



Research Integrity Annual Statement 2016-17

Reviewing and streamlining processes to support a culture of research integrity

1. The 2014-15 and 2015-16 Annual Statements both refer to the ongoing review of the ethical review processes across UCL, as well as the subsequent pilot of the recommendations from the review. This pilot continued throughout 2016-17 within the faculties of Laws, the Bartlett and Population Health Sciences.
2. A great deal of staff time across UCL has been devoted this academic year to undertake the pilot, not only to assess the previous recommendations and to work through the practicalities involved, but also to assess the level and type of impact the various changes would have for staff and students, and how this could be managed.
3. The pilot is due to end in October 2017 and a final report on the outcomes of the pilot and any recommendations will be submitted to the Research Governance Committee for consideration.

New Promotions Framework

4. The 2015-16 Annual Statement on page 6 referred to work being undertaken to create a new framework for promotions and that the draft was due to be circulated for staff consultation. The new UCL Academic Careers Framework has now been published.

General Code of Ethical Principles

5. A General Code of Ethical Principles was created to guide staff and students when making decisions with ethical considerations. This code (distinct from guidance on research ethics) centres around a set of ethical principles; responsibility and accountability, integrity, and UCL values. It also refers staff to a number of key documents; including the Dignity at Work Policy, research integrity, Information Security Policy, Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy, and the Codes of Conduct for researchers and students.
6. The General Code of Ethical Principles can be accessed via the UCL website¹.

Training & Awareness Raising

Integrity Training Working Group

7. During the previous academic year, the Research Degrees Committee set up an Integrity Training Working Group to review UCL provision on research integrity training and web-based information, and to consider ways of providing training across UCL. The Working Group began work at the start of this academic year and submitted their final report to the Research Degrees Committee in March 2017.
8. A number of recommendations and actions were proposed, with the main recommendation being the creation of a Research Integrity Training Framework to provide mandatory, core training, and pathways for advanced training in generic and in

¹ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/policies/conduct/ethical-principles>

discipline-specific areas. Training would be provided through a mixture of central and locally provision, as well as online and self-directed learning. Further resources on research integrity would also be created for staff to use at a local level during meetings or locally held training events.

Research Integrity Training Framework

9. The Research Integrity Training Framework was created through the Integrity Training Working Group to support a culture of research integrity at UCL and to provide a clear structure for research integrity training for UCL staff and students
10. The Framework was designed based around what would be required for a research project to be said to have integrity, and therefore the knowledge and skills researchers would need to have to ensure the research has integrity (e.g. appropriate research methods, thorough research data management, consideration of ethical issues, etc.). It is applicable to all researchers across all disciplines and can be used in two ways:
 - a reference to assist researchers throughout the research lifecycle, in ensuring their research has integrity; and
 - a training tool for researchers to assess their training needs, according to the research they are undertaking.
11. The Framework has 4 levels with Level 1 forming the foundation, Levels 2 and 3 providing core training, and Level 4 relating to advanced and discipline specific training. The Framework is publicly available on the research integrity website² along with detailed guidance on the pathways through the Framework, as well as an explanation of each level. Some suggestions for training are provided and these will be expanded over time to provide a wide set of training options available across UCL.

Introduction to Research Support & Integrity

12. As mentioned in the last Annual Statement, the Introduction to Research Support & Integrity workshop was launched in 2016-17. The session introduces attendees to research integrity, the culture of integrity at UCL and the elements of integrity; research data management, data protection, research ethics and open access, as well as the support available through Research IT Services. A summary of the course is available on the Doctoral Schools Development Programme website³.
13. Over the academic year 4 3-hour workshops were run, with 121 attending. As this was the first year, the workshop will be further developed and revised during the academic year 2017-18 based on feedback from attendees and speakers.
14. This workshop now forms a core part of Level 2 of the Research Integrity Training Framework for postgraduate researchers; Introduction to research integrity. To ensure that all postgraduate researchers have access to this training, work will commence in 2017-18 on adapting the workshop into an online version; as recommended by the Integrity Training Working Group.

