Research Integrity Annual Statement 2019/2020

Goldsmiths is a signatory to The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (rev. 2019) and this sixth annual statement reports on the progress being made in creating a culture of integrity in research at all levels.

This public statement is intended to provide assurance that as a university we are responsible for:

- supporting and strengthening understanding and application of research ethics and integrity issues in research at all levels across the university
- having processes to manage and investigate allegations of misconduct that are transparent, robust and fair, and fit for purpose
- reporting on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken during this year, and on lessons learned from these investigations

This statement covers the period October 2019 to September 2020.

Supporting and strengthening understanding and application of research integrity issues

Following the review by our internal auditor (KPMG) described in last year's report, we have continued to make clarity of procedures and communication one of our top priorities. Although in the latter part of the academic year face-to-face activities have naturally been curtailed, there has been substantial engagement with research integrity issues through meetings with the network of Research Ethics and Integrity leads in each department, and through regular postgraduate training events. A particular emphasis has been on the ethics of practice research, including life-writing, which has resulted in valuable debate about privacy and data protection issues. The implications of Covid-19 for research involving interviews and group meetings were also a matter for discussion.

The appointment of two early-career researchers to the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee has beneficially extended the range of the committee's influence.

With regard to student research, the ethical approval process for postgraduate research students has been sharpened up to include closer monitoring by the Graduate School. A

review of department practices for taught courses resulted in a guidance document regarding research integrity and ethics at all student levels.

We are currently in the early stages of implementing a new research management tool, which will result in a significant change to the way in which staff and postgraduate ethical approval is managed.

Processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

A fully revised Research Misconduct Procedure was approved by Academic Board and adopted during the year (https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/docs/research/Research-Misconduct-Procedure.pdf). This closely follows the UKRIO Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research, with advice from UKRIO. We believe this revised procedure is entirely appropriate to the needs of Goldsmiths and its particular subject mix.

Formal investigations of research misconduct

One allegation was received between October 2019 and September 2020, relating to a staff project. The new procedure was used for the first time, and the allegation was not taken to a formal investigation.

Lessons learned from formal investigations

The formal investigation listed in last year's report led to a review meeting, which identified improvements to (i) ways in which communication with external bodies might be better handled in future to avoid misunderstandings; (ii) departmental procedures for ethical approval; (iii) central procedures for research misconduct investigations.

The research environment

At all levels there is emphasis on enabling staff, researchers and students to feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. This is strongly emphasised in the new investigation procedure (including the facility for an allegation to be made by an intermediary where the individual has reservations about making an allegation directly). This emphasis has been passed on via websites and documentation.

Reviewed by Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee, 15 September 2020
Reviewed by Research and Enterprise Committee, 23 September 2020
Approved by Academic Board, 23 September 2020
Reported to Council, 26 November 2020