

## **Framework for Research Governance – An overarching policy statement for research activity at the University of Westminster**

### **1. Introduction**

At the University of Westminster we pride ourselves on our record of excellence in research that makes a difference – to academia, to the professions, to business, to industry. We have a rich and diverse profile of activity across a broad range of subjects and, as highly as we value pure academic research, we are equally committed to ensuring that our knowledge delivers real-world benefits through knowledge exchange and applied research, i.e. research with impact (“[impact](#)” is defined in Annex A). The University recognises that all excellent research needs to be underpinned by the highest standards of practice, confidence in the integrity of its researchers and the institutional systems for ensuring these occur.

Research undertaken by the University should have a clear purpose and should meet or exceed recognised standards for research practice, ethics and integrity, thereby maintaining the confidence of the public and collaborators in the University’s governance of research. The University is therefore committed to:

- Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
- Developing and sustaining a culture of integrity, based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers in accordance with the requirements of the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#);
- Using transparent, robust and fair processes to address concerns and manage allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- Working together with researchers to strengthen the integrity of research and reviewing progress regularly and openly; and
- Actively engaging in national and international debates and developments regarding research practice and integrity.

Researchers and their supervisors or managers are responsible for ensuring their research activities meet the required standards, while Faculties and the University are responsible for ensuring researchers have a suitable research environment, including clear guidance on best research practice, the external environment and associated benchmarks, with clear processes to ensure effective and proportionate assessment and review. This document aims to set-out the overarching Framework for Research Governance at the University. The University recognises it has a responsibility to disseminate this policy and the associated research

support infrastructure and to offer appropriate training and development to those involved in the planning or delivery of research related activities. Compliance with supporting policies, codes and regulations is, however, the responsibility of individual researchers and failure to do so can result in research misconduct proceedings, which could result in disciplinary action, the withdrawal of support for research or the rescinding of any academic awards, positions, publications or other outputs that may have been obtained from the research.

## 2. What is Research?

There are different definitions of research. An example is:

“A process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction”<sup>1</sup>. Some alternative, but equally valid definitions have been summarised at [Annex A](#).

Research related activities range from undergraduate projects through doctoral degrees to large collaborative research projects comprised of professional researchers from both the University and external stakeholders. Research may be qualitative, quantitative or often adopt multiple methodologies. Research may be within a single discipline or be multi-disciplinary and be undertaken within the UK or elsewhere in the world.

## 3. University of Westminster Framework for Research Governance

In broad terms, Research Governance is a framework of policies, practices and procedures which:

- Sets minimum standards for the University’s research activities and research environment;
- Defines the mechanisms needed to deliver those standards; and
- Describes the monitoring, assessment and auditing arrangements to ensure compliance with those standards.

The University Framework for Research Governance applies to **all** research undertaken at or on behalf of the University of Westminster and researchers are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with the University’s expectations and for compliance with the policies, practices and procedures that make up the framework. The University is responsible for effectively communicating those expectations to researchers. It is recognised that the research environment is affected by a complex array of external influences, including external governance frameworks, which in turn inform the internal policies, practices and procedures. The key external influences and the associated University policies, procedures and codes are highlighted in [Annex B](#), and have been mapped to the following seven domains in [Annex C](#) (as

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<sup>1</sup> Concordat to support research integrity, Universities UK, 2012

the research environment within which the University operates evolves the Annexes will be updated at least annually):

- **Research Design/Methodology** – Ensuring research proposals are subject to appropriate and proportionate peer review to ensure the quality and validity of the research, including compliance with University policies and procedures; mandatory and statutory requirements; and the use of appropriate methodologies/research design. For student research this is normally carried out by a research supervisor. For doctoral researchers this is supplemented by the programme registration process via the Graduate School Board. For staff research, peer review, when required, should be undertaken by an experienced researcher who is independent of the proposed research programme. Researchers can obtain advice from their Head of Department, Research Centre Director or Faculty Research Director.
- **Safety, Health and Well-being** - Ensuring researchers are either employees of the University, formally registered as a student on a programme of academic study, or an authorised visiting researcher. In the absence of a formal relationship the University's insurance policies may have limited or no validity. Researchers are expected to comply with statutory health and safety legislation and the University Safety, Health and Wellbeing policies and associated procedures. In particular, researchers must carry out appropriate risk assessments, which should cover issues of institutional risk as well as individual risk to both researchers and research participants. Risk assessments should cover such issues as: fieldwork; lone working; working and travelling overseas; display screens; control of substances hazardous to health; laboratory safety; reputational risk, etc. A principle of beneficence should prevail, i.e. acting in the best interests of the research participants, which includes the well-being of the researcher(s).
- **Research Ethics** – Ensuring researchers 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. 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.

