

## **Annual Research Integrity Statement 2021- 22**

This statement has been produced by St George's, University of London in accordance with The Concordat to Support Research Integrity 2019. It has been approved by St George's Council and will be made publicly available on the University website.

In accordance with the Concordat, this statement includes:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues
- a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, which will include data on the number of investigations
- a statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring
- a statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct

St George's is strongly committed to research integrity and we fully support, promote and have embedded the commitments set out in the updated Concordat. We believe that research integrity is fundamental to our research and its outcomes. We have the policies, processes, governance and culture to promote and ensure research integrity across St George's.

This annual statement covers the period August 2021 to July 2022.

### **1. Guidance, support and training for researchers**

- i) Research integrity presentations: Our Research Ethics and Integrity Officer has delivered several research ethics and integrity presentations for St George's students and staff.

The presentations and workshops in 2021/22 are listed below.

- 22/09/2021: Msc Healthcare Practice students (40 participants)
- 04/10/2021: BSc Healthcare Science students (20 participants)
- 19/10/2021: BSc and MSc Physiotherapy students (58 Participants)
- 25/10/2021: Bsc Biomedical Science students (5 Participants)
- 26/10/2021: Staff research integrity discussion (20 participants)

- 02/11/2021: Population Health Research Institute staff (42 participants)
  - 03/11/2021: Infection and Immunity Research Institute staff (20 participants)
  - 05/11/2021: Molecular and Clinical Sciences Research Institute staff (12 participants)
  - 22/11/2021: BSc Diagnostic Radiography students (40 online participants)
  - 23/11/2021: Population Health Research Institute staff (8 participants)
  - 25/11/2021: MSc Advanced Clinical Practice, MSc Translational Medicine, and PGCert Healthcare Skills and Methods students (13 Participants)
  - 20/01/2022: BSc Diagnostic Radiography students (10 participants)
  - 31/01/2022: Post Graduate Research students (11 participants)
  - 04/02/2022: Molecular and Clinical Sciences Research Institute staff (35 participants)
  - 23/02/2022: BSc and MSc Physiotherapy students (57 participants)
  - 04/03/2022: Molecular and Clinical Sciences Research Institute staff (10 participants)
  - 16/03/2022: Infection and Immunity Research Institute staff (19 participants)
  - 22/03/2022: Vitae workshop (10 participants)
  - 19/05/2022: BSc Diagnostic Radiography students (6 Participants)
- ii) Data protection training: Training on managing personal information is mandatory for all staff handling personal data.
- iii) Research ethics webpage: The [research ethics webpage](#) is kept updated and provides information for researchers on the ethics review process and St George's Research Ethics Committee.
- iv) "How to Arrive and Thrive at St George's" guide: This [guide](#) covers a range of topics to support researchers, including matters pertaining to research integrity.
- v) Code of practice for research: A [research code of practice](#), defining St George's policies and expectations in relation to the conduct of research, was launched in December 2021.

## 2. Policies, processes and governance

A full list of all our policies and processes relating to research integrity, with links to our website, is contained in Appendix one.

Those reviewed/updated in 2021/22 are:

- i) Clinical Trials Transparency Policy: This policy was updated in January 2022 to incorporate Health Research Authority updates to public database registration.
- ii) Disciplinary Procedure: This procedure was reviewed in October 2021. It was made explicit in the procedure that misconduct includes online behaviour. The definition of failure to attend work was amended to include failure to participate in work, to reflect increased flexible and remote working since the pandemic.
- iii) Grievance Procedure: This procedure was reviewed in October 2021. No changes were made.

### 3. External engagement

- i) UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). St George's has continued its subscription to the UKRIO, which is an independent charity which provides support and webinars in relation to matters of research integrity, research ethics and research misconduct.

### 4. Research misconduct

- i) Formal research misconduct investigations: St George's undertook formal research misconduct investigations into 20 allegations.

19 of the allegations, relating to research publications, were initiated by anonymous complaints received via PubPeer. After investigation of these 19 publications, which covered a period of 20 years, 14 allegations were found to be not upheld. In five cases, authors were in contact with journals or PubPeer to provide further information or explanation. At least one paper has been retracted, where the lead author was based at a different university (who undertook the main investigation). The majority of investigations involved interpretation of bands on gels, and in most cases the lead staff involved were not currently based at St George's.

St George's also undertook one formal research misconduct investigation regarding a plagiarism complaint relating to a publication from approximately 40 years ago. The complaint was not upheld.

- ii) Learning from misconduct investigations: St George's provided support to authors involved in anonymous complaints from PubPeer to correct or clarify the scientific record. We have also sent communications to all of our research staff reminding them of St George's commitment to scientific integrity and outlining our process to investigate such allegations and support authors where appropriate.
- iii) Research environment: We are committed to ensuring that St George's has a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. We ensure this by having procedures on and a named contact for research misconduct and whistleblowing, by dealing with allegations robustly and in a timely manner, by St George's leaders promoting research integrity and through our training for researchers.
- iv) Assurance: The Research Misconduct procedure is available on our website. The procedure contains timelines within which the different aspects of the investigation need to be conducted. The procedure has an informal stage, a screening panel and an investigation panel, which provides for robust review of allegations. An individual cannot be a member of both the screening panel and the investigation panel. The procedure was last reviewed in 2017 and is based upon the 'Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research' authored by the UKRIO. The procedure will be reviewed in the current academic year, taking into account the updated UKRIO procedure which was published in 2022.

## Appendix one

- [Clinical Trial Transparency](#)
- [Cloud Computing](#)
- [Code of Conduct on Personal Relationships](#)
- [Conflicts of Interest and Financial Dealings](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Data Quality Policy](#)
- [Dignity at Study](#)
- [Dignity at Work](#)
- [Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- [Freedom of Information policy](#)
- [Grievance Procedure](#)
- [Human Tissue Act](#)
- [Information Governance Framework](#)
- [Information Sharing Protocol](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [Research Ethics](#)
- [Records Management Policy](#)
- [Removable Media Policy](#)
- [Research Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [Research Publications Policy](#)
- [Research Related SOPs/templates](#)
- [Retention and Disposal Policy](#)
- [Use of Animals in Research](#)
- [Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure](#)