A. Purpose

This report outlines for Council the requirements placed on the University under the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and the *Research Councils UK Research Integrity Assurance questionnaire*. It informs Council of the work carried out by the RIWG to understand current policies, processes and training and to make recommendations to ensure the University can meet the provisions of the Concordat and questionnaire.

B. Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was launched in 2012 with support from the Government, HEFCE and major research funders such as the Research Councils (RCUK) and the Wellcome Trust. This University is fully committed to supporting the Concordat.

The key provisions of the Concordat are enshrined in five commitments:

1. We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
2. We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
3. We are committed to supporting 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.
4. We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
5. We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

The Research Integrity Working Group (Appendix 1) was set up by Research Policy Committee in February 2014. It includes representatives from all Colleges and key corporate services offices who contribute expertise in a variety of subjects, and took advice from offices and individuals with specialist knowledge (Appendix 2). Its remit was to examine and report on current processes, guidelines and training in relation, primarily, to commitments 3 and 5. RIWG will disband after completing this work but a longer-term group may be required to ensure provision is developed and progress reviewed annually, in line with the Concordat and questionnaire.

The Concordat recommends that the University should present a short annual statement to the governing body (Council) that includes, amongst other things, a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews). This, the first report of the RIWG, is intended to form the basis of the 2014 annual statement.
RIWG intends to make a second formal report to Council in early 2015, forming the annual report for 2015, once it has completed its work. In line with the Concordat, both reports will be made publically available on the University website once approved by Council.

The University is also required to make a return to the RCUK Research Integrity Assurance questionnaire as part of the assurance programme of organisations in receipt of RCUK funding and the work of RIWG is relevant to parts of this return.

C. Key Findings in the relation to the Concordat and RCUK questionnaire

In addition to examining University provision under commitments 3 and 5 (above) of the Concordat, RIWG has focused on two of the six questions posed by the RCUK questionnaire:

1. How are policies and procedures on Research Integrity & Ethics disseminated to staff? Please indicate if any special provision is made for new employees (including postgraduate students) and also how staff awareness is maintained.
2. Please outline any actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example, postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews).

1 Policies and Procedures

1.1 The Research Code of Conduct
The current Research Code of Conduct, which sets out the University's policies and procedures in relation to research integrity, was last revised in July 2011 and is now out of date. Drawing on the extensive experience available within the Group, and through consultation with relevant groups (Appendix 2), RIWG revised the Code and prepared an online version.

1.2 Ethics
The University ethics approval processes, and related documentation such as the Ethics Code of Practice, are currently being revised by the University Ethics Committee. RIWG includes Representatives of this Committee to ensure that work is co-ordinated. RIWG and the Ethics Committee have agreed a standardised set of definitions and style for these Codes. The revised Ethics Code and approval process for research projects are scheduled for release in early 2015.

1.3 Dissemination
During the review work undertaken by RIWG, it has become increasingly clear that the concept of integrity in research is poorly understood at all levels, and awareness is low, from first-year postgraduates to senior professors. Integrity is often equated to ethical approval or avoidance of plagiarism, which form only part of what it means to behave with integrity. There is no specific dissemination of the issues around research integrity and ethics, or guidance on the Codes, for new staff or students. Some dissemination events have been held, but these are generally on a one-off basis. Formal training for new academic staff does not cover research integrity.

1.4 Training and development
RIWG surveyed college, departmental and central provision of training courses in areas related to research integrity. The responses suggest that provision varies widely with some areas covered in depth in one department and not at all in others with little consistency; in some areas the only ‘training’ seemed to be a paragraph within student regulations.
RIWG considers that all those carrying out research (whether staff or student) should receive basic training in research integrity, plus advanced training in areas of specific relevance to their research. Completion of basic training should be monitored and linked to (e.g.) transfer from probationary status to research degree or ability to apply for research funding. Data security training is currently provided on Blackboard and all staff are required to complete the training, and completion can be audited. It was felt that a similar model might work for research integrity training, although a number of subject-specific modules might be required.

2. **RIWG Actions and Activities**

2.1 An updated Research Code of Conduct was prepared for approval by Research Policy Committee and Senate.

2.2 An externally accessible research integrity website has been provided and, once approved, the revised Code will form the basis of this website, together with links providing further information and advice on specific issues.

2.3 RIWG is continuing to examine current training around research integrity and will consider how the University might extend and enhance its provision in this area in the next, and final, report from the Group.

2.4 RIWG is exploring the possibility of producing dissemination material (such as posters and flyers) which can be sent to new staff and students and disseminated at events, or displayed in departments.

2.5 RIWG will explore the possibility of providing online training, for example via the Blackboard virtual learning environment.

2.6 RIWG will continue to examine dissemination and training across the University and provide additional recommendations for colleges, departments and other providers.

**D. Actions Required of Council**

Council are requested to note:
   a) The University’s commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the requirements placed on it by this commitment;
   b) The approval by Senate of a revised Research Code of Conduct;
   c) The continuing work of RIWG to examine dissemination and training around integrity;
   d) This first formal report to Council.

Professor Mark Jobling, Chair RIWG
Dr Juliet Bailey, Secretary RIWG

October 2014
Appendix 1: Terms of Reference and Membership of RIWG

TERMS OF REFERENCE

a) To consider the implications of the Concordat for Research Integrity for the University
b) To gather evidence on current policies and compliance from relevant internal groups
c) To evaluate current practices and procedures in light of the Concordat
d) To consider and report on areas of improvement, suggesting mechanisms where possible
e) To work with internal stakeholders in developing reports and proposals
f) To communicate their work broadly across the University
g) To contribute to the report on implementation of the Concordat required by HEFCE
h) To consider and record the potential equal opportunity impacts of decisions made by the Group (in accordance with the ‘due regard’ provisions of the Equality Act 2010).

Reports to the Research Policy Committee  Secretariat: Research Support Office

MEMBERSHIP

Professor Mark Jobling (Genetics; Chair)
Professor Jo Brewis (Management)
Professor Paul Cullis (Chemistry)
Professor Jose Miola (Law)
Mrs Jan Davies (Research Support Office)
Mr Brian Berry (Research Support Office)
Dr Meera Warrier (Academic Practice Unit)
Dr Juliet Bailey (Research Support Office; Secretary)

Appendix 2: Groups consulted over revisions to Research Code of Conduct

1. Enterprise and Business Development
2. Library
3. University Ethics Committee
4. IT Services
5. Human Resources
6. Information Assurance Services & Data Protection Officer
7. Academic Registrar
8. Governance Office
9. Development and Alumni Relations Office
10. Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise
11. Research Policy Committee
12. Research Governance Office
13. University Legal Advisor
14. UK Research Integrity Office