The Researcher is responsible for ensuring that they comply with the Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research and that appropriate ethical approval is sought and obtained before commencing their research. Certain types of research may be covered by statutory/mandatory requirements, both within the UK and in other countries. In addition, the Researcher may need to seek formal sponsorship/ management approval, in addition to seeking ethical approval.

- **Information Management** – The University has a well-developed information environment with a supporting framework and access to appropriate resources, both internally and externally, to encourage the delivery of the University's Research agenda. This includes a Virtual Research Environment, which helps ensure researchers comply

with the University Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research, the management of Doctoral Research programmes, project management and the [Open Access](#) policy. Procedures exist for data management and security and the publishing requirements of any funding bodies, e.g. Research Councils, NHS, Charities, etc. This can include the publishing of research proposals, and ultimately both positive and negative results. Researchers are expected to use the University's online archive, [WestminsterResearch](#), and comply with the requirements of the University Policies on [Dissemination of Research and Scholarly Output](#) and [Open Access](#). The University of Westminster Press also exists to help encourage and facilitate open access publication. Researchers need to be conscious of the requirements of the [Data Protection Act](#) and the [Freedom of Information Act](#) and comply with University policies related to data management and security, seeking advice from the University Information Compliance Manager when necessary. Data security protocols should be used, including encryption and secure storage to protect personal information.

- **Finance** – Ensuring researchers (supervisors in the case of student research) meet required standards of financial probity and comply with the University [Finance policies and procedures](#), including the costing of research proposals. Where there is to be collaborative provision, researchers should seek advice and support from the Research Centre Director, Faculty Research Director or Dean as appropriate and liaise with the team in the University responsible for supporting Research, Business Development and Knowledge Exchange activities. In addition, where the collaboration involves academic study the partner approval processes managed by the Academic Quality and Standards Office and the Graduate School Board need to be followed. Researchers must not sign any legally binding memorandums, agreements or contracts as they need to be approved and signed by an authorised officer of the University in compliance with the financial policies and procedures.
- **Intellectual property** - 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 University's academic enterprise activity.
- **People** – Researchers are expected to comply with their conditions of employment or student registration. In addition, researchers are expected to participate in a programme of continuous professional development (CPD) and comply with the requirements of the [Researcher Development Framework](#).

#### 4. Roles and responsibilities in research and knowledge exchange

It is essential that the various roles and responsibilities in research are clearly articulated, understood and agreed as the nomenclature may vary between different organisations/disciplines.

Typically researchers<sup>2</sup> (e.g. chief/principal investigators/researchers) will be responsible for developing research proposals that:

- are methodologically sound and ethical;
- are conducted in accordance with the agreed protocol, legal requirements and accepted standards of good practice, including where appropriate, any professional or discipline specific codes of practice;
- ensure compliance with the University's arrangements for managing safety and participant welfare whilst in the study; and
- disseminate the results of the research to participants (sponsors, funders, and host organisations).

Researchers should seek appropriate management permission, e.g. within the Faculty (see Faculty responsibilities below) and from any external collaborator(s) before commencing research activities.

In contrast the University will typically act as an employer<sup>3</sup> and a promoter of a quality research culture by ensuring that

- researchers understand and discharge their responsibilities;
- that research is properly designed and submitted for review as necessary;
- research is managed, monitored and reported according to the agreed protocol; and
- action is taken if misconduct or fraud is suspected.

Where appropriate it will also act as a funder<sup>4</sup> or sponsor<sup>5</sup> of the research.

