

UCL Code of Conduct for Research

Policy

1. Introduction

Context

According to its mission statement, UCL is 'a world-class centre of research and teaching, dedicated to developing and disseminating original knowledge to the benefit of the world of the future'. UCL values independent thought and integrity and is committed to the pursuit of excellence. In realising this vision, UCL is committed to maintaining the integrity and probity of academic research. UCL therefore regards it as fundamental that research should be conducted, and the results of research disseminated, honestly, accurately and in accordance with professional standards.

In keeping with this commitment and as part of its research governance framework, UCL operates a code of conduct for research. This code sets out the general principles of conduct by which UCL expects research to be carried out at or in the name of UCL. The UCL code of conduct in research is coherent and should be read in conjunction with [Research Councils UK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct](#).

Contents

The UCL code of conduct in research covers five main areas:

- professional and personal integrity of researchers
- process of research design
- publication process
- leadership responsibilities
- institutional responsibilities

The final section of the code lists related UCL policies and procedures and provides links to the detailed versions of these policies and procedures.

2. Professional and personal integrity of researchers

Researchers should meet the standards expected by funding bodies, their profession and the institution. They should be:

- honest at all stages of the research process, from applying for funding to publishing results and acknowledging the work of others;
- open and willing to discuss results and share data with colleagues;
- aware of and adhere to legal and ethical requirements relevant to the area of research;
- ready to participate in (i) training to improve their own skills and (ii) the mentoring of others;

- alert to perceived or actual conflicts of interest and address these as appropriate – in accordance with the UCL declaration of interest policy;
- aware of the types of research misconduct outlined in the UCL policy and procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research.

3. Research design and methodology

The following requirements apply to research in all disciplines:

- clear documentation for the rationale for the study and any subsequent modifications should be kept in files or notebooks;
- while the research leader or grant holder usually has ultimate responsibility for assuring compliance with legal, ethical and safety requirements, all researchers involved in the work should be aware of these requirements and help ensure they are met;
- a risk assessment must be completed before research is commenced;
- progress should be monitored regularly and if necessary there should be the opportunity to refine the design and/or methodology;
- prior to commencing research, consideration should be given to the potential misuse of research results;
- research data should be stored for a minimum of 10 years (20 years for projects of major social, environmental or heritage importance);
- data which has been stored should be checked periodically to ensure that it remains accessible should it be necessary to consult this data;
- all external collaborators should work in accordance with the standards expected by UCL;
- likewise, UCL staff participating in research at another institution are expected to work in accordance with the policies and procedures of both UCL and the partner institution concerned.

4. The publication process

Researchers should disseminate their findings through all appropriate media - such as journals, books, chapters, articles, conference proceedings, reviews, software, databases and creative arts – and should take account of the following:

- the person with overall responsibility for the research programme should authorise the publication of results;
- all those who have contributed to the publication should be given the opportunity to be included as a co-author and should be able to identify their contribution;
- authors should not be included unless they have made an intellectual contribution to the paper;
- any contracts or agreements relating to research should include provision for ownership and use of intellectual property and accord with UCL's policy on Intellectual Property Rights for Staff. UCL encourages staff and students to assert personal copyright over material submitted for publication. Information on Copyright is available on the UCL Library Services web pages;

- if an error is later found in previously published research a retraction should be published as soon as possible.

5. Leadership responsibilities

While responsibility for compliance with safety, ethics and any other legal standards lies with leaders of research groups, responsibility may be delegated to other staff provided that it is made clear within the research group what is expected of each of its members.

Leaders of research groups:

- are accountable for the safety of others under their supervision and ensuring that risk assessments are completed prior to commencing research;
- are responsible for supervising and checking the work of others in their group and should encourage staff to develop their skills;
- are responsible for ensuring compliance with legal and ethical requirements;
- should undertake a regular review of progress.

Graduate student supervisors should complete the course on *An Introduction to Research Student Supervision* available through UCL's Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT).

6. Institutional responsibilities

UCL is committed to fostering a climate to allow research to be conducted in accordance with all legal, ethical and safety criteria and promote a culture of good practice among research staff. In particular UCL has in place:

- and will continue to develop and strengthen a research ethics framework, which outlines policy and good practice in research ethics;
- a UCL Research Governance Committee, which is charged to develop research governance policy and to monitor the operation of research ethics committees;
- a statement of Safety policy and a Safety Services Unit, which can provide guidance on safety issues;
- and will continue to develop a variety of training opportunities to provide support and training to researchers at all stages of their career;
- guidelines setting out responsibilities and procedures for the storage and disposal of data and samples;
- a procedure for dealing with allegations of research misconduct;
- a full range of insurance policies which protect UCL's assets and liabilities and extend to personal liabilities of staff and students undertaking authorised academic research on behalf of UCL.

7. Associated policies and procedures

This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with the following UCL policies and procedures:

- [Disclosure of Conflict and Declaration of Interest Policy](#)
- [Procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research](#)
- [Safety Services guidance on risk assessment](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy \(IP\) PR policy](#)
- [Information on copyright matters](#)
- Information governance compliance requirements – https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/itforslms/services/handling-sens-data/ig-documentation/SLMS-IG03_Research_Information_Governance_Policy.pdf
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- Guidelines for the storage and disposal of data and samples – <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/data-protection>
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-tissue/human-tissue-act>
- insurance policies which protect UCL's assets and liabilities and extend to personal liabilities of staff and students undertaking authorised academic research on behalf of UCL – <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/expenses-insurance/travel-advice/insurance-policies>.

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