



TO: **BOARD OF GOVERNORS, 28th JUNE 2017**
FROM: VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE)
PREPARED BY: VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE)
DATE: 24th MAY 2017

APPROVED BY
VICE-CHANCELLOR:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christine Frade'.

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

1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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>.

HEFCE now requires institutions eligible to receive research funding to confirm their compliance with the concordat in the annual assurance statement.

- 1.2 Governors approved a report on compliance by Bath Spa University for 2014/15 at their meeting of 24 June 2015, and for 2015/16 at its meeting on 10 June 2016.
- 1.3 Recommendation: that the Board of Governors considers the compliance report attached for approval and inclusion in the HEFCE annual assurance statement.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The University Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee (RKECC) has taken a number of actions and activities in the 2016/17 academic year to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues, details of which can be found in the annual compliance statement attached as Appendix A.
- 2.2 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. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Following consideration at RCSC on 20 March 2014, amended documents were circulated to Schools for consideration and approval.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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>.
- 3.6 The University Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee (RKECC) 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, and there is a standing item on the RKECC agenda for updates on the group's activities.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Governors are asked to note that the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee (RKECC) continues 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.

5. RISK

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 That Board of Governors consider 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 2017 report to Governors

1. The Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee has taken the following actions in the 2016/17 academic year to support research ethics and integrity across the University:
 - 1.1 Ethics approval processes reviewed and amended to include the new on-line Stage 1 review process, supported by an advocacy programme delivered to Schools. The Handbook on Research Integrity and Ethics has been subsequently updated to include this information.
 - 1.2 Review and approval of revised membership of the University Ethics Committee, in light of the new College of Liberal Arts decision to put two field level Ethics Committees in place
 - 1.3 Pilot of new on-line Ethics and Integrity training from the provider Epigeum, to replace the existing modules for 2017/18
 - 1.4 Consideration and the development of guidance of the appropriate ethical procedures to be followed in relation to the following activities:
 - Student placement procedures
 - staff research on the HE in Professional Practice programme
 - mentoring of teachers undertaking research projects in Schools
 - 1.5 The Ethics Working Group hosted a visit from the Director of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) to the University to discuss how they are able to support the ongoing development of ethics and integrity at Bath Spa
 - 1.6 Consideration of the results of the UKRIO self-assessment tool on the implementation of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity at Bath Spa University (as required by the Internal Audit Committee) and an agreement of actions to be taken to address issues addressed in the 2017/18 academic year, including updating the website to ensure that our policies and procedures are more clearly set out.
 - 1.7 A suite of researcher development workshops on research integrity and ethics is being developed for delivery in the 2017/18 academic year.
2. There have been two allegations of research misconduct in the 2016/17 academic

year.

- 2.1 One allegation of misconduct was upheld, and has resulted in retraction requests from international journals. The member of staff concerned has resigned their post at the University.
 - 2.2 The second allegation is still under investigation (May 2017) – the outcome of this will need to be reported to the RCUK as it relates to a researcher attached to an AHRC grant.
 - 2.3 As a result of the above, and as identified in the self-assessment exercise, the University Ethics Committee will be reviewing the University's Research Misconduct Procedure in 2017/18, in consultation with HR.
3. A student complaint in relation to the University's consideration of an Application for Ethical Approval in relation to an MA research project is currently in process (May 2017).
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.