# RESEARCH GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicable to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All employees and research students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date first approved</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date first amended</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date last amended</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2015 (minor update)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approved by</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Research Ethics and Governance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Academic Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approval date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 10 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 21 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Document owner</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Enterprise Development Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

This Framework is designed to ensure that research in the University meets the demands of good research practice. Furthermore, many funding bodies (e.g. Research Councils, Government Departments, NGOs, Research Charities and international agencies) now require that institutions provide evidence of their strategies towards research governance and standards of good research practice prior to the award of research grants. Future research funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) requires compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity recently introduced (2013) by Universities UK and others.

2. BACKGROUND

Research Governance Frameworks (RGFs) establish the standards which must be met in research and define the mechanisms through which these will be achieved and outline the way in which compliance will be assessed and monitored. They are, in turn, designed to enhance the ethical and scientific quality of research and to reduce adverse incidents, fraud and misconduct. RGFs are being implemented by an increasing number of organisations in which research is carried out and their terms and conditions applied to anyone who manages, participates in or supervises research in or for these organisations.

Following the publication by the Department of Health of a Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (DoH, 2001 & 2005), the CCCU Faculty of Health and Social Care decided to implement the requirements of the Framework in the governance of all research carried out by the staff and students of the Faculty. As a result, the University successfully applied to the Department of Health for recognition as an approved Research Sponsor.

The University subsequently decided to implement the RGF principles in the governance of all research carried out across the remainder of CCCU. In 2005 (revised 2010 and 2012) the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) published a similar Framework for Research Ethics which is now mandatory for all ESRC-funded research. The other Research Councils require similar adherence via the contractual terms of their grant funding.

3. RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

Research Governance is aimed at a continuous improvement of standards and the reduction of unacceptable variations in research practice. It is concerned with setting standards to maintain and improve research quality whilst safeguarding the public and especially those immediately involved in specific research projects. It focuses particularly on all work involving human and animal subjects wherever they may be located. Its aim is to ensure that any risks, particularly - but not exclusively - to participants, are effectively identified and managed. This requires the achievement of key standards in the following areas:

- Ethics: ensuring the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of research participants;
- Science: ensuring that the design, methods and conduct of research are subject to independent review by experts in the relevant field;
- Information: ensuring that research findings are appropriately and effectively disseminated and that there is full public access to information regarding research and its findings;
- Health and safety: ensuring that, at all times, the safety of research participants, researchers and all other staff is protected; concern for the research environment is also paramount;
- Legal issues: ensuring compliance with the law in the conduct of research;
- Finances: ensuring financial probity; and
• Integrity: Preventing fraud and misconduct in research.

In common with all quality assurance and governance systems this Framework requires that the following are in place:

• arrangements to define and communicate clear quality standards;
• mechanisms to ensure that these standards are met; and
• arrangements to monitor quality and assess adherence to the standards.

Achieving these objectives requires that effective policies and procedures are developed and that quality and risk management systems are in place. It is important that such systems are appropriate and commensurate with the needs of the research being undertaken and that they do not divert effort disproportionately from enabling and carrying out research. The majority of our effort is, therefore, directed towards controlling and managing research activities that may have a direct effect on the health, safety and well-being of the people and animals involved in the research.

4. SCOPE

This Framework aims to implement the broad requirements of all such Frameworks that are being, or may be, used for research governance in the subject areas undertaken at CCCU. Where there is a need for a Faculty to meet specific requirements of a particular external RGF, for example in Health and Social Care, the Faculty concerned may produce a variant of this or any of the associated documents (see below) in order to meet such a need. Staff and students undertaking research should make themselves familiar with the existence and terms of Faculty variants.

Any Faculty variant must be approved by the University Research Ethics and Governance Committee.

All those involved in research and/or research supervision should be aware of, and must implement, the terms of this and any other Research Governance Framework relevant to their area of research. Compliance will support the University’s role as a research sponsor.

Everyone carrying out research should be aware of and compliant with the Research Governance requirements of any collaborating organisation, e.g. NHS Trust, Education Authority.

