

Annex 4: Peer Review

The University encourages its researchers to take part in peer review activities.

The University agrees with the UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research regarding the following requirements upon universities and will support its researchers in this respect:

'They should recognise the obligations of peer reviewers to be thorough and objective in their work and to maintain confidentiality, and should not put pressure, directly or indirectly, on peer reviewers to breach these obligations.'

The University also agrees with the UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research regarding the following requirements on researchers and expects UWE Bristol researchers engaged in peer review to comply with them:

'Researchers who carry out peer review should do so to the highest standards of thoroughness and objectivity. They should follow the guidelines for peer review of any organisation for which they carry out such work.'

Researchers should maintain confidentiality and not retain or copy any material under review without the express written permission of the organisation which requested the review. They should not make use of research designs or research findings from a paper under review without the express permission of the author(s) and should not allow others to do so. Researchers acting as peer reviewers must declare any relevant conflicts of interest.

While carrying out peer review, researchers may become aware of possible misconduct, such as plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, or have ethical concerns about the design or conduct of the research. In such cases they should inform, in confidence, an appropriate representative of the organisation which requested the review, such as the editor of the relevant journal or chair of the relevant grants or ethics committee.'

It should be noted that some research funders, such as the Medical Research Council, require funded researchers to take part in peer review:

'All researchers supported by the MRC are expected to participate in peer review, acting as reviewers for meetings, journals, grant applications and the ethical review of research proposals at a level appropriate to their experience and training.'

The University also sees considerable advantages in relation to improving research quality and practice of researchers engaging in internal peer review. This may be to assist colleagues with proposals to external funders or to offer advice in relation to internally funded projects. The University strongly recommends that researchers consider some form of internal peer review for their work and that Colleges, Schools and Research Centres should support this activity.