



Embedding research integrity in institutional research ethics frameworks

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Managing Change: Research Ethics

- ▶ Aims
 - ▶ Sharing ideas and lessons learnt so far
 - ▶ Approaching change from an integrity perspective
 - ▶ Ideas for managing change
- ▶ Where are we now? Ethical review at Exeter and UCL

Managing Change: Research Integrity

Go back to the five commitments

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

Why does Research Integrity matter?

- ▶ Fundamental to research and to the role it plays in society
- ▶ Lack of trust waste huge amounts of researchers' precious time and effort, and the project of enquiry is hugely harmed
- ▶ Societal trust: risks when the power and influence that science has are misplaced - real harm to innocent people
- ▶ Maintaining trust is the fundamental goal of global efforts around research integrity (honesty, accountability, professional courtesy and fairness, good stewardship)

- ▶ **Not restricting research, but enabling it**
- ▶ **TRUST**

Ensuring the integrity of research helps to maintain trust.

Rule One: What is the change you want to see?

UCL and IOE merger - separate policies and processes

Example: Changing ethics policy

- *Review policies*
- *What changes are needed/what should be kept*
- *What documents need changing*
- *What new structures are needed*
- *Alert everyone to the change*
- *Make the change*

Rule One: What is the change you want to see?

Before you begin a change: Think....what is the outcome you want?

Want a centrally-devolved unified ethics review system. Why?

Want a single system used and agreed across UCL. Why?

Because:

- Becomes part of the culture and 'how we do things'.
- Produces rigorous and ethical research
 - Ensures researchers are trained and able to act and react ethically in the field
 - Ensures risks relating to research are identified and managed (consistently)
 - Allows for institutional oversight and proportionate peer review

Rule One: What is the change you want to see?

Next question is how can you get to that point?

- *Current policy*
- *Current system*
- *Proportional Review*
- *Local variations and similarities*
- *Practicalities and resources*

Start with the outcome and work backwards – design the change from the end point.

Rule Two: Change Perspective

Need to find neutral zone

Perspectives:

- ▶ *Disciplinary perspective (terminology)*
- ▶ *Risk perspective*
- ▶ *Ethical research v ethical review*
- ▶ *Proposed changes*

Rule Three: Change creates change

Embedding a culture of integrity and ethics is an ongoing process; change needs to be continuous – *aim to create a ripple effect*

Examples:

1. Multiple strands within project involving different groups - combination of PS/centrally-led review (e.g. working groups) and peer to peer approaches (e.g. cross referral of applications, support between REC Chairs)
2. Forums for sharing best practice e.g. academic/ECR and PGR led seminars and events in formal and informal settings - this has helped with finding consistency across disciplines
3. Building research integrity and ethical considerations into work across multiple areas of institution e.g. close working with research culture/researcher development team, open research and library teams and into broader university governance and compliance functions
4. Opportunities for embedding ethical considerations into C-19 shut down, changing data collection methods and re-start processes?

Rule Three: Change creates change

Lessons learnt so far?

- Be prepared for the level of complexity and challenge...and long timescales
- Think about what expertise and support you can call on and ask for help; importance of working collaboratively on shared goals to maintain focus
- Hold onto and support enthusiasm and ideas (e.g. peer-led activities); you don't need to do everything and this is a key part of embedding the culture
- Remember to step back, keep re-planning and prioritising because...

Rule Four: Change is not straight forward

The reality is:

- ▶ External factors and competing priorities – and now rapidly changing ways of working
- ▶ Layers of groups and silos - Faculty/Department/Location/Team
- ▶ Disciplinary differences; definitions, assumed ways of working
- ▶ Lack of resources; financial, human and time
- ▶ Management structures and multiple reporting lines/consultation routes
- ▶ Past experiences (e.g. previous IT implementations)
- ▶ Individual differences in key colleagues – approaches, assumptions and ways of working

Rule Four: Change is not straight forward

Example:

1. *Substantial revision of Research Ethics Framework and implementation of online application/review system*

Time taken to review, revise and implement - not just changing a policy or how/who reviews applications:

- Changes to the way we work across all Colleges
- Cultural changes in the way we consider ethical review as an ongoing cycle
- Changes in the role and function of the REC (e.g. relationship between ethical review and governance approvals)

Perennial discussions e.g. workload allocations and resources, use of secondary data, review of student projects – will continue to change in future revisions

Rule Four: Change is not straight forward

Lessons learnt so far?

- ▶ Linking back to the change you want to see
- ▣ Bringing departments/faculties/disciplines together in development and procurement - steering groups, consultation and piloting
- ▶ Tackling (perceived) differences in disciplines (e.g. terminology)
- ▶ Collective agreement on common standards and where some flexibility is acceptable
- ▶ Differing approaches with key colleagues are needed to keep their involvement and support
- ▶ Building trust over time to enable quick decisions when needed and when there is limited opportunity for consultation

Managing Change: embedding research integrity

1. What is the change you want to see?
2. Change Perspective
3. Change creates change
4. Change is not straight forward

This is one example of an approach to changing ethical review - we have broad roles and a focus on research integrity so have chosen this route but it may not be the right approach for all.