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Code of Research Good Practice
2017/18

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Note

1. All sections of this document are available online. The online version is the current definitive one and takes precedence in the event of any discrepancy. The Code is available at the website address below:

    westminster.ac.uk/research-framework

2. **IMPORTANT:** The Code of Research Good Practice takes account of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research. The following code needs to be read in the context of recent developments in the area of research integrity and staff and students involved in research should make themselves familiar with the Concordat and the UKRIO Code – links are provided at the end of this document.

Code of Research Good Practice

1 Introduction

1.1 The University of Westminster is committed to conducting its business in accordance with the seven principles identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life[1]; the five commitments outlined in the Concordat to support research integrity[2]; and the principles contained within Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct[3]. The University is responsible for ensuring that its research is carried out in conformity with current legislation.

1.2 The University expects all those engaged in research, including its academic employees, doctoral researchers, postgraduate students, visiting researchers and in addition any other staff undertaking research that is externally funded or likely to be disseminated to observe these principles and comply with the requirements of the University Framework for Research Governance, irrespective of the sources of their funding, or their area of research. It is also recognised that Undergraduate students undertaking research projects/dissertations are primarily engaged in developing research skills. It should be recognised that a key feature of research skills development is the ability to meet recognised standards of research ethics and integrity, and so any undergraduate project that involves human participants, potentially sensitive identifiable data or which may have an impact upon others including the environment must also comply with the requirements of the University Framework for Research Governance including the Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research..

1.3 The document is only one element in the University Framework for Research Governance covering good practice in research, which is also informed by the following essential documents:

- Framework for Research Governance – The over-arching policy statement of the University;

- Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research (Ethics Code);

- Public Interest Disclosure policy;

- Human Resources policies (disciplinary, grievance, staff contracts, conflict of interest policies etc.);

- Regulations and supporting guidance for Research Degree programmes;

- Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct;

- Policy on Dissemination of Research and Scholarly Output and the University Open Access Policy.

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[1] Selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

[2] http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf

[3] http://www.ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/

1.4 The University view is that research based upon high standards of governance, integrity and practice will help facilitate high quality and robust research outputs. In an environment where research can be subject to independent audit it is in the interests of the University and any Researcher employed or supported by the University to ensure high standards are complied with.

1.5 The University supports the principle of academic freedom in the context of sponsored and publically funded research.

2 General Principles

2.1 The University expects that, whether research is being funded by a sponsor for public advancement or a user for private or commercial gain, good practice as defined by this document and by relevant, external good practice frameworks should be applied throughout.

2.2 Sponsors and stakeholders can reasonably expect the University to ensure that an adequate policy framework exists that promotes and promulgates good research practice, that emphasises integrity and rigour in research and that creates a culture in which the following general principles can be understood and observed. It is the purpose of this document, in association with other University policy documents referred to herein, to create such a policy framework.

2.3 This document should also be read in conjunction with the University Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research (University Ethics Code). Together they are essential elements of the University Framework for Research Governance.

2.4 The University obtains funding from various bodies, including government departments, Research Councils and charities. Such bodies have defined expectations as to the standards of research good practice in funded projects. In drawing up its own standards of good practice in this Code, the University has drawn extensively on the codes of practice and standards articulated by relevant external bodies and stakeholders. The University wishes to acknowledge the guidance and assistance provided by these sources, which are listed at Annex A. Foremost amongst these are the Concordat to support research integrity; the Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct; and RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct.

2.5 United Kingdom charities can only fund research that falls within their charitable objectives. Additionally, charity law imposes certain obligations and restrictions on the use of charitable funds for research, for example a requirement to disseminate research findings, and a proscription on funding research for the purpose of commercial or private gain. In addition to adhering to the University framework governing good practice in research, University of Westminster researchers are also expected to be familiar with their obligations in relation to the relevant external bodies and to ensure that their work complies with these guidelines and expectations, regardless of the source of funding.

2.6 Researchers should also be aware that these research good practice obligations associated with research for charities apply to the University itself, which has charitable status.

2.7 The University recognises that an essential element of research governance and good practice is a procedure for addressing instances of suspected research misconduct, and that the existence of institutional procedures for dealing with such cases is a condition of funding for many sponsors. The approach of the University to managing instances of alleged or suspected misconduct in research is set out in the Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct. This Procedure applies in the case of allegations against staff, doctoral researchers and in addition postgraduate and undergraduate students undertaking research that is externally funded or likely to be disseminated externally. In the case of taught programme students, staff supervisors need to recognise their critical role as the Principal Investigator and their responsibility for ensuring the principles of this Code are complied with.

