

Research Governance and Integrity Policy

SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy is written to inform all Researchers involved in conducting research at the University of the policies, expectations and procedures involved in carrying out research. This document addresses the issues involved in the proper conduct of research and provides guidance on the standards expected. It contains sections on the roles and responsibilities of all Researchers at the University, Research Ethics and sources of research funding. It outlines the principles of good research practice.
- 1.2 The University views research governance and integrity related policies as a method to help researchers conduct better research. This is seen in conjunction with our ethical review procedures as a way to work positively with researchers and to ensure that participants are informed in a positive way so that they can engage safely with research activities. Our aim is to ensure quality and integrity in the planning, conduct and management of research, in reporting and disseminating the results, and in the delivery and reporting of research impact. Due to this, the University has a responsibility to ensure that all research carried out under its auspices is conducted to the highest possible standard, in accordance with the law and public interest. This means that all researchers, including academics, research staff, honorary post holders, undergraduate and postgraduate students and anyone else carrying out or supporting research under the University's auspices, are obliged to maintain the highest of integrity in all aspects of research and follow the principles of good research practice.
- 1.3 This policy is not meant to be an exhaustive document and is to be viewed as the minimum standard with which University staff and students should comply. The lack of mention in this policy of a particular act or omission should not be taken as conclusive on any question of professional conduct, should an enquiry arise.
- 1.4 This policy is aligned with the terms of reference and standard operating procedures of the relevant Academic Policies and Procedures. The University also supports the Universities UK (UUK) Concordat to Support Research Integrity elements of which have been used directly to inform this policy¹.

2. DETAILS OF POLICY

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all researchers and staff supporting research to conduct their research in accordance with all applicable laws, the principles outlined in Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity and in compliance with relevant University policies. Researchers will also understand and maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in their work at all times.
- 2.2 As part of its commitment to the principles of the Concordat, the University will support researchers to maintain the highest standards of integrity in research by:
 - a) upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
 - b) ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
 - c) supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the

¹ [The Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(universitiesuk.ac.uk\)](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/research-integrity/concordat)

- d) development of researchers;
- e) using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to handle allegations of research misconduct when they arise;
- f) working together to strengthen the integrity of research;
- g) Providing induction, guidance, support and training to those involved in research in a collaborative inclusive culture of best practice.

3. PRINCIPLES OF GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

- 3.1 The University cannot be prescriptive about individual approaches taken by researchers in addressing particular research questions. However, in the conduct of all research, the University expects the following general areas of practice to be complied with.
- 3.2 Those involved in research should seek to ensure that adequate resources and skills are in place to support their research. This includes facilities and equipment as well as ensuring that the research team has sufficient skills and experience to carry out the proposed research. Costings should be carried out in liaison with the finance team at University for studies that seek external funding.
- 3.3 Research proposals should be aligned with relevant expectations. For student-based work this will include review by supervisors. For bids seeking external funding internal peer review should be sought alongside agreement from the University's sponsor representative which will normally be the Head of Research. Where practical, additional external peer review is encouraged as good practice.
- 3.4 All planned research should consider potential risks to the health and safety of participants, researchers and to the research itself and University as an institution.
- 3.5 Researchers should aim to enhance the quality of their work by use of public involvement. This means researchers should seek to involve patients, or other people with relevant experience to contribute to how research is planned, performed and made available to others.
- 3.6 Principal investigators and others involved in collaborative research with external organisations should take measures to ensure that procedures for compliance with sponsor, institutional, legal, financial, ethical and funder requirements are in place.
- 3.7 Researchers and those involved with the delivery of research should ensure that appropriate contractual and other arrangements are in place to deliver effective communication and reporting with and to collaborators, funders, stakeholders, research users, participants. Transparent and early agreement should be established about roles, responsibilities and agreements about intellectual property, authorship and support for researchers.
- 3.8 Conflicts of interest should be considered and declared whether of a legal, ethical, moral personal or other nature so that where possible, measures can be taken to mitigate the risks that these may pose to avoid poor practice or allegations of misconduct. Where conflicts of interest cannot be reasonably mitigated such that the validity or integrity of the research may be compromised, then it may be necessary to decide against proceeding with the research. In the first instance, researchers should raise their concerns with the Head of Research who will seek further advice as required.
- 3.9 Researchers should adhere to legal, ethical, funding body and institutional requirements for the collection, use and storage of data, including adherence to the Data Protection Act 2018 and to UK GDPR. Data should be collected and recorded accurately and kept secure using UCO secure servers and other means as necessary. Researchers should keep clear and transparent records of the data recording and storage process to enable audit should this be needed. Related research documents such as protocol versions, ethics applications, claim forms, receipts and invoices should be stored securely.

- 3.10 Researchers should seek to disseminate the results of their work through various fora. Where funded work is undertaken, dissemination should also align to the expectations of the funder. Dissemination should include reports to funders, collaborators, research users and other stakeholders as well as more formal outputs such as publications and conference papers. Summary results should normally be made available in an accessible format to research participants. Researchers should seek advice if there is pressure to suppress or change data, results or conclusions. All research outputs should be made available shortly after acceptance on University's research repository.
- 3.11 Authorship and ownership of anticipated outputs should be established early on in the research process. Those who do not meet authorship criteria but have contributed to the work should be acknowledged. The University expects that anyone listed as an author of an output should meet the following criteria²:
- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
 - Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
 - Final approval of the version to be published; AND
 - Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.
- 3.12 Documenting and dissemination of research impact should be undertaken. Researchers have responsibility to ensure that measures and accounts of impact are underpinned and supported by evidence. Sources and references used to corroborate impact should be clear and transparent. Conflicts of interest relating to evidence of impact should be declared.
- 3.13 The principles below set out the core values that apply to all areas of research in line with the Research Concordat:
- a) **Honesty**, in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings.
 - b) **Rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.
 - c) **Transparency and open communication** in declaring conflicts of interest; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public.
 - d) **Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care for the integrity of the research record.
 - e) **Accountability** of the University and its researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this policy.

4. RESEARCH ETHICS

- 4.1 Researchers are expected to be aware of and to comply with all relevant policies and procedures relating to Research ethics.

5. SOURCES OF RESEARCH FUNDING

² <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

- 5.1 Researchers must consider any ethical implications associated with sources of funding, including potential conflicts of interest or reputational risks for the University. If unsure about the acceptability of a funding source, researchers should contact the Head of Research to discuss the matter.

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