Code of Practice for Research

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Introduction

Honesty, accountability, openness and integrity are vital qualities for all academic researchers from all disciplines. The University expects all members of staff and students to observe the highest ethical and professional standards in their research and is committed to ensuring that all researchers should be able to pursue their work in an atmosphere free from prejudice and harassment.

This Code of Practice (the 'Code') sets out standards of performance and conduct expected of all staff and students engaged in research at St Mary's University.

Observance of the Code

All staff and students engaged in research must familiarise themselves with the Code and ensure that its provisions are observed. Heads of Schools, School Research Directors and Directors of Research Centres have a responsibility to seek to ensure compliance with the Code in their areas. The University will make newly appointed academic staff aware of the Code as part of the staff induction process. The Code will also form part of the induction for all new research students. Supervisors of students engaged in research will seek to ensure compliance with the Code on the part of such students.

A. Principles of good research practice

The University expects the following general principles to be understood and observed by all researchers:

A1 Maintain honest and open professional standards
A2 Accountability and integrity in observing legal and ethical requirements laid down by the University and appropriate professional bodies
A3 Recognise the importance of good leadership and co-operation in research groups
A4 Be aware of the needs of inexperienced researchers
A5 Plan and conduct research including the documenting and scrutiny of results, security of data and the publication of results
A6 Attribute honestly the contribution of others
A7 Report any conflict of interest, actual or prospective, to the appropriate person

B. Management of good research practice

B1 Honesty:
Researchers must be honest in respect of their own research and that of others and ensure that data and results are accurate
B2 Openness:
Recognising the need for researchers to protect their own research interests, the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and members of the public. In respect of the results, researchers need to be aware of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) which means that any individuals have the right to request any information held by the University. The Data Protection Act 1998 places

responsibilities and obligations on the University in the way that it processes information about living individuals. The Act gives individuals the rights to access data and those who record and use personal data must be open about how this data is used and stored.

B3 Accountability:
Organisations and researchers must ensure that their research complies with any agreements relating to a project. If the research involves human participants in any way, researchers must comply with the *University's Ethics Guidelines and Procedures*. Researchers should also follow the requirements and guidance of relevant professional bodies.

B4 Integrity:
Researchers must be honest about any possible conflict of interest issues. Plagiarism, deception or fabrication of results is a serious disciplinary issue. All researchers are encouraged to report any cases of suspected misconduct or malpractice through the procedure outlined in the *Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct.*

B5 Leadership and Management:
Within the University, it is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure that all research is undertaken in accordance with good research practice.
Within Schools and Research Centres, it is the responsibility of the Head of School or Research Centre Director to encourage a research environment of mutual cooperation and open exchange of ideas.

B6 Training:
Responsibility for ensuring that all new researchers understand good research practice lays with the University through staff inductions and training and with Schools in their mentoring of all new staff.

B7 Planning and conducting research:
If applying for external funding, all researchers must ensure that they comply with University policies including financial regulations. Guidance on applying for research funding is available from the Research and Enterprise team.
Ethics – research involving human participants must adhere to the *University's Ethics Guidelines and Procedures*. It is the responsibilities of all researchers to ensure that they are compliant with the ethics procedures (guidance is available from School Ethics Representatives)
All research carried out within the University must comply with:

- *The University Policy on Equal Opportunities and Diversity*
- *The University Health and Safety policies*
- *The University Data Management Policy*

➢ Documenting results – researchers should keep accurate and transparent records of their results including sources of research material. This demonstrates good practice and also minimizes cases of allegations of research misconduct. Researchers must ensure that they comply with the Data Protection Act of 1998 which applies to research that involves data collected about living individuals and requires that such data should not be used for purposes other than for those for which it was collected.
➢ A critical approach – researchers should be prepared to question the outcome of their research and be challenged on their outcomes once published
➢ Security of data – Primary data which is the basis for publications should be securely stored for an appropriate time in compliance with the *University's Data Management Policy*. Disposal of data and samples should be carried out in accordance with appropriate internal or external policies and adhering to the *University's Ethics Guidelines and Procedure.*