2.8 Academic Council will be advised of proposed changes to this Code**.**

2.9 Academic Council and/or the University Executive Board will be advised of any important issues/incidences of research misconduct relating to academic and/or non-academic research governance respectively. This will be via an annual report, or in the event of an urgent case, an interim report by the PVC (Research and Knowledge Exchange).

3   Integrity

3.1 The University expects that researchers should be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research work, including designing experiments, generating and analysing data, applying for funding, publishing results, and when peer reviewing the work of other researchers.

3.2 All the direct and indirect contributions of all colleagues, collaborators and others should be acknowledged (see Section 12, Dissemination and Publication of Results).

3.3 Researchers are accountable to multiple bodies and need to balance their obligations to society, their professions, the institutions where the research is taking place, the staff and students involved and any sponsor of the research.

3.4 The University views plagiarism, deception, or the fabrication or falsification of results as serious disciplinary offences. All members of the University community should report concerns or cases of suspected misconduct in accordance with the procedures (see 2.7 above)[4].

3.5 Researchers should also declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest, whether financial, personal or professional. Conflict of interest might potentially occur in cases where:

- Researchers have an existing or potential financial interest in the outcome of the research.

- There is a private or private practice benefit significantly dependent upon the outcome of the research.

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[4] A failure to report research misconduct can be considered misconduct in its own right

Further guidance on conflicts of interest and declaration of personal interest is contained in the University HR Policies, the Financial Regulations and the Ethics Code (Annex B).

4 Openness

4.1 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 academic enterprise activity of the University. In these circumstances the University, unless agreed otherwise, should have the first opportunity to facilitate any potential commercialisation and this should be considered in advance of publication.

4.2 In the case of University research, the normal expectation shall be that research results be disclosed openly and at the earliest opportunity consistent with the protection of any intellectual property or with the resolution of any confidentiality or contractual issues which may arise.

4.3 Whilst recognising the need for the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public.

4.4 Sponsors recognise that publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of any intellectual property arising from the research, or for other reasons.

4.5 Any such periods of delay in publication should be kept to a minimum and should be in accordance with agreements with sponsors. Where dissemination of the research is a requirement of the sponsors of the research, it is the responsibility of the researcher(s) to satisfy this requirement.

4.6 Once results have been published, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, on request, provided that this is consistent with any ethical approvals and consents which cover the data and materials, and any intellectual property rights in them (see sections 9.5 and 12.4).

4.7 Researchers are expected to exercise caution when discussing work that is not complete or has not been published, particularly if it has not undergone peer review, and should ensure confidential material of all types is adequately protected.

4.8 It is emphasised that the ultimate aim of both charity-funded and University research is to increase knowledge and understanding: its primary purpose is not publicity for the researcher, the University or for the sponsor, and the arrangements for disseminating the research should fully recognise this.

5 Professional Guidance and Legislation

5.1 The University expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice set out in guidelines published by the UK Research Integrity Office, RCUK, other relevant scientific and learned societies, and other professional bodies, key examples of which are listed at Annex A.

5.2 Researchers are responsible for making themselves aware of any legal requirements which regulate their work, and in particular Health and Safety, Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation and supporting University policies and procedures.

5.3 Researchers must comply with University policies related to information 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.

5.4 Researchers must complete appropriate risk assessments, which should cover issues of institutional risk as well as individual risks to researchers, research participants and others that could be affected. 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). Researchers should also ensure appropriate insurance covers are in place prior to commencing their research.

6 Leadership

6.1 The Vice Chancellor and the University Senior Management Team, including PVC (Research and Knowledge Exchange), Deans, Heads of Departments, Faculty Research Directors and Research Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the research environment and climate is conducive to the application of the principles laid out in this good practice framework.

6.2 Research Leaders are also required to ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision of researchers is provided, in accordance with the nature of the individual academic discipline and associated mode of research.

6.3 Research Leaders are also required to ensure researchers receive appropriate mentoring and development to enable them to carry out their research responsibilities competently.