Video series

15. As mentioned in the 2015-16 Annual Statement, filming of a research integrity video series began. Filming of the video series concluded in 2016-17, and though editing started, there was not adequate time to complete and publish the series. This work will continue in 2017-18 and the series will be part of Level 2 of the Research Integrity

² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/research-integrity-training-framework>

³ https://doctoral-skills.ucl.ac.uk/course-details.pht?course_ID=2797

Training Framework; acting as a key awareness-raising tool on research integrity for staff and students.

Guidance and support for researchers

Sensitive Research

16. All researchers have a duty to consider carefully the risks and consequences associated with their research. This includes risks and consequences for researchers, participants, other individuals or groups connected to the research or research participants, as well as for the reputation of UCL and its researchers.
17. Research that is classed as 'sensitive' carries with it particular risks that need to be managed, with particular consideration being given to the potential consequences of these risks. It is important therefore that, in order to minimise the impact/consequences for the individuals/groups concerned, researchers should consider beforehand what potential risks may arise from the research, to whom and how these risks could be removed, reduced or best managed.
18. To this end in the academic year 2015-16 a UCL definition of 'sensitive research' was agreed. The definition, along with accompanying guidance was published on the research integrity website in September 2017⁴. The accompanying guidance for researchers included advice on assessing potential risk, and areas to consider such as the misuse of research, information security and data protection issues, and insurance.
19. Extended guidance for researchers on managing sensitive research will be added in due course.

Research Integrity POSTnote and Inquiry

POSTnote

20. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology published a POSTnote on research integrity⁵ in January 2017; created through a review of literature as well as a number of interviews with a range of stakeholders. As a member of the Russell Group, UCL was part of the interview process through the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum.

Research Integrity Inquiry

21. Following on from the publication of the POSTnote the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee launched an inquiry into the issues raised by the POSTnote as well as following up on the 2011 report on the inquiry into Peer Review in Scientific Publications.
22. An open call for written evidence was then made. UCL submitted written evidence in response to this call, both as institution and as a member of the Russell Group; both of which are publically available on the Inquiry publications webpage⁶.

⁴ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/sensitive-research>

⁵ <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/POST-PN-0544>

⁶ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry6/publications/>

Research Misconduct

23. The UCL procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research closely follows the UK Research Integrity Office's model whilst allowing some minor variations to fit with local circumstances and usage of terminology. Further to the review of the procedure conducted in 2015-16, over the past year some further amendments have been made to the procedure to further ensure a proportionate response to allegations and to enable greater expediency in considering allegations. In relation to the screening process, the procedure now allows for this stage to be conducted via email circulation where the matter appeared to be straightforward. The Named Person was also able to resolve straightforward cases at the initial assessment stage where they are not considered to be significant and there is no intent to deceive. UCL also has a standing a pool of screening panellists from across all UCL's faculties from which to draw on to form screening panels. Recruitment to the pool has been repeated in 2016-17. Training has also been developed and delivered in house for the pool members to ensure fair treatment and will be repeated in 2017-18. The current version of the procedure was implemented on 1 January 2017. It can be accessed via the UCL website⁷.

Summary of investigations

24. No cases of academic misconduct were proved in 2016-17. Three cases were referred by screening panels for formal investigation in 2016-17 and they are still in process and will be completed in 2017-18.

Special Inquiry into Regenerative Medicine Research at UCL

25. A number of reported cases at UCL fell within the area of regenerative medicine research at UCL and concerns had been expressed from external funders. During 2016-17 session, a Special Inquiry was set up, outwith the procedure, to look into the role of regenerative medicine research at UCL. Its report was published in September 2017 that included a number of recommendations, some of which related to the operation of UCL's procedure. It is intended that a Task and Finish Group be formed in 2017-18 to develop an associated action plan for implementing the panel's recommendations.

⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/governance-and-committees/resgov/research-misconduct-procedure-jan-2017.pdf>