




TO: **BOARD OF GOVERNORS, 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016**

FROM: VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE)

PREPARED BY: VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE)

DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016

APPROVED BY  
VICE-CHANCELLOR: 

SUBJECT: **COMPLIANCE WITH CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY – ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT TO HEFCE**

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## 1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The requirement for an annual assurance statement was introduced as a condition of HEFCE grant from 2013-14, for institutions eligible to receive HEFCE funding for research. This follows the consultation 'Research integrity concordat: Consultation on proposed implementation from 2013-14' (HEFCE 2012/32), the outcomes of which are published on the research integrity section of the HEFCE web-site: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/integrity>.
- 1.2 The funding agreements for 2013-14 therefore state:
- 'The institution is required to comply with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity published by Universities UK in July 2012 [...] Institutions in receipt of research grant from the Council are also required to provide assurance of their compliance with the Concordat through the annual assurance return to the Council and following any guidance that the Council may provide. Institutions will be asked to confirm their compliance with the Concordat in the annual assurance statement, which will be subject to routine audit. Institutions will not be required to provide additional evidence in the assurance return. We will additionally monitor the implementation of the concordat through the information shared by other funders at the integrity working group (see paragraph 13).'
- 1.3 Governors approved a report on compliance by Bath Spa University for 2014/15 at their meeting of 24 June 2015.
- 1.4 A report on compliance by Bath Spa University for 2015/16 is attached for consideration.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 On 11 July 2012, Universities UK (UUK) published a concordat to support research integrity. This was developed in collaboration with HEFCE, Research Councils UK, the Wellcome Trust and Government, and in consultation with HEIs and other bodies with an interest in research. The concordat coexists with and supports the mechanisms that some funders of research already have in place to promote best practice.
- 2.2 The UK research base enjoys a very high reputation for the excellence and integrity of its activity and outputs. Research integrity is fundamental to maintaining this, and to ensuring that these outputs can confidently be used to contribute to economic growth and national wellbeing.
- 2.3 Following consideration at RCSC on 20 March 2014, amended documents were circulated to Schools for consideration and approval.
- 2.4 RCSC subsequently approved the documents in the form of a handbook for Research Ethics and Integrity at Bath Spa University, for consideration at Academic Board.
- 2.5 Academic Board approved the handbook for immediate implementation at its meeting in July 2014. The handbook can be found on the University's website at:  
  
<https://thehub.bathspa.ac.uk/research-integrity-and-ethics>.
- 2.6 The University Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee (RCSC) set up an Ethics Working Group at the end of the 2014/15 academic year, to review policies and procedures related to Research Integrity and Ethics. The Group has met 4 times over the 2015/16 academic year and taken forward the actions outlined in the compliance report attached.
- 2.7 An IT Project request form is currently being prepared to support the development and implementation of a full on-line ethical approval system in the 2016/17 academic year.
- 2.8 In line with statutory requirements, the University is now asked to confirm its compliance with the Concordat in the annual assurance statement to HEFCE.

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 Governors are asked to discuss the report attached to enable the Chief Executive officer to include a statement of compliance in the HEFCE annual assurance statement.
- 3.2 Governors are asked to note that a working group of the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee (RKECC) has been set up to lead the work of embedding research integrity principles across the whole University, within both the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, and across validation and quality assurance processes.

## **4. RISK**

- 4.1 As set out in section 1.1 above, compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity is a condition of HEFCE grant from 2013-14, for institutions eligible to receive HEFCE funding for research.

4.2 If the University does not include a statement of compliance in its annual assurance statement, it will risk the payment of HEFCE grant in 2017/18.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 That Board of Governors considers the compliance report attached for approval and inclusion in the HEFCE annual assurance statement.



Compliance of Bath Spa University with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity – June 2016 report to Governors

1. In line with the University's statement on Research Integrity and Ethics (noted by Governors in June 2015), the University Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee (RKECC) has taken the following actions and activities in the 2015/16 academic year to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues:
  - Revised version of Handbook on Research Integrity and Ethics approved by RKECC in November 2015
  - Module Leaders questionnaire developed and launched in February 2016 – summary of actions will be considered by RKECC at its 14 July 2016 meeting.
  - Ethics approval processes reviewed and amended
  - On-Line Ethical Approval process agreed – stage 1 to be launched in 2016/17 academic year, and stage 2 to be developed
  - Revised application forms for full ethical approval reviewed are currently being developed as a paper based process for implementation at the start of the 2015/16 academic year based on good practice across UK HEIs
  - Ongoing monitoring of the number of applications for ethical approval that have been considered by Schools.
  - Monitoring of the completion of on-line training on Ethics undertaken by academic staff and PGR students across the 2014-15 academic year (mandatory for all academic staff)
  - Discussions with the central project team on the development of a full on-line ethical approval system across the 2016-17 academic year
2. There have been no allegations of research misconduct in the 2015/16 academic year. Current processes continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.
3. No formal investigations of research misconduct have been undertaken in the 2015/16 academic year.
4. The Vice-Provost, Research & Enterprise confirms that the University continues to ensure that its environment promotes and nurtures a commitment to research integrity, and that suitable processes are in place to deal with misconduct. This statement will be made publicly available on the University's website, upon confirmation of the Board of Governor's approval of this report.