

# Research Integrity Annual Statement 2018-2019.

## 1. Introduction.

### 1.1 *The Concordat and the School.*

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London is fully committed to the spirit and substance of the *Concordat for Research Integrity*. The concordat is designed to help institutions continue to further embed research integrity into their activities. The concordat is formed of 5 commitments. In line with the concordat, Central commits to:

1. maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research, which means maintaining honesty and rigour, transparent and open communication, and care and respect.
2. ensure research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
3. support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers. This includes clear policies and procedures, training and development opportunities for researchers, management systems to ensure policies are implemented, awareness of appropriate behaviour of researchers, and systems to intervene at an early stage where researchers require support.
4. use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
5. work together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.
6. Foster an environment of robust debate and engagement with research ethics and integrity.

### 1.2 *School's policy and procedures in relation to research integrity.*

The School's commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of the concordat's intentions can be traced through its policies and procedures, principally through key policies:

1. The Research Conduct and Ethics Handbook.
2. The School's Strategic Plan.
3. Ethical Policy Framework.
4. Whistleblowing Policy.
5. Standards of Professional Conduct Policy.
6. Academic Strategy.
7. Handbook for Supervisors of Research Degrees Candidates.
8. Research Degrees Programme Code of Practice and Specification.
9. Research Handbook.
10. PhD Course documentation.

### 1.3 Activities.

The commitments to the enhancement of research integrity are not only present in policy, but are also embedded also through the cycles of training, development and enhancement, including:

1. Staff training and development.
2. Research student training and development.
3. The Research Ethics Subcommittee, which reports to Research Committee, Academic Board and The Governing Body.
4. The Research Committee.
5. Reporting lines to the Governing Body.
6. Regular review of policies and procedures.
7. Visiting Fellows, where appropriate.

## 2. Developments and activities for 2018-19, into 2019-20.

### 2.1 Supporting research integrity

The School's engagement with research integrity was felt across its activities, in particular the School:

1. Continued administrative support for ethics processes, which is now housed in the research office. The administration of the process now centrally logs ethics forms, processes readers' responses to submissions and communicates decisions to researchers.
2. Contributed to a consultation for the new Concordat on behalf of CUK. The new Concordat was published in September 2019, in the session 2019-20 the School will implement its recommendations and ethics processes will potentially shift to support that change.
3. Redrafted the Ethics Handbook in light of internal and external feedback. The redrafting of the Ethics Handbook, once ratified early in the 2019-2020 session, signals a shift in some languages and the inclusion of a plain language statements alongside informed consent.
4. In line with sector languages and its commitment to research integrity, changed the name of the Research Ethics Subcommittee to the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee.

### 2.2 Data

Applications. Between October 2018 - 2019

Received	Fast Track	Full	Of Full, number to CUK
16	15	1	1

In addition, the Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee commented on 19 full applications from CUK.

### 3. Research Misconduct

#### 3.1 Reports of misconduct.

Details of research misconduct investigations<sup>1</sup>:

	Number of formal investigations completed			Number of allegations upheld (in whole or part)		
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Fabrication</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Falsification</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Plagiarism</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Misrepresentation</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Breach of duty of care</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Details of any allegations upheld in part</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

In the year under review there were no formal or informal notification of misconduct. The process for reporting misconduct is communicated to researchers through briefings and the availability of material on the School's website.

### 4. Planned Developments.

#### 4.1 Changes to the Concordat for Research Integrity.

Central responded to the consultation for a new concordat. As noted in last year's report, the Government's Commons Science and Technology Committee acknowledges the importance of the concordat but considers 'the concordat to support research integrity should be tightened so that compliance can be more easily assessed, with a timetabled route-map to securing 100% compliance'. The School responded to the consultation on behalf of CUK. The new concordat was published in September 2019. In concert with the Research Committee, the Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee will respond to the requirements

<sup>1</sup> Table adapted from University of Liverpool.

of the concordat. In particular the concordat requires further reporting than at present, and the annual Research Integrity Report may form part of the new reporting cycle. Plans for the alignment to the new concordat – now called The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researcher, Commonly known as the Researcher Development Concordat – will be formed with the Research Committee and other stakeholders in the coming year. The key challenge in this process is to find a response to the concordat that is commensurate with Central's scale of activity and areas of research.

#### 4.2 Roll out of changes to ethics guidance.

The last cycle saw the discussion and agreement at committee level for some changes to the ethics guidance. The process will change the 'fast track' to 'low risk' in part to shift the emphasis away from the time the process takes to the type of activity. In addition, the informed consent will require a plain language statement. In the coming cycle, the Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee will seek feedback about the shifts. In part the shift indicates a discursive approach to managing research ethics and integrity – often a discussion with the research integrity lead before forms are completed – such that the process of ethics clearance is seen as an ongoing part of research. Likewise, the low risk category of application may also involve a discussion before submission where the researcher thinks it would be beneficial to the research process.

#### 4.3 Data Collection.

At present, the annual data harvest only reflects the ethics applications for post graduate research students and staff. It does not cover the other places where Ethics Handbook and forms/processes will be used – in taught courses, for instance. In the year coming, the subcommittee will scope ways of capturing this data in a centralised way such that it may form part of its annual reporting cycle.

#### 4.4 Conservatoires UK

In the year 2016-17 the Research Ethics Subcommittee recommended that any applications for ethical clearance that were deemed not low risk should be submitted through Conservatoires UK's Ethics Committee. The first Ethics Application to go to CUK came in during 2017-18 and was granted permission early in 2019. The process ran smoothly and we now have a sense of the timeframe and give guidance to further applications. In the coming cycles, we will begin negotiations for an agreed turnaround time and will seek to append CUK's Research Integrity Annual Statement to ours.