

# RESEARCH INTEGRITY STATEMENT 2017-2018

11/30/2017

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## **Research Integrity Statement 2017/18**

**September 2018**

### **1. Introduction**

The University of Strathclyde is committed to excellence in research and fully supports the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Research integrity is an essential element of research excellence and Strathclyde expects its researchers, students and staff to act with integrity at all times. Striving for excellence entails a constant pursuit of improvement and as the research environment evolves, Strathclyde will make positive adjustments in its approach to integrity to ensure the highest standards are adhered to.

In the period 2017/2018, Strathclyde has sought to develop from the foundation work carried out in 2016/2017. The focus of this period has been to establish where improvement could be made and where advice and learning could be sought in order to inform future changes. To this end, this year Strathclyde became a member of UKRIO and activity in the coming period will include completion of the UKRIO assessment and discussions with UKRIO about areas of further improvement.

### **2. Leadership**

In recognition of the seriousness of its commitment to research integrity, the Associate Principal with responsibility for Research has designated responsibility for ensuring that the University responds to and upholds the Concordat. This responsibility extends to research and knowledge exchange policies, ethics, postgraduate research development and research governance. The Associate Principal is supported in this work by the Deputy Associate Principals with Research and Knowledge Exchange portfolios in addition to the following groups and committees:

- Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC)
- University Ethics Committee (UEC)
- Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board (AWERB)
- Researcher Development Sub-Committee (Responsible to RKEC)

The committee structure enables cohesion and consistency of communication at a senior level across the faculties. This information is then communicated within the faculties via staff and student structures as follows:

- Responsibility for Research Integrity is distributed through the Academic Faculties via the Vice-Deans with responsibility for Research in each Faculty who represent their Faculty on RKEC. Agreement made at committee level is disseminated via faculty, departmental and school management structures.
- Student representatives participate in The Researcher Development Sub-Committee to ensure involvement in decision-making and communication of information into the wider student community. Expectations, information and guidance are also delivered to research students via their supervisors and postgraduate administrators in order to ensure that they are fully informed of best practice in research.

The Research Integrity & Compliance Manager, based in Research & Knowledge Exchange Services, supports the Associate Principal in ensuring that the University sets appropriate policy and activity in Research Integrity areas. The role is also responsible for co-ordination of Research Integrity activity across Professional Services and Faculties.

### **3. Named Person**

The Named Person responsible for Research Integrity at University of Strathclyde is the Associate Principal responsible for Research. Any queries related to research integrity, research misconduct or other related matters should be directed to [research-integrity@strath.ac.uk](mailto:research-integrity@strath.ac.uk).

### **4. Policies**

The University of Strathclyde has a range of Academic Policies and procedures aimed at clearly setting expectations for the standards of conduct of staff and students. The [Research Code of Practice](#) (for staff) and the [Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Study](#) in addition to the [Code of Practice on Investigations involving Human Beings](#), are all documents that are designed to demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes that researchers and other staff should engender in pursuit of research integrity and research excellence.

### **5. Actions & Activities to Support and Strengthen Research Integrity**

The University prides itself on serving research students with the highest standard of education and preparing its students and staff for their future careers in research through a combination of subject area knowledge and practical skills and experience. Knowledge and understanding of Research Integrity is essential for excellent research and so forms a core part of the researcher development experience wherever appropriate. The University delivers and demonstrates research integrity via three main routes: training, support and recognition.

#### **5.1. Researcher Training**

Early Career (PGR/PDRA/ECR) Researcher development is an integral part of our research strategy throughout the University. Strathclyde's Researcher Development Programme (RDP) is delivered by Faculties, Professional Services and external partners to offer the postgraduate research community a range of opportunities to continue their personal, professional and career management skills development. Established through utilisation of Research Council's 'Roberts' funding, and now institutionally supported, provision is designed to help researchers enhance their generic skills, attributes and competencies for future employability both inside and outside of academia. RDP provision is mapped to the UK's Researcher Development Framework and Statement (RDF/S), which articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers. Specific research integrity training is delivered through PGR induction, via face to face workshops and as a 20 hour online resource available to all students.

Training for Early- Career (including postdoctoral researchers, research fellows and research assistants), Mid-Career & Established Academics is delivered by our Organisational Staff Development Unit. In particular, the Unit's SPARK and SPIRAL programmes aim to deliver appropriate content to our researchers: SPARK's specific Researcher Development programme aims to empower staff, by providing them with the skills, experiences and understanding to reach their full potential, whilst at the same time providing the University with a means of

assuring and enhancing quality in its research at all levels. Meanwhile SPIRAL focuses on developing and strengthening leadership across research and knowledge exchange. Both programmes contribute significantly to the culture of research integrity at Strathclyde. Specific training on Research Integrity issues including research data management is available and provided to groups of researchers on request. In addition to the 20 hour online resource on research integrity, also available to students, a full research data management course available online via the Development & Training Gateway.

## **5.2. Researcher Support Services**

The University continues to provide dedicated support in a number of areas in addition to structured training programmes to assist researchers in the fulfilment of their research responsibilities. Colleagues from across Professional Services provide specialist advice on topics with research integrity implications such as:

- Information Governance including GDPR,
- Ethics in Human and Animal Research,
- Records Management,
- Data Management,
- Open Access and Open Data, and
- Cyber security.