Within the University there are also teams with specific areas of responsibility in relation to research governance, these include: the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> *Researchers: are people who conduct research, including but not limited to: employees; independent contractors or consultants; research students; visiting or emeritus members of staff; or members of staff on joint clinical or honorary contracts.*

<sup>3</sup> *Employer: any bodies that conduct or host research; employ, support or host researchers; teach research students; or allow research to be carried out under their auspices.*

<sup>4</sup> *Funder: The organisation providing funding for the research, such as via a contract, grant or donation to an authorised person at the employing organisation. The funder also has a key role in quality assurance and for securing value for money.*

<sup>5</sup> *Sponsor – an individual, organisation or group taking on responsibility for securing the arrangements to initiate, manage and finance the research. If more than one party takes on sponsor responsibilities then the responsibilities can be on a co-sponsor basis but these must be clearly documented.*

Exchange) supported by the Executive Officer (Research); Research Quality and Standards; Research and Enterprise Services; Graduate School and Graduate School Registry; Information Services; Human Resources; Recruitment and Marketing; Procurement; and Faculty Research Support teams ([Annex C](#) and [Annex D](#)).

## **5. Implementation, Compliance Monitoring and Audit**

The University recognises the importance of effective policy implementation both at the University and Faculty level and is committed to facilitating focused dissemination and supporting training and development activities to further develop the University's research culture. The monitoring and audit of implementation of and compliance with the Framework for Research Governance is an essential element in discharging its own responsibilities for ensuring high standards are maintained and applied consistently across the University. Researchers are expected to comply with audits undertaken internally by the University and external stakeholders. Researchers should comply with the Framework of Research Governance and encourage others to do so and if necessary promptly report cases of poor research practice or conduct.

## **6. Advice and Guidance**

In the first instance advice and guidance on research governance can be obtained from the relevant Faculty, e.g. the Faculty's Research Ethics Coordinator, PhD Programme Coordinators, or the Faculty Research Director. Independent advice and guidance on research governance issues can be obtained by contacting the Research Quality and Standards Team in the Academic Quality and Standards Office in the Academic Registrar's Department ([Annex C](#) and [Annex D](#)).

## Annex A – Alternative Definitions of “Research” and “Research Impact”

### 1. Frascati – Definition of Research

Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

The term R&D covers three activities: basic research, applied research and experimental development... **Basic research** is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view. **Applied research** is also original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective. **Experimental** development systematic work, drawing on existing knowledge gained from research and/or practical experience, which is directed to producing new materials, products or devices, to installing new processes, systems and services, or to improving substantially those already produced or installed. R&D covers both formal R&D in R&D units and informal or occasional R&D in other units.

OECD, (2002). *Frascati Manual 2002*. [online] OECD Publications. Available from:

[http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/frascati-manual-2002\\_9789264199040-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/frascati-manual-2002_9789264199040-en) [Accessed 17 Sept 2016].

### 2. AHRC – Definition of Research

Research activities should primarily be concerned with research processes, rather than outputs. This definition is built around three key features and your proposal must fully address all of these, in order to be considered eligible for support:

1. It must define a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its aims and objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions, issues or problems to be addressed.
2. It must specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. You must specify why it is important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution this project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area.
3. It must specify the research methods for addressing and answering the research questions, issues or problems. You must state how, in the course of the research project, you will seek to answer the questions, address the issues or solve the problems. You should also explain the rationale for your chosen research methods and why you think they provide the most appropriate means by which to address the research questions, issues or problems.

Arts & Humanities Research Council, (2016). *Research Funding Guide*. [online] Arts & Humanities Research Council. Available from:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/research-funding-guide/> [Accessed 17 Sept 2016].

### 3. REF2014 – Definition of Research

1. For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.
2. It **includes** work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It **excludes** routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also **excludes** the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.
3. It **includes** research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.

Research Excellence Framework 2014, (2011, 2012). *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*. [online] HEFCE, Scottish Funding Council, HEFCW, Dept for Employment & Learning. Available from:

[http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceonsubmissions/GOS\\_including\\_addendum.pdf](http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceonsubmissions/GOS_including_addendum.pdf) [Accessed 23 May 2016].

### 4. REF2014 – Definition of Research Impact

For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life beyond academia.

- Impact **includes**, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.
- Impact **includes** the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.
- For the purposes of the impact element of the REF:
  - a. Impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector (whether in the UK or internationally) are **excluded**. (The submitted



unit's contribution to academic research and knowledge is assessed within the "outputs" and "environment" elements of REF.)

