Middlesex University

Annual Research Integrity Report – 2017-18

1. Introduction
Middlesex University is 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 adheres to the principles and practices set out in that document.

The University expects that all staff and students engaged in research 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.

The University's Code of Practice for Research (2) was updated in 2016 to accommodate any necessary changes required at that time and to consolidate the requirements of the Concordat. Since then, UUK has published a progress report (3) and the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee have undertaken an inquiry into research integrity and compliance with the Concordat.

Likewise, the University's Research Ethics Review Framework Statement (4) was reviewed and updated in 2014 and is due for review in the 2018/19 academic year. The Middlesex Online Research Ethics system (5), introduced in 2016, is now firmly embedded and has proved to be a very valuable resource. A series of workshops is provided each year which all research students, supervisors and expected to attend.

2. Summary of Activities for the 2017/18 Academic Year
Much of the activity during the 2017/18 academic year focussed on the issues highlighted in the UUK Progress Report (3), with an ongoing review of existing practice and arrangements and actions to address any gaps identified. One of the important findings of the UUK Progress Report (3) was:

'One area for improvement identified in this report is in the provision of public information on action to promote and embed the principles set out in the concordat. This is not due to a lack of activity, as this report demonstrates; however, there is a need for more to be done to improve accountability. Only 35 annual narrative statements were identified, and half of institutional websites lacked easy-to-find information on research integrity activities and the concordat.'
(Para 11, page 3)

One such gap was a recommendation in the Concordat that:
*'. . . **employers of researchers** should present a short annual statement to their own governing body'*, and further, *'To improve accountability, and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity, this statement should be made publicly available.'*

Processes have been put in place during the year for a formal approval route to Academic Board for an annual statement and, once approved, for public dissemination via the Internet. As part of these preparations, the public facing research web pages have been updated to simplify, and make more evident, where all information relevant to research integrity may be found. This is due to go live at the start of the 2018/19 academic session.

The research integrity and ethics content of the research student and the supervisor training workshops were strengthened for 2017/18 and made available via webinar presentations in addition to the ongoing face-to-face sessions. In total, 11 of these workshops were offered during the year, with 8 for students (4 face-to-face and 4 webinars) and 3 for supervisors.

Other important activity during the 2017/18 academic year included a response from the University to the House of Commons Science and technology inquiry.

3. Summary of Investigations
There were no reported cases of academic misconduct in respect of research integrity during the 2017/18 year.

4. Actions for the 2018/18 Academic Year
The following activities and actions are planned for the coming academic year:
- Development and trialling of an interactive, online learning/training resource to supplement existing provision (e.g. face-to-face workshops), to further raise awareness and engagement among all researchers
- Inclusion of research integrity and ethics in generic staff welcome/induction sessions
- Review of the Research Ethics Review Framework Statement with particular attention to the strong linkages between ethics and integrity, with a view to streamlining activities in the interests of greater clarity and transparency
- Review of Information Paper on Ethical Management of Knowledge Transfer Activities to ensure consistency with recent developments (e.g. enhanced HEIF reporting, GCRF Strategy, etc.)
- Elevation of research integrity to standing item on RKEC agenda.

5. References
(1) The Concordat to Support Research Integrity
https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2012/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf

(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 Research Integrity – A Progress Report
https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/concordat-research-integrity-progress-report.pdf

(4) Middlesex University Research Ethics Review Framework Statement:
https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/opportunities/research-at-middlesex/research-ethics

(5) Middlesex Online Research Ethics (MORE) Applicant Guidance Notes (Student & Staff)
https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-ethics-framework

Information Paper on Ethical Management of Knowledge Transfer Activities
https://www.intra.mdx.ac.uk/_media/_intranet/document-library/j-k-l/KT-Ethical-Managment-of-KT-Activities.pdf

See also:
https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/public-policy-statements

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