This provision is often delivered via cross-disciplinary/departmental groups involving specialists from Strategy & Policy, Information Services and Research & Knowledge Exchange Services working with academics wherever appropriate.

## **6. Key Activities in the Current Year**

Strathclyde has focused on ensuring that our policies and practices continue to be consistent with the latest advice and requirements. This work has included:

### **6.1. Communication of the Updated Research Code of Practice**

In 2017, Strathclyde's Research Code of Practice was reviewed in order to ensure ongoing alignment with the principles of the Concordat on Research Integrity. The updated Code was approved by Senate in early 2018. Since the Code's approval, the Research Integrity and Compliance Officer has been consulting with Faculty Research Committees on the best way to communicate the Research Code of Practice to the whole research community. Work is underway to deliver a range of materials aimed at exposing researchers to the principles of Research Integrity via the Research Code of Practice.

### **6.2. Membership of UKRIO**

This year Strathclyde has become a member of UKRIO in order to enable the sourcing of additional support and knowledge gathering from the wider sector on ways to enhance our culture of research integrity. UKRIO's guidance materials were used in the preparation of the updated Code of Practice and our first narrative statement. Memberships allows greater support to be gained, including when dealing with misconduct allegations, as well as access

to events attended by experts in Research Integrity and other HEIs with interest and experience in this area. Strathclyde looks forward to establishing a strong relationship with UKRIO in the coming year and benefitting from their advice each year to continually improve.

### **6.3. Annual Research Integrity meeting of RKEC**

The first regular annual meeting of RKEC specifically focused on Research Integrity occurred in September 2018. The aim of this specially themed meeting is to enable the committee to view and focus on all activities related to Research Integrity as a cohesive programme. The Committee is tasked with overseeing review of relevant policies and activities as well as planning, measurement and follow up activity. Undertaking this at the beginning of each academic year sends the message that all research activity depends on high standards of Research Integrity.

The University Ethics Committee (UEC) is responsible to RKEC and its Annual Report and any reviews of The [Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Beings](#) will be aligned with the annual Research Integrity meeting of this committee. Any matters arising from the UEC annual report will be monitored via RKEC. The annual meeting will provide a focal point for review of training provision for researchers delivered via the PGRS Researcher Development Programme (governed by the Researcher Development Subcommittee) and the staff researcher training delivered via the Organisational Staff Development Unit (OSDU).

## **7. Activities for the Coming Year**

### **7.1. Improving visibility of Research Integrity**

The introduction of the updated Code of Practice and associated misconduct investigation process provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of Research Integrity and to ensure that all our researchers and collaborators are aware of the process for raising questions and complaints about practice. Initial engagement with Faculty via their research committees demonstrated the high value placed upon Research Integrity by our academic community. Their desire to go further than communicating the existence of a new policy for researchers to digest has raised the ambition of the teams supporting activity in this area. A range of activity in communication, training and recognition that will further build the Research Integrity culture at Strathclyde is planned for 2018/2019.

### **7.2. Recognition**

As Research integrity is fundamental to assurance of performance in research funding and publication then it is important to give the same recognition to activity demonstrating Research Integrity as to other research activity. In 2018/2019, researchers will be encouraged to report their participation in research integrity related activities, including training, via the Annual Development Review process. PGR students' attendance at Research Integrity training is already recognised through Strathclyde's award-winning credit

bearing training system. The team will also seek to establish areas where undertaking training on a mandatory basis is appropriate.

### 7.3. Continuous Improvement

In the coming review period, Strathclyde will undertake the following actions to ensure that our research integrity activity continues to be of the highest standard and meets the needs of the University:

- Monitor sector & government guidance for recommendations or guidance that provide an opportunity for improvement.
- Act upon lessons learned from any misconduct allegations and from reports prepared by UEC & AWERB.
- Seek out examples of best practice from other HEIs and research organisations. We expect our membership of UKRIO to greatly assist in this aspect of our learning.

## 8. Transparent, Robust, Fair, and Appropriate Processes for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct

In 2016/17 the University took the opportunity to formalise and make public its process for investigating research misconduct by including the process as an Annex to the Code. The process was updated to reflect the UKRIO best practice in handling such allegations. Clear responsibilities are outlined for senior members of staff in handling allegations. Internal processes and guidance have been created to ensure that any allegations made receive high quality management in adhering to standards of integrity but also in ensuring fairness for both the complainant and respondent. The result is a more robust and transparent process that enables the collection and reporting of the types of information that our research funders require to fulfil their own obligations as detailed below. The Code was endorsed by RKEC in November 2017 and formal Senate approval followed in early 2018.

## 9. Formal investigations of research misconduct

The University of Strathclyde takes very seriously any allegations of misconduct including in relation to research. Strathclyde's research quality depends upon a transparent and accountable research culture and Strathclyde is committed to supporting the highest standards in research. As part of this commitment, activities for the coming year will include promotion of reporting mechanisms to ensure that researchers are able to raise questions and concerns about research conduct and practice and be confident that there are effective mechanisms in place to deal with any allegation appropriately.

This table details recent allegations of misconduct:

Date of Allegation	Nature of Allegation	Respondent Type	Status	Outcome
2016/2017	Failure to follow ethical guidelines	Staff	Formal Investigation Complete	Upheld