

To: Management Board

Subject: Research Ethics and Integrity – Annual Report - 2022-23

From: Research Ethics Committee

Date: September 2023

Overview

Ensuring that research affiliated with London Business School is conducted in an ethical manner that protects the School, including its faculty, and research participants stands behind the School's commitment to Research Integrity. The internal process of ensuring research integrity has been led by the School's Research Ethics Committee (REC) since November 2011. The terms of reference and members of the committee for the academic year 2022-23 are detailed under Appendix 1. The School's REC held 2 meetings during academic year 2022-23 (November 2022 and a Planning meeting for academic year 2023/24 in July 2023).

As part of our commitment to Research Integrity, the School is wholly committed to the principles outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity published in October 2019 by Universities UK and supports research that is properly conducted and of the highest quality. Acting in accordance with the five specific Concordat principles, the School endorses:

- Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
- Embedding a culture of research integrity, by 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.
- Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct, should they arise.
- Working together, to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly, and openly.

Ethical procedures in practice Academic Year 2022-23

The operational arrangement continued, as in previous academic years, for the Chair of the REC, to receive support from the Research Lab team and the Assistant Director, Research in the weekly approval of research requiring ethical review.

The applications submitted by researchers, did not undergo a full review from each representative of the REC, and the majority of the applications received were reviewed by the REC Admin team and forwarded with comments to the REC Chair for review and a final decision to be made on behalf of members under the expedited approval process.

Appendix 2 provides an overview of the number of studies approved and the yearly activity of the REC for the last 6 years. Appendix 3 provides the definition for each 'Track'.

Research Integrity and Ethics Key activities in 2022-23

The following outlines some key activities from the business of the REC in 2022-23:

Research Ethics Digitisation: Plans for implementing a new online ethics application system by Summer 2023 were delayed due to delays with contract signature from departments outside of the REC remit. These have now been overcome and the project team (Jonathan Berman, Daniel Efron, Cecilia Fenech Brincat and Zareen Choudhury from the Research Ethics Committee together with colleagues in Technology and Digital Learning) is on track for the new online ethics system to be launched by academic year 2024/25. In 2022/23 most of the activity related to the discovery and initial configuration.

Research Data Privacy: Following concerns by the research ethics committee related to expertise in research data privacy an external review of our research data privacy activities was carried out in Q2. This led to a number of recommendations to the LBS ways of working, which have been agreed with the LBS Data Privacy Manager and School Secretary. The key recommendations related to moving towards a co-design and co-delivery model for supporting research data privacy and developing training initiatives in this area for faculty. A key change is that the Research Ethics Committee will no longer be responsible for research data privacy, but the newly set up Research Committee will oversee research data specific aspects. The research ethics process will still support research data privacy as part of the co-delivery operational model. However, it is recognised that not all research that might have data privacy concerns necessarily goes through the research ethics process, and alternative processes will also be developed.

Research Ethics and Integrity Training: A new module on Research Integrity and Ethics was developed in conjunction with Bob's Business and issued to faculty and PhD students in May 2023. As of the end of July 2023, completion rates were at 52.6% across all faculty and PhD students. An in-person training session on research ethics and integrity was also delivered as part of the PhD development programme in February 2023.

Changes to REC structure and function: At the end of the 2021-22 year, the incoming Deputy Dean (Faculty) proposed to change the composition of REC and way of operation. The key changes were to reduce the membership from representation from all seven subject areas to representation from the four areas who currently conduct the vast majority of research involving human participants (Marketing, Management Science and Operations, Organisational Behaviour and Strategy and Entrepreneurship); and to share the load of reviewing ethical applications among all the faculty on the committee, in line with best practice. In preparation for these changes in academic year 2023/24, during 2022/23 a number of activities were undertaken, including:

- A new administrative process for delegating applications to reps for review was developed.
- Identification of training material for any member of faculty reviewing applications for ethical approval.
- A planning meeting for the 2023/24 research ethics committee was held in July 2023 in preparation for the new model to operate as from August 2023.

Behaviour Lab Activity: In the period up until July 2023, **62** studies were carried out with 3 studies outstanding before the Academic year ends at present.

Investigations of Research Misconduct: In 2022-23 no allegations of academic misconduct were received by LBS.

Research Integrity and Ethics Key activities and initiatives planned for 2023-24

Implement the Research Ethics Committee (REC) structure: 2023/24 will be the first year of the proposed changes in operation. This will require additional training for the committee and an ongoing review of any challenges faced or unintended consequences.

Implement the new online ethics application system: Over 2023-24 the research ethics committee will continue working with colleagues and the suppliers to implement the new online ethics system by the start of academic year 2024/25. Over the next few months the project is expected to stop activity whilst the supplier is making changes to the platform. We expect to start working again in Q2 2024 to User Acceptance Testing and Deployment (Q3/4 2024). In support of this activity the research ethics committee will also look to develop new guidance and updating of relevant policies as necessary; reviewing the new ways of working and training.

Research Data Privacy: The recommendations related to Research Data Privacy identified over 2022/23 will be developed and implemented in collaboration with the Data Privacy Manager and the LBS Data Privacy and Security Committee. Key areas of focus are personal data; international data transfers; and third party data platforms.

UKRIO Membership: LBS has become a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). UKRIO is an advisory body that provides advice and guidance related to research integrity and research good practice that runs across all research disciplines and regulatory remits. Membership of UKRIO will be maintained and further activity related to research integrity planned for the upcoming year.

Alignment to the Concordat to support research integrity: To ensure ongoing alignment to the concordat to support research integrity, the Research Support Manager will conduct a gap analysis through the UKRIO self-assessment tool for the Concordat to support research integrity.