5. KEY DOCUMENTS

Researchers should note the key documents:

• Code of Conduct on Research Practice (CCCU, 2015);
• An Introduction to Ethics Issues and Principles in Research Involving Human Participants (CCCU, 2014)
• Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants (CCCU, 2006 under review);
• Ethical Procedures for the Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants (CCCU, 2006 under review);
• The Peer Review Process (Research) (CCCU, 2015);
• Principles of Data Protection in Research (CCCU, 2015);
• Policy for responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct (CCCU, 2015);
• Bid Development Procedure (CCCU, 2013)
• Protocol for the Use of Animals in Research and Teaching (CCCU, 2010)
• Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK et al, 2013)
These documents are designed to ensure that all research complies with the appropriate scientific and ethical standards.

6. **OVERSIGHT OF THE RESEARCH GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

6.1 **The Research Ethics and Governance Committee (REGC)**

This Research Governance Framework is overseen by the University’s Research Ethics and Governance Committee (REGC). The Committee is subject to the overall authority of the University’s Academic Board.

The Committee’s Terms of Reference are:

- To establish and audit policies for research ethics and research governance across the University.
- To institute procedures to deal with any serious breaches of these policies that are sufficiently robust to reassure the institution, its partner organisations and its insurers.
- To deal with ethical-related issues where a University response is required (as and when they arise).
- To have an overview of all research undertaken within the University.
- To establish and maintain oversight of an Appeals System for matters relating to Research Ethics and Governance.
- To receive reports and minutes from all Faculty Research Ethics Committees and to adjudicate on research proposals where appropriate.
- To receive notification of all changes of substance to any project that has previously been approved Research.
- To prepare and approve an Annual Statement for the Governing Body summarising research governance activities and compliance within the University with the Research Integrity Concordat for the preceding Academic Year.

6.2 **Ethical Review**

The responsibility for dealing with the ethical review of research proposals involving human and animal participants has been devolved to Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs). Faculty Committees do not review proposals for research involving NHS patients or premises since these will be subject to review by a Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the National Research Ethics Service. They do, however, review proposals for research involving NHS staff which NHS RECs no longer review following changes in the Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees (GAFREC) which took effect from September 2011.

FRECs are bound by the terms and conditions set out in the CCCU documents associated with this RGF referred to earlier. They should also draw up and work to a set of Standard Operating Procedures approved by the REGC. A formal Report of their activities should be presented to the REGC annually.

7. **COMPLIANCE**

7.1 **Notification and Approval**

- No research involving human or animal participants can take place unless it has first received satisfactory ethical review and permission to proceed has been obtained in writing from the University or other appropriate authority.
• Starting dates should be negotiated for all research involving external collaborators and will be subject to clear agreements between the University and the appropriate bodies, e.g. NHS Trusts.

• No research may commence without the written agreement of the appropriate research sponsor.

• Postgraduate programme leaders must ensure that all research carried out by their students complies with the requirements of the relevant RGF; records must be maintained and are subject to audit. (See section 8 for further information on student research).

• All research active staff must ensure that they adhere to the notification and approval processes in regard to individual projects ensuring that the Faculty Directors of Research & Knowledge Exchange are informed of each project and that this is entered on to the Faculties’ databases.

• Faculty Directors of Research & Knowledge Exchange should be informed of all research being carried out by staff and postgraduate research students in any environments external to the University.

7.2. Informed Consent

• In projects subject to ethical review, informed consent must normally be obtained in writing from all research participants and filed with research records; these must be available for scrutiny and audit when required.

• Procedures for obtaining informed consent must be clearly defined in all research proposals.

• The consent procedures associated with individual projects should be clearly recorded.

• The recruitment practices of individual researchers must be transparent and open to scrutiny.

7.3. Monitoring

• All research is subject to audit and monitoring through appraisal and any other mechanisms that may be developed.

• All researchers should provide regular written reports to their supervisors, Heads of Department and/or to the Faculty Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange as required.

• Researchers must inform the approving REC once a study has been completed, i.e. when the research report or dissertation has been submitted as required.

• Where funding has been obtained for individual projects appropriate records of income and expenditure must be maintained; these will be subject to audit.

• A minimum sample of 10% of all research approved by Faculty Research Ethics Committees and external RECs will be audited for research governance compliance annually.

7.4. Dealing with Adverse Events

• All researchers must assess the potential risk(s) associated with individual research projects drawing them to the attention of the research supervisor and other authorities as appropriate.

