Annual Research Integrity Statement 2019 - 20

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 2019 to July 2020.

1. Guidance, support and training for researchers

i)   Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (REIO): We created the REIO position in September 2019, to promote and provide expert guidance on research integrity.

ii)   Research integrity presentations: The REIO has given research integrity presentations on welcoming days for new staff, and seminars for different groups in our Research Institutes. Presentations have taken place online during Covid.

iii)   Training for students: St George's has provided training workshops for research degree students (MDRes, PhD, MRes) in research integrity, research ethics, publication ethics and statistics.

iv)   Data protection training: Training on managing personal information has been made mandatory for all staff handling personal data.

v)   Research ethics webpage: We have created a new research ethics webpage (https://www.sgul.ac.uk/research/research-ethics) which provides information for researchers on the ethics review process and St George`s Research Ethics Committee.

vi)   Research integrity webpages: Webpages bringing together all of our information on research integrity policies, guidance, training and support are under development and will be published by the end of 2020.

vii)   Code of practice for research: A research code of practice, defining St George's policies and expectations in relation to the conduct of research, is being developed and will be finalised by the end of 2020.

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.

i)   Clinical trials transparency: A new policy to ensure clinical trials transparency was implemented in November 2019. This policy sets out the requirements of chief investigators of clinical trials to publish findings and quarterly monitoring by the Research Governance Committee to ensure compliance.

ii)   Research publications: The Research Publications policy was updated in October 2019 to improve bibliographic information relating to research outputs on St George's website.

iii)   Freedom of Information: Our Freedom of Information policy was updated in January 2020 to incorporate Environmental Information Regulations.

iv)   Dignity at work and study: A Dignity at Work and Study policy was implemented in November 2019. The policy assists in developing and encouraging a working and learning environment in which harassment is unacceptable.

v)   St George`s Research Ethics Committee (SGREC) audit: In 2020, an audit of the SGREC was undertaken. The audit was based on Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations guidance from the UK Research Integrity Office and Association of Research Managers and Administrators The outcome was that that the SGREC is 95 % compliant with the Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations guidance. We will take action to remedy the outstanding points.

3. **External engagement**

i) <u>San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA):</u> St George's has signed DORA. This declaration is based on the concept that outputs from research are many and varied; that they are not well captured by a single measure such as journal impact factor; and that the quality of research needs to be assessed in a broad manner.

ii) <u>UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).</u> St George's has a 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) <u>Formal research misconduct investigation:</u> There was one formal investigation. This was an allegation of a chief investigator of a double-blinded clinical trial being unblinded. The allegation was not upheld due to lack of intent to deceive. The recommendation was that wording should be added to the trial publication to address the scientific limitations and the manuscript internally reviewed before publication.

ii) <u>Learning from misconduct investigation</u>: We are updating our protocol development tool to ensure that blinding procedures are always maintained. We are establishing a procedure on trial oversight committees to help guide chief investigators. We have introduced robust criteria on chief investigator education/background/experience in developing, leading and undertaking trials.

iii) <u>Research environment:</u> 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) <u>Assurance:</u> 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 is based upon the 'Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research' authored by the UKRIO. The procedure was last reviewed in 2017 and is currently being reviewed.

Appendix one

- Clinical Trial Transparency: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/clinical-trial-transparency

- Research related SOPs/template: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/joint-research-and-enterprise-services/research-support/performing-clinical-research/policies-standard-operating-procedures-and-templates

- Human tissue act: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/research/our-research-facilities/human-tissue-act

- Research ethics: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/research/research-ethics

- Use of animals in research: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/use-of-animals-in-research

- Data Protection policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/information-services/information-governance/data-protection/data-protection-policy

- Data Quality policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/data-quality

- Records Management policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/records-management

- Freedom of Information policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/freedom-of-information

- Information Governance Framework: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/information-services/information-governance/information-governance-framework

- Information Management policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/information-services/information-governance/policies-and-procedures/information-management

- Information Sharing Protocol: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/information-sharing-protocol

- Research Data Management policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-data-management

- Removable Media policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/staff-only-policies/removable-media

- Research Publications policy: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-publications

- Retention and Disposal policy:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/retention-and-disposal

- Cloud computing: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/cloud-computing-policy

- Code of Conduct on Professional and Consensual Relationships:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/staff-only-policies/code-of-conduct-on-professional-and-consensual-relationships

- Conflicts of Interest and Financial Dealings:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/conflicts-of-interest-and-financial-dealings

- Dignity at Work and Study policy:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/dignity-at-work-and-study

- Health and Safety Policy Statement:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/staff-only-policies/health-and-safety-policy

- Disciplinary procedure: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/staff-only-policies/disciplinary-procedure

- Grievance procedure: https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/staff-only-policies/grievance

- Research misconduct procedure:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-misconduct-procedure

- Whistleblowing and public interest disclosure:
  https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/whistleblowing-and-public-interest-disclosure