Research Integrity Annual Statement 2019 / 2020

Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date	July 2020

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.

1.2 To complement the successful uptake with the Epigeum Research Integrity course, a new online training module on *Ethical Reflexivity and Research Governance* was released. This build upon the core Epigeum areas and focuses upon reflexivity as well as navigating various tensions researchers invariably encounter.

1.3 The Research Ethics Panel (REP) formally approved and circulated a bitesize of the procedure, referral categories and submission timetable for all summary ethics approvals.

1.4 In 2019 / 2020, the REP received a total of 46 referrals, comprised from research undertaken by all levels of researcher (staff, postgraduate doctoral researcher and postgraduate taught students). The REP also made determinations upon five-requests to embargo PhD thesis'.

1.5 An additional procedure to capture ethical approval for unfunded staff research activity has been formulated and introduced into Worktribe, the research grant management portal. This allows for researchers to obtain ethical approval for research that is conducted under the auspices of SOAS but does not have formal grant funding.

2. Safeguarding

2.1 A total of 7 submissions to the REP required a safeguarding referral. The ethics process formally embeds a mandatory safeguarding referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent deputy where safeguarding issues potentially arise, including where research involves potentially vulnerable participant groups.

2.2 A further mandatory safeguarding training module is being introduced, and researchers will be required to successfully complete this prior to undertaking any research activity.

3. Responding to government measures arising from SARS-CoV-2

3.1 Researchers at all levels have faced considerable and diverse challenges posed by the government response to SARS-CoV-2, in particular, navigating the complex new Regulations and government public health advice.

3.2 While some research activity was temporarily paused, or postponed, bespoke support has been provided to SOAS researchers to review and re-evaluate existing or proposed research plans considering the evolving Regulations, and ensuring any reasonable alternatives, such as online or remote research activity, could be undertaken while maintaining the commitment to the highest standards in research ethics and integrity.

3.3 Several students on taught programmes (postgraduate Masters) and postgraduate researchers, adapted existing plans to undertake research remotely, successfully obtaining the necessary approval from the REP to proceed.

4. Research Misconduct

4.1 Two allegations of research misconduct have been raised during this period. Both cases are currently ongoing.