• Steps should be taken to reduce the risks associated with individual research projects and mechanisms put in place to manage any adverse events that may arise.
• Research supervisors/lead researchers should monitor individual projects to ensure compliance.

7.5 Contracts and Indemnity
• No research may take place unless clear indemnity arrangements are in place in respect of claims for compensation in the case of negligent harm.
• No health and social care research may be carried out unless an appropriate research sponsor has been identified and has confirmed their agreement to support the project. Normally, the University will act as sponsor for research carried out by its staff and students.

7.6 Peer Review
• All research proposals submitted for ethical scrutiny are subject to peer review commensurate with the level of that research. For research students this will be carried out by the academic supervisor, and for staff by a person independent of the research team concerned.
• The review system must be clear, open and transparent and provide feedback to researchers.
• Clear records must be maintained and open to scrutiny.

7.7 Fraud and Misconduct in Research
Canterbury Christ Church University has undertaken to comply fully with the terms of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2013) introduced by Universities UK and others. In particular it will comply with the five Commitments of the Concordat as follows:

Commitment 1: We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of our research.
• We shall endeavour to meet the Concordat’s definition of integrity in terms of honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, and care and respect.
• By collaborating with others we shall endeavour to maintain a research environment that develops good research practice and nurtures a culture of research integrity, as described in Commitments 2 to 5.
• We shall support researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours, and defend them when they live up to these expectations in difficult circumstances.

Commitment 2: We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
• By having clear policies on ethical approval available to all researchers.
• By ensuring that all researchers are aware of and understand policies and processes relating to ethical approval.
• By supporting researchers to reflect best practice in relation to ethical, legal and professional requirements.
• By having appropriate arrangements in place through which researchers can access advice and guidance on ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards.
Commitment 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.

- We will endeavour to provide a research environment that helps to develop good research practice and embeds a culture of research integrity. This will include:
  - clear policies, practices and procedures to support researchers;
  - suitable learning, training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers;
  - robust management systems to ensure that policies relating to research, research integrity and researcher behaviour are implemented;
  - awareness among researchers of the standards and behaviours that are expected of them;
  - systems within the research environment that identify potential concerns at an early stage and mechanisms for providing support to researchers in need of assistance.
- We shall embed these features in our systems, processes and practices.
- We shall work towards reflecting recognised best practice in our systems, processes and practices.
- We shall implement the Concordat within our research environment.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) is responsible for the oversight of research integrity and acts as the first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity.

Commitment 4: We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.

- By having a clear, well-articulated and confidential mechanism for reporting allegations of research misconduct.
- By having a robust, transparent and fair process for dealing with allegations of research misconduct that reflects best practice.
- By ensuring that all researchers are made aware of the relevant contacts and procedures for making allegations of research misconduct.
- By ensuring no detriment to whistleblowers making allegations of research misconduct in good faith.
- By providing information on investigations of research misconduct to funders of research and to professional and/or statutory bodies as required by their conditions of grant and other legal, professional and statutory obligations.
- By supporting our researchers in providing appropriate information to professional and/or statutory bodies.

The University Solicitor and Clerk to the Governing Body is the main point of contact who will act as confidential liaison for whistleblowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspices of the University.

Commitment 5: We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

- We will present a short annual statement to our governing body that:
provides 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);
provides assurances that the processes we have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the University;
provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

- To improve accountability, and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity, this statement will be made publicly available.
- To ensure that we can be confident that our procedures and practices continue to be robust - given the changing nature of concerns relating to research integrity and the emergence of new types of research – we shall periodically review our processes and procedures to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

7.8 Data Protection

- All researchers must adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998).
- Adherence will be monitored closely and subject to review.
- All data must be stored securely and retained safely for the required period.
- Data used in any report/publication arising from research should be aggregated and anonymised where appropriate to ensure that no individual can be identified from that publication.

7.9 Health and Safety

- The potential health and safety implications of all research projects must be identified via a risk assessment.
- All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the health and safety of all research participants and researchers.
- Where appropriate, Occupational Health clearance should be obtained for researchers entering health and social care environments.
- Organisations hosting research by CCCU staff and students that involves the participation of vulnerable groups, - for example, people with mental or physical health problems, people with learning disabilities, and those under 16 - may require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before allowing the research to commence.