7 Supervision and Mentoring

7.1 It is the expectation of the University that appropriate mentoring, training and direction for research and supervision of researchers is available through the Faculties or other units with delegated responsibility for the management and quality assurance of research.

7.2 The University is committed to the continuous enhancement of its training programme for research supervisors through staff development sessions and through mentoring and leadership within Faculties and to its

integration within the overall staff development of the University and the institutional development programme for researchers.

7.3 Guidance is available for supervisors covering supervision and all stages of the research process, including outlining or drawing up a hypothesis, preparing applications for funding, the design of experimental or research protocols, data recording and data analysis, thesis writing and assessment/progression stages (registration, annual progression, transfer, examination).

8 Training and Development

8.1 Doctoral researchers will be given opportunities to receive an induction and training and development in accordance with the University Doctoral Researcher Development Programme or an equivalent provision, which aims to meet the requirements of the Researcher Development Framework.

8.2 The academic Faculties will ensure that research and academic staff receive timely and appropriate training and development opportunities so that they understand and adopt best practice. Managers of research staff should ensure research specific training and development needs are discussed when a need is identified and during their Personal and Professional Development Review meetings. This will be particularly important that support is provided for new staff during their probationary period.

8.3 All researchers and research staff should be proactive in discussing their own training and development and receive instruction and/or attend courses on, as appropriate: research methods, regulatory and ethics approvals and consents, equipment use, confidentiality, data management, record keeping, publication, research team leadership, health and safety, budget management and other topics as appropriate.

9 Primary Data, Samples and Equipment

9.1 Researchers should ensure that there is clarity, wherever possible, from the outset of the research programme as to:

- the ownership and, where relevant, use of data and samples used or created in the course of the research;
- Any intention to archive data and samples and/or reuse data and samples;
- The results of the research; and
- Equipment paid for by sponsors.

9.2 The responsibilities and procedures for data management, including the storage, transport/transmission and disposal of data and samples (including compliance with the requirements of the University and/or other Ethics Committee) should be made clear at the commencement of any project. In the case of collaborative research the necessary clauses must be included in the collaboration agreement to address the respective responsibilities.

9.3 The University requires that researchers keep comprehensive, clear and accurate records in relation to research projects, including records of

primary observations, both in order to demonstrate proper research practice, and in the event of future questions relating to the conduct of the research. These should include records of procedures followed, approvals granted during the research process, interim results and final research outcomes. Research records, including laboratory logbooks, should be maintained where appropriate.

9.4 Data generated in the course of research should be kept securely in paper or electronic format using appropriate data security tools and facilities, as appropriate. Secure back-ups of research data should always be made in accordance with business continuity principles.

9.5 The minimum periods for which data should be retained vary by discipline and are defined by the regulations or guidance of the relevant professional or learned bodies. It is recognised that there can be tensions between the principles of data protection and the move towards open access publishing and the retention of data in an archive. Where required by a sponsor or a professional body to store data in a particular way or format this should be complied with. In all other circumstances the expectation is that a researcher will be responsible for ensuring research data and outputs are stored securely on an appropriate University system.

9.6 Researchers should report any proposed changes in the direction of research to any sponsor and/or any other relevant body, e.g. an appropriate Ethics Committee. Any change in the direction of the research must be discussed with these entities prior to its implementation.

10 Intellectual Property (IP)

10.1 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 academic enterprise activity of the University.

10.2 If the research or associated practice may be commercially exploitable, Researchers should inform their Faculty, applicable University research, Business Development and Knowledge Exchange support team(s) and any research sponsor, where required to do so by the terms of the sponsorship, and in accordance with current University IP policy and procedures (Annex B).

10.3 Research supported by the University, Research Councils or charities is undertaken for public benefit and may not be undertaken solely for the purposes of commercial gain. However, commercial benefit from the exploitation of the results of the research may accrue to the researcher, the University and, by agreement, to any charitable sponsor of the research.

10.4 Doctoral researchers from the Faculty of Science and Technology are normally required to assign any potential IPR to the University at Registration. This requirement may only be waived, under exceptional circumstances, by agreement with the Dean. Other Faculties should follow

the same approach where the intellectual property generated may be exploitable.

11 Publication Practice and Authorship

11.1 The University supports the principle of academic freedom, however, researchers are expected to publically disseminate their research outputs in accordance with the University Open Access and other publication related policies, e.g. University of Westminster Press, or comply where necessary with the requirements of sponsors.

