

Middlesex University

Annual Research Integrity Report – 2019-20

1. Introduction

This has been an unusual year with considerable activity in support of our REF submission, and the significant disruption resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. In spite of the disruption, Middlesex University has remained committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of ethics and integrity in its research.

The University was an early adopter of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (1) and continues to adhere to the principles and practices set out in that document. All staff and students engaged in research are required to conduct their activities in line with the UUK Concordat, including any visitors who make use of, or are supported by, the University and/or its facilities.

2. Summary of Activities for the 2019/20 Academic Year

Work has continued throughout the past academic year to both raise awareness of and further embed research integrity practice and policy. Two actions planned for 2018/19 have been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and have been rolled through to coming year (see Section 4 below).

Research degree vivas moved to an online mode following the initial Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020. A detailed procedure was developed and approved, including the recording of vivas, to ensure that the integrity of the process was maintained, in accordance with our Research Degree Regulations.

The University has been engaged in a full review of its strategy (Strategy 2031) throughout the year, which will be concluded in 1920/21. Research and Knowledge Exchange are key elements of the review with research governance and integrity featuring strongly. New activities are expected to arise from this review in the second half of the coming academic year.

3. Summary of Investigations

There were ten reported cases of academic misconduct in respect of research integrity during the 2019/20 year, all involving research students. Eight of the ten cases involved students at the transfer stage of their studies and two at the final viva stage. All cases have been investigated and concluded with the eight students at transfer stage being permitted to proceed with penalties and the two cases involving students at the final viva stage having their theses returned for reworking with a final resubmission attempt. There have been no cases involving academic staff.

4. Actions for the 2020/21 Academic Year

The following activities and actions are planned for the coming academic year:

- Review and revalidation of the University's Code of Practice for Research (2), last updated in 2016
- Review of other relevant University research practice and policies to ensure alignment with the updated Code of Practice for Research
- Approval of Research Degree Regulations to include update/enhancement of research integrity content (delayed from 2019/20)
- Review of practices and procedures for the sharing and monitoring of research integrity between the University and our partner sites (delayed from 2019/20)
- Review and update of the Career Development programme for researchers in line with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (3)

5. References

(1) The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/the-concordat-for-research-integrity.aspx>

(2) Code of Practice for Research – Principles and Procedures

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/opportunities/research-at-middlesex/research-ethics>

(3) The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/concordat/full>

See also:

Middlesex University Research Ethics Review Framework Statement:

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/opportunities/research-at-middlesex/research-ethics>

Middlesex Online Research Ethics (MORE) Applicant Guidance Notes (Student & Staff)

<https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-ethics-framework>

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