7.10 Intellectual Property, Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings

- All researchers are expected to include a plan for publication and dissemination of their findings within their research proposal.
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure that all research findings are disseminated appropriately.
- All researchers should ensure that the ownership and potential exploitation of intellectual property is clearly defined prior to the commencement of any research.

7.11 Costing and Financial Management

- All research must be appropriately costed in accordance with University standards.
Researchers must ensure that individual projects are completed on time and within budget; records will be available for scrutiny as and when required.

Where funding has been obtained for individual projects, records of income and expenditure will be maintained. These will be subject to inspection and audit by supervisors and Heads of Department.

8. STUDENT RESEARCH

The procedures outlined in this Framework will apply to all research involving human and animal participants carried out by students in the University.

8.1 Undergraduate Studies

- In undergraduate programmes and all other programmes positioned below Masters level it is not anticipated that participants will engage in formal research. However, there are a number of disciplines in which students may engage in demonstrations and other activities that verge closely on research activities. In all these cases such research must adhere to the Code of Conduct on Research Practice (CCCU, 2015), the Ethics Policy for Research involving Human Participants (CCCU 2006), Ethical Procedures for the Conduct of Research involving Human Participants (CCCU, 2006), and the Protocol for the Use of Animals in Research and Teaching, (CCCU, 2010).

- Responsibility for the ethical review of undergraduate studies rests with the academic Department concerned. Departments may use the standard University ethics review documentation, or else develop their own. Either way, the documentation should be retained by the Department concerned as part of the student’s academic record.

- No undergraduate students will be permitted to carry out empirical research in health and social care environments outside of this University or a collaborating University.

8.2 Postgraduate Studies

- Postgraduate students may carry out empirical research involving human or animal participants provided that such research adheres to the Code of Conduct on Research Practice (CCCU, 2015), the Ethics Policy for Research involving Human Participants (CCCU 2006), Ethical Procedures for the Conduct of Research involving Human Participants (CCCU, 2006), and the Protocol for the Use of Animals in Research and Teaching, (CCCU, 2010).

- Taught-Programme Leaders at postgraduate level must maintain clear records relating to the research carried out by their students and demonstrate compliance with the RGF; these will be subject to audit.

- In regards to other postgraduate research, supervisors must ensure compliance with the RGF by maintaining appropriate records; these will be subject to audit.

9. INVOLVEMENT OF CONSUMERS AND/OR SERVICE USERS

- All researchers should be aware of the need to involve users and consumers in any research project.

- Users and consumers should, whenever possible and appropriate or relevant, be involved in the development of research and in its undertaking.

- Where possible, and appropriate/relevant, consumers should be involved in both peer review and ethical review.
• We endeavour to ensure that information about both ongoing research and its outcomes are made available to both service users and the general public.

10. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

• Staff and postgraduate students may be involved in international research collaborations, or wish to carry out their research or data gathering in countries outside of the United Kingdom. Depending on circumstances, ethical review of studies involving human or animal participants may be carried out in the countries concerned, or else in the United Kingdom.

• Where it is our view that rigorous ethical review has not been carried out elsewhere, such studies will undergo ethical review (full or proportionate) by a Faculty Research Ethics Committee of this University. As part of this process, the staff or students who intend to carry out their research or data gathering in countries outside the United Kingdom are required to sign a declaration of compliance with any ethical procedures and protocols in effect in the country concerned.

11. REFERENCES

Canterbury Christ Church University 2014, Research Governance Framework, CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2015, Code of Conduct on Research Practice, CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2014, An Introduction to Ethics Issues and Principles in Research Involving Human Participants, CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2006 (under review 2016), Ethics Policy for Research involving Human Participants, CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2006 (under review 2016), Ethical Procedures for the Conduct of Research involving Human Participants, CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2015, The Peer Review Process (Research), CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2015, Principles of Data Protection in Research, CCCU.
Canterbury Christ Church University 2014, Policy for responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct, CCCU. (Under revision 2016).
Canterbury Christ Church University 2013 Bid Development Procedure, CCCU
Canterbury Christ Church University 2010 Protocol for the Use of Animals in Research and Teaching, CCCU.(Under revision 2016).
Economics and Social Science Research Council 2010 (updated 2012), Framework for Research Ethics Swindon, ESRC.
Universities UK and others 2013, Concordat to Support Research Integrity