

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2020 / 2021

Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date	Sept-2021

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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 issues at SOAS.

2. Epigeum Research Integrity course

2.1 Version 2 of the [Epigeum research integrity course](#) was available to access from 1 Sept-2020.

The course is now divided into a Core and Supplementary component, with the Core component consisting of eight modules stipulated as mandatory certain researchers.

2.2 Uptake for the new version of the course was particularly strong, with 821 researchers across all levels, registering during the period 1 Sept-2020 to 31 Jul-2021. Pass rates (against registrations) have been notably good among Masters (78%) and PhD students (87%).

3. Safeguarding

3.1 Safeguarding procedures are 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. Only the Research Ethics Panel (REP) can provide approval for research that involves potentially vulnerable participants.

3.2 Where research is being undertaken with potentially vulnerable participant groups, the [Safeguarding Essentials](#) training module is mandatory and must be successfully completed. Where applicable, a relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check should be obtained.

4. Summary of the Research Ethics Panel (REP)

4.1 The Panel convened three-formal sessions throughout the year with the remainder work being conducted through the monthly virtual sessions. A total of 56 referrals were made by all levels of researcher, which included 5-requests to embargo PhD thesis.

4.2 A total of 7 safeguarding referrals were made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for research that potentially involved vulnerable participants. Two DBS checks were undertaken for specific funded projects during this period.

5. Updated Guidance

5.1 Version 5.1 of the [Code of Practice for SOAS staff and students: Using Personal Data in Research](#) was published. The updated version revised several aspects to the guidance and now includes greater precision in key areas, together with the addition of embedded links to SOAS guidance.

5.2 Researchers at all levels continue to face challenging circumstances to navigate the ongoing restrictions relating to SARS-CoV-2, particularly where research is planned or scheduled to take place outside the UK. In addition to regular updates provided to the Panel, a new [Assisted guidance for SOAS Researchers seeking to undertake fieldwork outside the UK](#) was published in June, to help researchers navigate the ongoing statutory regulations that place restrictions upon international travel.

6. Research Misconduct

6.1 One allegation of research misconduct was raised during this period but did not proceed as it was not formally within scope. The previous ongoing item was formally concluded with no further action taken.