirements of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF).

9.2.   The academic Colleges will ensure that researchers receive timely and appropriate training and development opportunities so that they understand and adopt best practice in research integrity and rigour. Managers of research staff should ensure research specific training and development needs are discussed when a need is identified and during their 'Professional Development Review' meetings. The University recognises it is particularly important that support is provided for researchers new to the University in understanding its polices and processes, systems for ethical review and governance and methods for gaining advice and

guidance.

9.3. All researchers are responsible for initiating discussions around their own training and development needs and attend workshops and briefing sessions as well as refresher sessions, as appropriate, including but not limited to: research methods, regulatory requirements and professional good practice, research ethics principles and review processes, participant (live or deceased) consent training (including for work under the University's Human Tissue Licence), equipment maintenance and use, lab safety, privacy and confidentiality, research data management, record keeping, publication and dissemination, authorship, Open Access, research team leadership, safety, health and well-being, budget management and other topics as appropriate.

10. Research Data

10.1. The University and its researchers must comply with all legal, ethical, funding body and organisational requirements for the collection, use and storage of data, especially personal data.

10.2. The University acknowledges its responsibility for awareness-raising, training, development of systems and supporting guidance in relation to research data management.

10.3. Research data management best practice is expected to be applied to all data collected or created. This includes the management of research related records, compliance with relevant copyright, data protection and FOI legislation and relevant institutional policies such as those relating to ethics, intellectual property and use and digital preservation.

10.4. It is the responsibility of researchers to meet the expectations of the University's Research Data Management policy including:

- Ensuring that research data is managed appropriately across its lifetime. This includes planning, design, collection and analysis, storage, description, and where appropriate, preservation and publication.

- Research data should be made as open as possible unless there are legal, ethical, commercial, intellectual property or other reasons not to do so. An appropriate licence should be applied to clarify the terms of data re-use

- Familiarising themselves with their research funder, publisher and other relevant external stakeholder requirements

10.5. Researchers should ensure at the beginning of any research project that there is clarity about data ownership and data management responsibilities and that these are documented in any collaboration agreement.

11. Intellectual Property (IP)

11.1. "The University and its researchers must ensure that any contracts or agreements relating to research include provision for ownership and use of intellectual property"[6]….the University Intellectual Property Policy is disseminated to researchers and advice is available to researchers when required.

11.2. Researchers need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations relating to intellectual property, including ownership, copyright, design and patent legislation. Importantly, researchers may generate intellectual property in which the University, researcher or external collaborators may have a vested interest. This can be particularly relevant where there is the potential to exploit any new knowledge or practice commercially, which can then potentially be developed to form an element of the academic enterprise activity of the University.

Researchers have an obligation to manage intellectual property in line with the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

11.3. If the research or associated practice may be commercially exploitable, Researchers should inform their College, applicable Research and Knowledge Exchange Office teams, and any research sponsor, where required to do so by the terms of the sponsorship, and in accordance with current University Intellectual Property Policy (Annex A).

11.4. Research supported by the University, Research Councils or charities is undertaken for public benefit and may not be undertaken solely for the purposes of commercial gain. However, commercial benefit from the exploitation of the results of the research may accrue to the researcher, the University and, by agreement, to any charitable sponsor of the research.

12. Publication Practice and Authorship

12.1. Researchers have the academic freedom to disseminate their research via the most appropriate mechanism and in a form appropriate to their academic discipline.

12.2. Researchers are expected to follow the core practices highlighted by the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE). In particular:

- Authorship and contributor-ship should be clarified prior to dissemination of research

- Any conflicts of interest/competing interests should be declared

- In line with the University's Research Data Management Policy, any datasets underpinning research, should be made openly available where possible

- Ethical oversight in line with the University of Westminster Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research is expected

- Meet the expectations articulated by the University of Westminster Intellectual Property Policy

13. Dissemination and publication of results

13.1. It is the responsibility of researchers to meet the expectations of the University's Open Access Policy relating to research outputs including:

- Adding a metadata record about all research outputs to WestminsterResearch (the university's repository of research outputs) via the Virtual Research Environment (VRE)

- In the case of journal articles and published conference proceedings, including a copy of the final accepted manuscript and a date of acceptance.

- Adding attachments for all other types of outputs where possible.

13.2. Publication of research results should follow the guidance in the University of Westminster Open Access Policy which states that:

- "when submitting to publishers, a standard institutional affiliation, "University of Westminster" should be used in all articles and papers, in preference to School, Department or Faculty names…"

- "the source of funding, including grant code if appropriate, should be acknowledged in all papers."

14. Ethical Practice in Research involving Humans, Animals and the Environment

14.1. This section should be read in conjunction with the University's Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research.

14.2. The University believes researchers should respect the dignity, rights, health, safety and privacy of all research participants, including researcher(s) and the reputation of the University; the welfare of animals; and the integrity of the environment.

14.3. The University is responsible for ensuring that clear and proportionate ethical review processes are in place, that these are complied with, and providing appropriate training and guidance for stakeholders where appropriate.

14.4. Researchers are required to comply with the University Ethics Code including obtaining University or other Ethics Committee approvals, where necessary, prior to the commencement of their research and obtaining amendments to approvals where appropriate throughout the duration of the research.

14.5. The University expects researchers to observe where applicable, the standards of practice set out in guidelines published by relevant professional bodies, regulatory authorities and other relevant organisations.

14.6. Throughout the lifecycle of their research, researchers should work to ensure that ethical issues relating to the research project are identified and managed..

Annex A

References and guidance documents

[1] Nolan Committee Standards in Public Life

[2] Universities UK, (2019) Concordat to Support Research Integrity

[3] UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO's), (2009) Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct

[4] Universities UK, (2019) Concordat to Support Research Integrity

[5] same as number 4 above

[6] UKRIO (2009) Code of Practice for Research; 'Intellectual Property', page 16

RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct

https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/reviews/grc/rcuk-grp-policy-and-guidelines-updated-apr-17-2-pdf/

Relevant documents;

BBSRC Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice

UK Research Integrity Office, Code of Practice for Research

Information Commissioner's Office – Data Protection Guide

European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)- Guidelines on Good Publication Practice

World Conferences on Research Integrity– Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research

Medical Research Council (MRC)– Research Good Practice Guidelines

Committee on Standards in Public Life – The seven principles of public life

VITAE – Researcher Development Framework

Science and Technologies Facilities Council - Research Grants Handbook

World Conferences on Research Integrity – Singapore Statement

Social Research Association – Research Ethics Guidance

[Health Research Authority (HRA)-Social Care Research](#)

[Universities UK (UUK)- Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)

[US Department of Health and Human Services; The Office of Research Integrity (ORI)](#)

[Wellcome Trust: Good Research Practice Guidelines](#)

University of Westminster Research Governance framework

- [Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)
- [Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [Open Access Policy](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)