

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

2019 –2020

LSHTM is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of research excellence and integrity, and is committed to delivering high quality, relevant research, underpinned by the highest ethical standards across the globe. LSHTM fully supports the Concordat for Research Integrity¹ and maintains an office dedicated to research governance, ethics and integrity to assure compliance with the Concordat, as well as regulations, guidance, standards governing research around the world.

This paper reports an annual summary of issues concerning research integrity, including research governance, and scientific misconduct at the School. This report is the School's annual public statement outlining the activities undertaken to strengthen integrity of research.

The Audit and Risk Committee is asked to note the report covering activities from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

1. Research Governance Committee (RGC)

The Research Governance Committee² has oversight of all research governance issues, including research integrity, across the School, including clinical trials, Chariot Innovations, the MRC/UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit and MRC Unit The Gambia at LSHTM.

The Research Governance Committee (RGC) continues to meet termly (28 May 2019, 9 October 2019, and 12 February 2020). The Research Governance Committee reports to Senate and the annual report will be submitted for the 10 June 2020 meeting.

2. Policies and Procedures

The Good Research Practice policy³ (v4.2, 27/01/2020) provides the essential criteria that all LSHTM staff and students are expected to follow in the conduct of their research. This was updated following the publication of the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity which was published in October 2019. The policy was reviewed and approved at Research Governance Committee on 12 February 2020. The definition of research misconduct was amended to bring it in line with the Concordat.

The procedure for inquiring into allegations of research misconduct⁴ (v2.2; 14/01/2020) was reviewed and approved by the Research Governance Committee following minor amendments. A fuller review will take place when the UK Research integrity Office (UKRIO) publish their revised guidance on the topic.

¹ Universities UK (2019) Concordat to Support Research Integrity, available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/the-concordat-for-research-integrity.aspx>

² <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/aboutus/organisation/governance/committees>

³ <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/sites/default/files/good-research-practice-policy.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/sites/default/files/allegations-of-misconduct-policy.pdf>

A summary of research governance and integrity policies and procedures is listed in Appendix 1.

3. Training

The Head of Research Governance and Integrity continues to deliver training on Ethics and Good Research practice which meet the standards of a Responsible Conduct of Research course. The training is provided to all staff and to doctoral students as part of the transferable skills programme and the recording is available online and on demand⁵.

It is anticipated that a full online version of the course will be ready for the start of the 2020-2021 term. The Head of Research Governance and Integrity continues to deliver an introduction to research governance at the doctoral student orientation day which is held once per term, as well as the staff induction days held each term.

4. Activities undertaken in Research Integrity

As part of its commitment to research integrity, LSHTM is a subscriber to UKRIO which enables access to teaching materials, the annual conference on research integrity, and other helpful guidance. The Head of Research Governance and Integrity attends their annual meetings.

The Head of Research Governance and Integrity presented a poster at the World Conference on Research Integrity in Hong Kong in June 2019. The poster was entitled, “Who are we? An analysis of research integrity personnel in the UK”.

The Head of Research Governance and Integrity continues with her part-time Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) at the School, focussing on Research Integrity. She is completing the first draft of the Organisation and Policy Analysis (OPA) focussing on Good Research Practice at LSHTM with recommendations presented to the Research Governance Committee once the document has been submitted. The OPA includes a gap analysis of current LSHTM policies and procedure with those recommended by funders and the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

5. Allegations of Breaches of Research Integrity/ Research Misconduct

In the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020, nine complaints were made to the Research Governance and Integrity Office and reviewed at the Research Governance Committee. Six investigations were completed and three are ongoing. The complaints can be summarised as:

Category of Breach of Research Integrity	Number of complaints
Data Protection breach	2
Breach of ethics approval	3
Breach of duty of care / harm on study	2

⁵ <https://open.lshtm.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=41>

Unethical conduct on study	1
Other: contract dispute	1
TOTAL	9

The sole confirmed breach of research integrity for 2019-2020 is summarised:

References	Topic Area	Specifics of Complaint	Outcome	Prevention
RM-2019-037U	Breach of ethics approval	Signed consent/assent forms from two studies were stolen from the locked archive in Entebbe. Both studies have completed recruitment but analyses are ongoing therefore the consent forms should not have been removed from the archive. The forms were removed deliberately and sold on as waste paper.	Reported to ethics as protocol violation. Staff member referred to HR for misconduct.	To prevent this from re-occurring, training has been amended to detail why consent forms need to be archived as essential documents during the study, as well as a period of time afterward. Consent forms are in a locked cupboard with minimal access.

In last year's audit and risk committee report (2018-2019), there were 2 investigations listed as ongoing at the time the report was issued; neither complaint was upheld.

The audit and risk committee are asked to note that this report will be made publicly available.

Patricia Henley
Head of Research Governance and Integrity
11 May 2020

Appendix 1: Summary of Research Governance and Integrity policies and procedures

RGIO Policies publicly available at: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/research-governance-integrity>

- Good Research Practice Policy, v4.2; 27 January 2020
- Human Tissue Act policy, v5.2; 10 April 2019
- Procedures for Inquiring into Allegations of Scientific Misconduct, v2.2; 14 January 2020
- Ethics Committee Terms of Reference, v2.2; 25 March 2019
- Statement on contact with the tobacco industry, from Prof Peter Piot, February 2018

Other relevant LSHTM policies, available at: www.lshtm.ac.uk/aboutus/organisation/regulatory-documents

- Animal research policy
- Anti-bribery
- Conflicts of interest
- Data Protection policy
- Freedom of Information
- Information Management and Security Policy
- Intellectual Property policy
- Open-access publishing policy
- Records Management
- Research Data Management Policy
- Whistleblowing
- Health and Safety policies and guidelines (various, on intranet)

Under review:

- Engaging with External Partners guide

On the RGIO intranet page:

- Standard Operating Procedures and templates on research oversight, regulatory applications and approvals, design, management, conduct, and completion of research