

Formal Investigations into Allegations of Research Misconduct, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

This report reports details of investigations of research misconduct by staff and postgraduate research students in line with the recommendations of the Universities UK *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. Due to staffing changes, this report combines two academic years to ensure continuous coverage.

Process

A standardised process for the operation of the *University Procedures for Investigating Research Misconduct by Staff and PGR Students* was adopted in 2015 and revised in 2017 and 2020 to ensure consistency of understanding (particularly in relation to allegations of plagiarism), independence of investigations, and proportionate response to allegations when these were upheld.

A record of all misconduct allegations, investigations and outcomes is maintained by the Research Graduate School (RGS). One of the administrators from RGS supports the University Research Ethics Committee.

A three-stage process for investigation is implemented, with formal investigations (Stage 2) and formal panels (Stage 3) being instituted only after preliminary consideration of allegations and complaints.

Investigations

During the Academic Year 2019-2020, 25 cases were considered, compared with 52 in 2018-2019. All of these related to postgraduate research students and were allegations of plagiarism, the majority of which were initiated at the point at which theses were submitted.

Five cases were pursued to the formal investigation stage (compared with 10 in 2018-2019) and there was one case in which a full investigation panel was required, down from three cases in 2018-19.

Stage	Cases in 2018-2019	Cases in 2019-2020
Preliminary Consideration	39	20
Formal Investigation	10	5
Investigation Panel	3	1
Total	52	26

Research Data Management

To ensure the integrity of primary data used in postgraduate research projects, Head of Research Development checks the existence of primary data for each submission. Students submit raw data on encrypted or password-protected memory sticks; this is then scrutinised and the results are recorded on a spreadsheet. If raw data is sensitive, contains personal information or is such that submitting it in

its unedited form will breach ethical regulations of professional or academic bodies (e.g. BPS, NHS, etc.) or other regulations (including copyright), the student should consider the next stage of data processing. If the next stage still has the same characteristics as raw data (even if mediated to some extent), the next stage of data processing should be considered. In a small minority of cases, meetings with students and/or supervisors are arranged to discuss an approach best suited for the nature of the student's work.

The above method of primary data submission is applicable to the students registered before October 2019. For those who started their PGR programme after 1 October 2019, a Research Data Management Plan requirement is applicable.

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