

# **Research Integrity Annual Statement 2018 / 2019**

Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date	July 2019

## **1. Summary of actions and activities**

- 1.1 Outlined here is a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues
- 1.2 Previously, SOAS undertook a comprehensive review of its research ethics policy and all associated procedures, including the Code of Practice for Using Personal Data in Research. These have now been published and formally introduced. A separate research-specific data protection impact assessment guide has also been issued.
- 1.3 Certain areas of research invariably raise ethical issues that must be given the appropriate level of consideration and scrutiny. A process of mandatory referrals has been instituted to capture any research that covers one of eight-categories, the ninth being a self-referral mechanism. These are now referred to the Research Ethics Panel (REP) for consideration and approval.
- 1.4 In 2018/19 the REP received 32 referrals: these comprised research undertaken by all levels of researcher (staff, doctoral researcher and taught students). The REP also determined to embargo 5 PhD thesis.
- 1.5 SOAS continues to subscribe to the Epigeum Research Integrity online course. Doctoral researchers are required to have completed this as part of the PhD upgrade process. Academic staff who have an externally funded research grant are also required to have successfully completed the course.
- 1.6 There are some outstanding examples of academic departments who, with continuous improvement in mind, have been encouraging all academic staff to complete the course, regardless of whether they currently have a research grant. Special mention is made of the Department of East Asian Languages (pass rate 83%), and the School of Arts (pass rate 71%).
- 1.7 To ensure greater compliance with the broad set of policies, the project to undertake internal spot checks (audit/assurance) of live research projects has started. Policy and procedural documentation have been drafted. Several projects have been reviewed as part of the ongoing test phase.

## **2. Research Misconduct**

- 2.1 SOAS has revised and published its policy for investigating allegations of research misconduct. While the policy is based upon the model recommended by UKRI, new features have been adopted to include a clear separation between the policy and procedure, definite timelines and an appeals process.

## **3. Research Misconduct Cases**

- 3.1 One allegation of research misconduct was made in relation to the Department for East Asian Languages.
- 3.2 The Named Person convened a Screening Panel, which determined that the claimant's allegation had substance and that there was a case to answer. An Investigation Panel has been formed and is shortly due to promulgate its determination upon the matter (June 2019).