

University of Warwick Annual Statement on Research Integrity

Approved by Council at its meeting on 13 July 2016

The University's Research Governance & Ethics Committee (RGAEC) is responsible to University Council and Senate for all institutional matters pertaining to Research Integrity. The Chair of RGAEC for the period 2015-16 has been Professor Lawrence Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) and the Secretary has been Ms Jane Prewett (Deputy Director, Research & Impact Services and Head of Research Governance).

During 2015-16, the RGAEC has given attention to the University's internal provision for training in research integrity, governance and ethics. The University has an established programme that provides training at regular intervals during the academic year in specialist areas such as Chief Investigator training, Good Clinical Practice (GCP), and research involving Human Tissue. In addition, research integrity, governance and ethics are included within the institutional induction programmes for new researchers.

The RGAEC considered this existing training provision and recommended that it could be enhanced by the provision of a less specialist course offering a comprehensive approach to the principles and practical application of research integrity in its widest sense. RGAEC recommended that this was a timely addition to the University's existing portfolio of training materials and subsequently recommended that the University subscribe to the Epigeum Research Integrity on-line training provision.

The University subsequently endorsed this recommendation and the Research Integrity online training is now available to all Warwick staff and students. Aligned to the University's subscription to Epigeum, has been an internal communications plan that has been led by the Chair of the RGAEC, involving presentations to Faculty Boards, internal research ethics committees, and Research & Impact Services. In addition, the availability of the online training has been disseminated by the University's Learning & Development Centre, which has included the Research Integrity online training within its academic induction programme, and has publicised it regularly through its research active staff newsletter. An additional question, relating to the completion of the Research Integrity online training, has been added into the University's pre-award research management system, and this provides useful management data as well as embedding the training into the University's research culture.

The RGAEC has also reviewed the internal reporting procedures of the Sponsorship Committee, which is responsible for the review and approval of sponsorship applications, and for the institutional oversight of CTIMPs and Interventional Studies. The RGAEC mandated that the reporting lines of the Sponsorship Committee should be changed such that the Committee reports directly into the RGAEC, and that the Chair of the Sponsorship Committee becomes an ex-officio member of the RGAEC. In addition, the RGAEC has reviewed its ex-officio membership and has recommended that the University's Designated Individual (Human Tissue) also be added as an ex-officio member of the RGAEC. Both ex-officio roles have been approved via the University's formal process, and are now formal members of the RGAEC.

During the reporting period, the University has reviewed its professional services for research governance and ethics, and has approved the formation of a new Research Governance & Quality Assurance team within Research & Impact Services. This will provide integrated support at institutional and project level in all matters of research governance (clinical and non-clinical), sponsorship, quality assurance and oversight. Three specialist roles are presently being recruited, and these will provide additional capacity and improved support for all matters of research integrity, governance, and ethics.

The University has an established Research Misconduct Policy, to support the appropriate and timely handling of allegations of research misconduct. Support in all such cases is provided by Research & Impact Services, reporting in this respect directly to the Registrar and Vice-Chancellor. There has been one formal investigation of research misconduct arising in 2014-15.