11.2 In accordance with the principle of openness referred to in Section 4 above, the University encourages the publication and dissemination of results of high quality research. However, it expects that researchers will engage in the process of publishing and disseminating their work responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of any such dissemination in the wider media.

11.3 Results should be published in a form appropriate to the academic discipline. The University requires that all individuals listed as authors accept responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the paper/output and can identify their contribution to it.

11.4 Authorship on papers should only include those individuals who have made a major contribution to the work and who are familiar with the entire contents of the paper. Authors should have participated sufficiently in the research to take public responsibility for the content.

12 Dissemination and publication of results

12.1 The University recognises the potential importance of publicity about research to industrial sponsors, to fund-raising charities and to the University itself. Advice on press releases and publicity can be obtained from the press agency for the University.

12.2 In publishing or disseminating their research or research findings, including any plans they may have to publish or publicise research at conferences or on web sites, researchers are required to take into account the following:

- The University of Westminster affiliation should be explicitly used by researchers in all outputs;

- The sponsor should be notified in advance when the research is to be published, publicised or disseminated;

- The University would normally expect that research is peer reviewed prior to it being published, publicised or disseminated where this is the norm for the discipline concerned. If any output in the name of the University of Westminster is disseminated before peer review has been undertaken this should be made clear;

- All funding sources must be acknowledged in any publication or publicity.

- Results of research should be published in an appropriate form.

- Anyone listed as an author on a paper is responsible for ensuring that he or she is familiar with the contents of the paper in its entirety and can identify his or her contribution to it.

- The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research should be both specified and properly acknowledged.

12.3 Examples of the ethical aspects of publication practice can be found in the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines.

12.4 In line with the University Open Access Policy, appropriate research outputs when accepted for publication should be made available to the University online repository.

13 Ethical Practice in Research involving Humans, Animals and the Environment

13.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the University Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research.

13.2 The University believes researchers should 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.

13.3 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.

13.4 Researchers are required to comply with the University Ethics Code including obtaining University or other Ethics Committee approvals, where necessary, prior to the commencement of their research and obtaining amendments to approvals where appropriate throughout the duration of the research.

13.5 The University expects researchers to observe where applicable, the standards of practice set out in guidelines published by relevant professional bodies and other organisations. Certain types of research may be covered by statutory/mandatory requirements, both within the UK and in other countries.

13.6 Throughout the lifecycle of their scientific investigations, researchers should work to ensure that ethical issues relating to the research project are identified and managed. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass areas where regulation and approval processes exist as well as areas where they do not. Examples include, among other things, relevant codes of practice, the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research, the use of animals or research that may result in damage to the environment (BBSRC, 2013).

13.7 Researchers should also consider any risks that their research will generate outcomes that could be misused for harmful purposes. Where such risks exist, researchers should seek advice and take active steps to minimise them. The University should ensure that risks of misuse associated with ongoing research programmes are identified and actively

managed, and provide advice to the researchers on these issues. (BBSRC, 2013).

Annex A

<u>**Key Guidance**</u>

External References and Sources of Guidance

- BBSRC Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice

- Code of Practice for Research – UK Research Integrity Office

- Guide to Data Protection - Information Commissioner's Office

- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

- Guide to Freedom of Information - Information Commissioner's Office

- Guidelines on Good Publication Practice, Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

- MRC Good Research Practice: Principles and Guidelines

- Nolan Report; Office of Science and Technology – Committee on Standards in Public

- Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (COPE)

- RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct

- Researcher Development Framework

- Science & Technologies Facilities Council Research Grants Handbook

- Singapore Statement on Research Integrity

- Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines

- Social Services Research Group: Code of good practice for research, evaluation, monitoring and review studies in social, housing and health studies

- The Concordat to support research integrity

- The Office of Research Integrity (ORI),USA.

- Wellcome Trust: Guidelines on Good Research Practice

Annex B

<u>Key Guidance</u>

University of Westminster Framework for Research Governance

- Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct
- Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research
- Policy on Dissemination of Research and Scholarly Output
- Open Access Publication
- Intellectual Property Policy

Relevant University Policies, Procedures and Sources of Guidance

- HR Policies
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

- University Financial Regulations

- University Press Office

- Managing Information and Records
- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information
- ICT Security and Use Policy