Research Integrity Annual Statement

2023 / 2024

Authored	RKED
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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 across SOAS.

2. Summary of the Research Ethics Panel (REP) work

2.1 The Panel convened three-formal sessions (Oct-23, Jan-24 and Apr-24) in addition to the monthly virtual REP, excluding Dec-23 where no listings session was convened.

2.2 For academic year 2023/2024 a total of 57 submissions proceeded to be determined by the Research Ethics Panel (REP), representing a decrease of approximately twenty percent when compared with the previous academic year. The breakdown of these submissions was as follows:

- Academic staff 26
- PhD Upgrade (and Fieldwork) 19
- PhD embargo 2
- PGT 10

2.3 No submissions came within scope of being security sensitive (category 1). Two-thirds of all submissions proceeding to the Panel were related to research involving potentially vulnerable research participants (category 2) and/or potential fieldwork risks (category 3). A total of 11 submissions were determined by Chairs Action, to expedite a decision. Total exclusions, those either sent through for review and / or not formally coming within scope to mandate referral were 16.

3. Safeguarding

3.1 Safeguarding procedures remain formally embedded into the research ethics approval process with a mandatory safeguarding referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent deputy where safeguarding issues potentially arise.

3.2 For the academic year 2023/2024, there were a total of 2 referrals made for research that involved potentially vulnerable participants. No DBS checks were undertaken for specific funded projects during this period.

4. Epigeum Research Integrity course

4.1 SOAS has subscribed to the [Epigeum research integrity course](#) for several years now, mandating completion from certain categories of researcher.

4.2 Discussions to expand the mandate for the course have occurred throughout the relevant committee structures over the course of the academic year. There has been broad support for the expansion of the mandatory requirement to now cover all academic supervisors

(excluding any external supervisors) of postgraduate research students. From the beginning of academic year 2024/2025, this will be implemented.

4.3 This academic year has seen the launch of a new and substantively revised version of the course (version 2.2, UK edition), with course content becoming live on 2 Jun-24. Historic data for the previous version of the course included a total of 2710 passes overall covering all levels of researcher.

5. Additional Guidance: Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research, DPIA

5.1 The Research Ethics Panel (REP) sub-committee published its guidance note on the use of AI in research. The guidance applies to all levels of research that is conducted at SOAS. Further updates to the guidance are likely to be forthcoming, however, these will not cover areas or subjects that are broadly outside of SOAS' research disciplines, particularly with regards to STEM subjects.

5.2 Following centralisation for DPIA reporting (together with a revised screening evaluation form), updates were made to the research specific DPIA.

6. Research Misconduct

6.1 No substantive allegations were raised during the period.

6.2 In conjunction with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, some amendments are currently under active review concerning submission and reporting routes. A revised version to the overall policy will follow once this has been finalised.