

## Concordat to Support Research Integrity

---

The University is committed to supporting the highest standards of research integrity which are reflected in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).

- Commitment 1: To maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
- Commitment 2: To ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
- Commitment 3: To 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.
- Commitment 4: To use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
- Commitment 5: To work together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

Research Committee is responsible for ensuring adherence to these commitments. We have a range of policies codes and processes to support researchers in maintaining these standards, specifically:

- Code of Practice for the Conduct of Research
- Code of Practice for the Reporting of Research Misconduct
- Framework for Research Ethics
  - UREC Ethical Guidance for Undertaking Research with Children and Young People
  - UREC Ethical Guidance for Undertaking Research with Vulnerable Adults
  - UREC Ethical Guidance for Undertaking Research with Edge Hill University Students
- Human Tissue Quality Manual
- Research Risk Assessment Guidance
- Open Access Policy
- Research Data Management Guidelines
- Authorised Signatories for research, knowledge exchange (KE) and enterprise activity contracts on behalf of Edge Hill University

These documents are all available on the University's [research governance webpages](#). The Research Office oversees the review and updating of these codes and policies on behalf of Research Committee. The Director of the Research Office provides an induction workshop (three times a year) that highlights

---

these policies and codes; in addition the newly enrolling PhD students have training sessions which cover the codes of practice, the ethics approval process, risk assessment and working with human tissue.

There is an additional policy on intellectual property that is owned by Academic Quality and Development Unit (AQDU) and is held on the central regulations pages.

## **Research Governance Structures**

Research Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor George Talbot. It has representatives from each faculty and ex-officio and appointed members from the Research Office, its Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC), Learning Services and the Governing Body. The Committee delegates the responsibility for the ethical approval process to URESC which meets three times a year. Among its ex-officio members are the chairs of each Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) which, in turn, oversee the ethical approval processes of research conducted in their areas. In the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), two departments, Psychology and Sport and Physical Activity, have their own departmental research ethics committees (DREC) which are able to approve ethics applications. All departments are expected to review projects in their areas and make recommendations to the FAS FREC. In the other two faculties, Health and Social Care, and Education, the FREC is responsible for all ethical approval processes. Where a FREC does not feel able to grant ethical approval, it may ask URESC to review the application.

URESC provides Research Committee with an annual report and a plan of business for the forthcoming year at its first meeting of the year.

In addition to the ethics committees, there is a Human Tissue Management Group (HTMG) chaired by Professor Clare Austin (Associate Dean for Research and Innovation, Faculty of Health and Social Care) which has oversight of the work carried out under the license. All projects carried out under the license must receive ethical approval from URESC rather than the FRECs. The 'Designated Individual' under the terms of the HTA licence is a member of the HTMG and an ex-officio member of URESC.

All governance documents are reviewed by both URESC and the Research Committee before being taken to Academic Board for final approval and adoption.

## **Activities 2016-17**

(The relevant Concordat commitment is indicated in parenthesis.)

- A formal process for notifying the HTMG of ethics approvals, amendments of extensions granted by URESC. URESC scrutinised eleven ethics applications related to the use and storage of Human Tissue, eight have been approved, three are awaiting confirmation that the conditions of approval have been met.
- The University reviewed its Open Access Policy to update it in light of developments within HEFCE and a range of staff development activities have taken place to promote this policy – these activities will continue into 2017-18. In addition, the operational support for open access continues to be developed. The University has moved to mediated deposit to ensure compliance (#1; #2; #3).
- The application form for ethical approval was amended to include:

- A project 'end date'
- Additional questions have been added on risk assessment. The researcher is now required to list any risks associated with the research to be carried out, and how these will be mitigated.  
(#1; #2; #3; #5).
- All ethics approval confirmation letters explicitly state the approval end date and that ethical approval does not extend beyond this date and that, where relating to a PGR project, they are addressed to the student's DoS as PI with the student copied in
- The Graduate School Board of Studies instigated an audit of ethical approvals granted to PhD students to ensure that those who require ethical approval have a record of it on their files (#2; #3; #5).
- The Director of the Research Office continued to deliver three annual sessions on the An Introduction to Edge Hill's Research Strategy and Code of Practice for the Conduct of Research, which includes reference to the range of governance documents. This session is aimed particularly at new academic staff but is open to all. In addition, there are other sessions in the Research Capacity Building (RCB) programme which promote research integrity including research ethics, data protection, research management and working with human subjects (#1; #2; #3).
- PhD students have sessions on governance and ethics during their induction week and have access to RCB sessions more generally (#2; #3).
- URESC approved applications for devolved ethical approval for Psychology and Sport
- The Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation working group produced a draft guidance document
- URESC appointed two new lay members.

For the record, there have been no cases investigated under the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct (hence there are no actions under commitment 4). Two PGR students have been investigated under research degree regulations for academic malpractice

Dr Nikki Craske  
Director, Research Office

*Received by University Research Ethics Sub-committee, 27 September 2017*

*Received by University Research Committee, 25 October 2017*