

# RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY

The University of Law's Research Integrity Policy has been informed by the Office for Students Sector-Recognized Standards and the General Ongoing Conditions of Registration and has regard to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. These definitive reference points for all English higher education institutions set out how academic standards are established and maintained and how excellence in the quality of learning opportunities is assured.

This policy sits within The University of Law's Quality and Standards Code, which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

1. The purpose of the University of Law's Research Integrity Policy is to ensure those involved/undertaking research activities are well-informed and compliant with current legal, regulatory, and institutional principles and expectations when planning, conducting and disseminating their work.

The policy is cognisant of other policies and national and international frameworks that underpin the research integrity. For the avoidance of doubt, 'Integrity' refers to the core values of honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability laid out in the Universities UK 'The Concordat to Support Research Integrity' (2019); and aligned to: [RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct \(2017\)](#), the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(2017\)](#), and the [UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct \(2009\)](#).

These values are strengthened by our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and are integrated throughout this policy. The Concordat five commitment statements apply to anyone researching on behalf of the University of Law, or those using University facilities and/or premises purpose of research or demonstrate an affiliation to the university. This includes all research undertaken by staff, students, and other affiliates of the University of Law.

## Introduction

2. The University of Law is committed to developing and enhancing a supportive research environment for its students and staff across all subjects, both academically and professionally. The University of Law encourages the link between research and teaching practice to develop deep levels of student engagement, provision of world-class education and high success in student achievements.

2.1 The University is steadfast on the application of the highest standards in its research, underpinned by the quality of the research process, ethical approval process, to support staff and students maintain research integrity from commencement through to research conduction, and broader dissemination of findings. The University of Law recognises its obligation to the wider research community, and to the international society to ensure research integrity is paramount. Thus, building public confidence in any research activities.

2.2 The University also has a responsibility to ensure that any received and administered funds/grants is per the funder's requirements and The Concordat commitments.

## Responsibility for this policy

3. The ultimate responsibility for the development of processes and procedures associated with research and upholding of highest standards of research integrity lies with the Academic Board.

## Key Aims and Principles

4. Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 1: The University takes its starting point from the definition of research integrity provided by Universities UK 'The Concordat to Support Research Integrity' (2019)
  - 4.1 **Honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings
  - 4.2 **Rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results
  - 4.3 **Transparency and open communication** in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public
  - 4.4 **Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record
  - 4.5 **Accountability** of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this concordat." (University UK, 2019; p6)

## Ethical Framework

5 Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 2: All research should undergo the appropriate ethical review. All individuals undertaking research in the University's name or on its behalf should take responsibility for actively considering whether their activities fall within the scope of the University's ethical framework. Where this is the case, the activities should be formally evaluated and approved by the appropriate ethics committee.

Together with the need to comply with legal and regulatory requirements, the University's Ethics Statement of Practice (2019) sets out a framework of ethical principles which articulates shared professional standards and values within the higher education sector. All research should be designed and conducted within this framework. The emphasis on compliance with ESRC six principles:

- 5.1 Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality.
- 5.2 Research subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended use of the research and what risks, if any, are involved.
- 5.3 The confidentiality of the information supplied by the research subjects and their anonymity must be respected.
- 5.4 Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion.
- 5.5 Harm to research participants must be avoided, including to their reputation, as well as their physical well-being.
- 5.6 The independence of the researcher must be paramount and any potential conflicts of interest must be explicitly stated.

## Planning and conducting research

6. Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 3: The University of Law is committed to supporting a research culture of integrity and good governance.

- 6.1 Researchers should devise a research project with a clear rationale and articulate the critical factors of success in conducting the research project. These factors may include the research design, methodology, data collection, data analysis and key milestones. All information should be available to demonstrate viability of the research is in place before the commencement of the project.

- 6.2 In planning and conducting research, the researcher must have undertaken a risk assessment before commencing their project. This must comply with University of Law Health and Safety policy.
- 6.3 The relevant parties must grant all approval/permissions to conduct the research; that is, the ethics committee, participating organisations, or regulatory or funding bodies, before the project can commence
- 6.4 As set out in the Q3.8 Research Publication Policy ethical considerations should be addressed from the onset and take into account planning, conduct and dissemination of the research. Ethics approval must be obtained before any data is collected.
- 6.5 The researcher must monitor the conduct of the research study against the University of Law Health and Safety policy.
- 6.6 A conflict of interest is a situation in which a researcher's interest is potentially or compromised by his/her other interests or the interests of others involved in the research study. This may include financial, institutional, academic, political, personal or other forms of interest. All researchers must declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest.
- 6.7 Conflicts of interest should be investigated and addressed satisfactorily by the Research Institute within seven working days.

## Publication

- 7. Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 3: The University of Law supports researchers in the planning and undertaking of their research and encourages all researchers to be as open as possible in sharing their research findings with the broader knowledge community, and public. Open Access principles are adopted to support all research, which includes funded research, to publish research outputs and data proactively. Therefore, all researchers must ensure they are compliant with Q3.8 Research Publication Policy.
- 7.1 The University expects anyone listed as an author to accept personal responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the paper and that they can identify their contributions to it.
- 7.2 The practices of dual submission and self-plagiarism (i.e. failure to acknowledge prior publication as appropriate) are unacceptable.
- 7.3 Researchers undertaking peer review of on behalf of a publisher (including the University of Law's own Journal) should treat the process as confidential and should not take advantage of any new data or privileged information for the furtherance of own research.

## Research Misconduct

8 Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 4: research misconduct can cause harm, wastes resources, undermines the research record and damages the credibility of the research. The responsibility for ensuring that no misconduct occurs rests primarily with individual researchers.

8.1 Research misconduct can take many forms, including:

8.1.1 **Fabrication:** making up results, other outputs (for example, artefacts) or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, and presenting and/or recording them as if they were real.

8.1.2 **Falsification:** inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery and/or consents.

8.1.3 **Plagiarism:** using other people's ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without acknowledgement or permission

8.1.4 **Failure to meet:** legal, ethical and professional obligations,

8.1.5 **Misrepresentation of:**

- Data, including suppression of relevant results/data or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence presenting a flawed interpretation of data
- Involvement, including inappropriate claims to authorship or attribution of work and denial of authorship/attribution to persons who have made an appropriate contribution
- Interests, including failure to declare competing interests of researchers or funders of a study
- Qualifications, experience and/or credentials
- Publication history, through undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication

8.1.6 **Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct:** failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers, or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding. Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties through the use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements.

## Research culture of integrity

9. Following The Concordat (2019) commitment 5: All researchers must contribute in their groups, departments and research to a culture of integrity.

9.1 On behalf of the University of Law, the Research Institute will take steps to ensure policies, protocols and support upholds research integrity.

9.2 The Research Institute will provide adequate researcher training and support to all researchers

9.4 The Research Institute will ensure effective processes are in place to manage research, publication and misconduct.

9.5 The Research Institute will submit research activity statements to the Academic Board every quarter. To include how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students can conduct research.

9.6 The Research Institute will submit reports about formal investigations of research misconduct and lessons learnt to Academic Board every quarter.

## Responsibility for the provision

10. Responsibility for giving effect to the Research Integrity Policy of the University lies initially with the Research Committee.

## Monitoring and review of the provision

11. Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Research Integrity policy lies initially with the Research Committee. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this provision lies with the Academic Board.

## Version history:

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
1.0	Initial drafting by project working group	Publication	March 2021