> ➤ Publication of results – The University expects that anyone listed as an author on a publication accepts responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the research. To ensure a high standard of publication, researchers should seek an appropriate form of peer review prior to publication

B8 Acknowledging the role of contributors

Anyone contributing in a substantial way to the research should be acknowledged. Formal contributors should be either listed as co-authors or otherwise acknowledged appropriately in the publication. Publications should normally include the names of all contributing authors. Where publications are issued by or on behalf of a Research Centre or Research Institute, this should be clearly indicated and the names of contributing members of that Centre or Institute should appear on the front matter of the document. Funders or other collaborating bodies should also be acknowledged, as appropriate.

B9 Misconduct

B9.1   Misconduct in research is defined as any breach of the University's *Code of Practice for Research,* or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic and scientific communities for proposing, conduction and reporting research. It specifically encompasses, but is not restricted to:

i)   Fabrication, including the creation of false date or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent.

ii)   Falsification, including the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery and/or consents.

iii)   Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and or involvement.

iv)   Plagiarism, including the general misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission. Where permission is given to use other sources, acknowledgement of source should still be noted in the normal way. If the original author(s) of that material or intellectual property does not wish to be acknowledged, a footnote or general note should be provided to explain that material has been included with the permission of original author(s) and/or copyright holder(s) but under condition of anonymity.

v)   Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to:
- humans
- the environment

vi)   Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

vii)   Intentional damage to, or removal of, the research-related property of another.

viii)   Intentional non-compliance with: the terms and conditions governing the award of external funding for research; the University's policies and procedures relating to research, including accounting requirements, ethics and health and safety regulations; or any other legal or ethical requirements for the conduct of research.

B9.2   Misconduct in research does not include unintentional error or professional differences in interpretation or judgment.
For the avoidance of doubt, misconduct in research includes acts of omission as well as acts of commission.

B9.3   Staff and students have a duty to report misconduct where they have good reason to believe it is occurring to the Research Integrity Officer. The University will investigate allegations or complaints about misconduct in research or scholarly fraud.

B9.4   In particular, any allegation or complaint of misconduct with be investigated and dealt with under the University's *Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research* and may be subject to action under the University's disciplinary procedures. Alleged misconduct in research relating to a thesis which has been submitted for examination will normally be investigated as described in the *Research Student Handbooks and Code of Practices.*

B9.5   Any complainant who can be shown to have acted maliciously may also be subject to action under the University's disciplinary procedures.

References

RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct (updated April 2017)
http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/grc/rcukpolicyguidelinesgovernancegoodresearchconduct-pdf/

UK Research Integrity Office Good Practice for Research (2009)
http://www.ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/

PGR Handbook & Code of Practice
http://staffnet/academic-services/research-support/Pages/Regulations.aspx

Human Resources Procedures
http://staffnet/services-departments/HumanResources/Documents/Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf
http://staffnet/services-departments/HumanResources/Documents/Procedure-for-the-Suspension-of-Staff.pdf

Procedure for investigating allegations of research misconduct
http://www.smuc.ac.uk/research/research-integrity.htm

University's Ethics Guidelines and Procedures
http://staffnet/Governance/AcademicBoardCommittees/ethics-committee/Pages/default.aspx

The University Policy on Equal Opportunities and Diversity
http://staffnet/services-departments/HumanResources/Pages/Reports,-Policies-and-Procedures.aspx

The University Health and Safety policies
http://staffnet/services-departments/HealthandSafety/Pages/default.aspx

Data Management Policy

Ethics Committee	Approved	15/10/14
Research & Enterprise Committee	Approved	10/12/14
Academic Board	Approved	28/12/14
University Research Committee	Updated	6/12/17