- b. Impacts on students, teaching or other activities within the submitting HEI are **excluded**.
- c. Other impacts within the higher education sector, including on teaching or students, are **included** where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI.

Research Excellence Framework 2014, (2011, 2012). *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*. [online] HEFCE, Scottish Funding Council, HEFCW, Dept for Employment & Learning. Available from:

<[http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceonsubmissions/GOS\\_including\\_addendum.pdf](http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceonsubmissions/GOS_including_addendum.pdf)> [Accessed 23 May 2016].

## Annex B – External influences and Internal Policies, Practices and Procedures

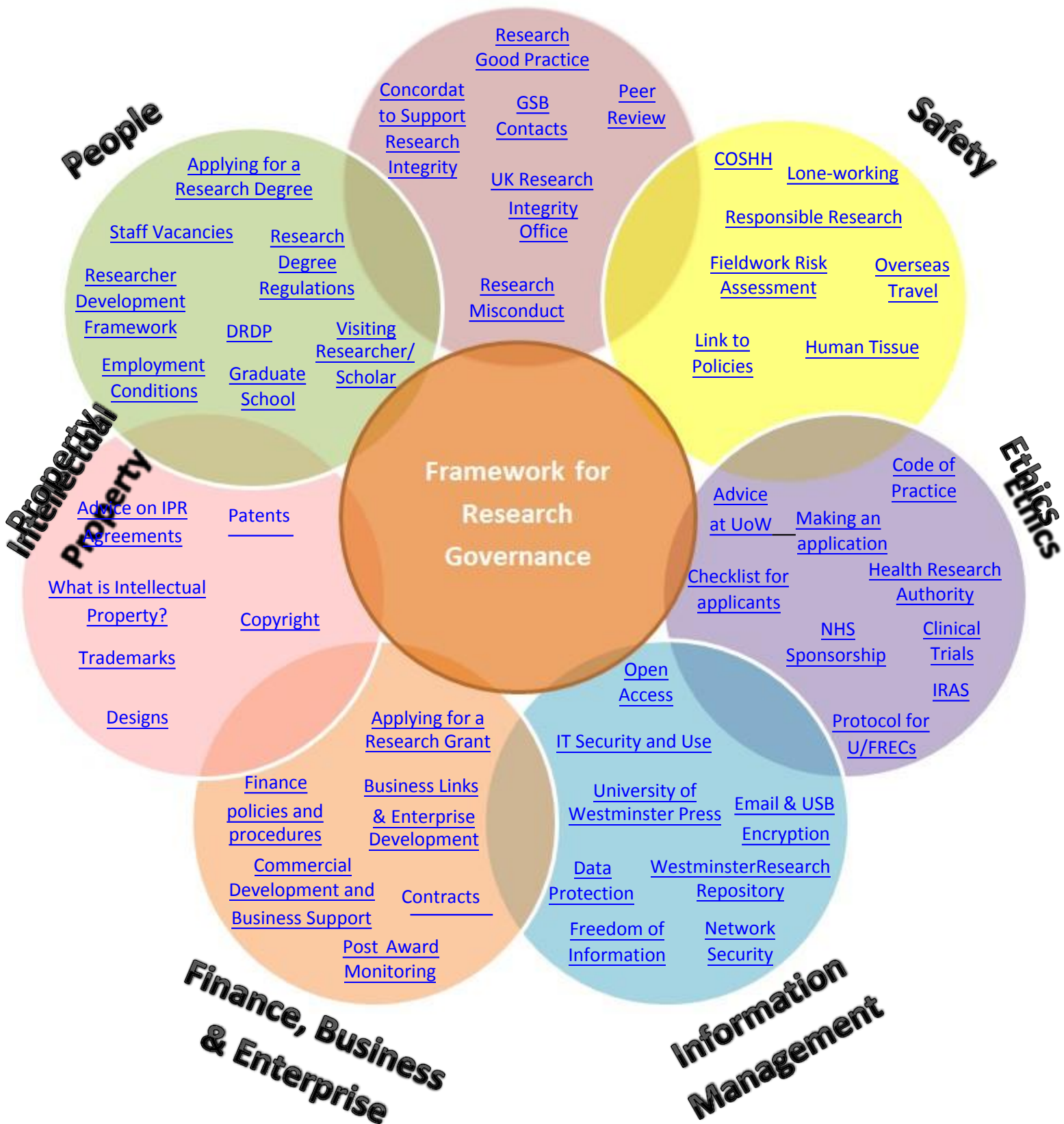
### • External influences

- Anti/Counter-Terrorism and Chemical Warfare legislation (statutory) and codes of practice, e.g. on [security-sensitive research](#), [Academic Technology Approval Scheme](#), restrictions on research involving certain [chemicals](#) and [pathogens](#), etc.;
- Codes of practice and rules from funding bodies, e.g. [RCUK](#), EU, etc. (mandatory);
- [Data Protection Act](#) and [Freedom of Information Act](#) (statutory);
- [Health and Safety legislation](#) (statutory);
- [Human Tissue Act](#) (statutory);
- [Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency](#) (statutory);
- [Mental Capacity Act](#) (statutory);
- [Research Excellence Framework](#) (mandatory);
- [UK Framework for Health and Social Care Research \(PDF\), October 2017](#)
- Research Integrity – meeting the requirements of [The concordat to support research integrity](#) and the UK Research Integrity Office's [guidance](#) (advisory but effectively mandatory if in receipt of public funds via HEFCE);
- The laws and customs of other countries within which the university undertakes research activities or through which they transit.
- [Health Research Authority UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research website](#)

### • Internal Policies, Practices and Procedures

- [Academic Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and the equivalent regulations for taught awards that include a research component;
- [Collaborative Provision](#), including: due diligence review, business risk assessment, and contract negotiation (policy and procedures);
- Commercialisation of research - enterprise activities including Knowledge Exchange, including [Knowledge Transfer Partnerships](#); [Finance policies and procedures](#);
- [Information Security](#) (policy and procedures);
- [Intellectual Property Rights](#) management (policy and procedures).
- [Open Access Publishing](#) and use of [WestminsterResearch](#) and the University Press (policy and procedures);
- Research Centres (policy and procedures);
- [Research Ethics](#) (code of practice);
- [Research Good Practice](#) (code of practice);
- [Research Governance – National Health Service Research – Sponsorship](#) (policy and procedures);
- [Research Misconduct](#) (policy and procedures);
- [Risk management](#) including [Safety, Health and Well-being](#) (policy and procedures), [Insurance](#) (policy and procedures) and the [University Risk Register](#) (policy and procedures);

Annex C – Areas of Responsibility Relating to Research  
**Research Design**



Annex D – Matrix of Governance \* = may apply in some circumstances

	Principal Investigator (Staff)	Supporting Researchers (Staff)	research degree student	Master's Students	Undergraduate Students	Visiting Researcher	Supervisors (Also PI for UG & PGT)	PhD Co-ordinators	Head of Department	Research Centre Director	Faculty Research Director	Dean of Faculty	Research and Enterprise support	Research Ethics Committee	Graduate School & GS Registry	Collaborative Partners
<a href="#">This Policy Statement</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">CoP Research Good Practice</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">CoP Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Academic Regulations for Research Degrees</a>			✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	*
<a href="#">Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Dissemination of Research &amp; Scholarly Output</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			*
<a href="#">Open Access</a>	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
Research Centres	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
<a href="#">Financial Regulations</a>	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<a href="#">Collaborative Doctoral Provision</a>	*		*				*	*		*	*	*	✓		✓	✓
<a href="#">Research and Enterprise support policies</a>	*	*	*			*	*			*	*	*				
<a href="#">Risk Assessments and Safety, Health &amp; Wellbeing Policies</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insurances including <a href="#">Travel Insurance Request</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
IT Security	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Visiting Researcher Policy</a>	*	*				✓		*		*	*	*	*		✓	*

Acknowledgements:

Concordat to support research integrity, UniversitiesUK -

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

Researcher Development Framework, Vitae - <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>

Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) 2005, Dept of Health -  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/139565/dh\\_4122427.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/139565/dh_4122427.pdf)

Research Governance: Information for Researchers, Keele University -  
<http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchgovernance/>