RESEARCH INTEGRITY STATEMENT 2019-2020

Research Integrity Statement 2019/2020

September 2020

1. Introduction

The University of Strathclyde is committed to excellence in research and fully supports the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity[i] (the Concordat). Strathclyde applies the Concordat's definition of Research Integrity as comprised of four core elements: honesty; rigour; transparency and open communication; and care and respect which are 'the values through which trust and confidence in research stem, and from which the value and benefits of research flow.". Strathclyde's Research Code of Practice[ii] defines the standards to which the University expects researchers should aspire and those which they would be expected to attain. Research integrity is an essential element of research excellence and Strathclyde expects its 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 continues to make positive adjustments in its approach to integrity to ensure the highest standards are adhered to.

In June 2020, Strathclyde was able to demonstrate this commitment in becoming a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers which has research integrity at its core.

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)
- Strathclyde Doctoral School

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 faculties 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 and Strathclyde Doctoral School Board 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.

This year, changes have been made to the team, based in Research & Knowledge Exchange Services, that supports policy and strategy for Research Integrity. The re-establishment of a research policy function via a four- person-strong policy team working across research policy, including research integrity, under the leadership of the Research Policy Manager, will enable the activity planned for the next several years to be supported appropriately.

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.

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 is 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

As detailed in previous statements, Strathclyde has an award-winning PGR researcher development programme. This programme continues to be 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. Following the review of the full PGR lifecycle a programme of work is being developed to address opportunities to enhance the PGR experience (Further details included in Section 7 under Key Activities in the Current Year).

Training for Early- Career (including postdoctoral researchers, research fellows and research assistants), Mid-Career & Established Academics continues to be 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, there is a full research data management course available online via the Development & Training Gateway. In this period, additional courses related to RI have been provided by OSDU (as detailed in 6.2 under Key Activities in the Current Year).

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

In addition to a continued focus on ensuring that our policies and practices continue to be consistent with the latest advice and requirements, this year Strathclyde has sought to improve provision in targeted areas based on initial assessment of our provision. This work has included:

6.1. Instigation of full review of PGR provision

In 2018, the Strathclyde Doctoral School was established to ensure a prominent and cohesive provision for postgraduate research students at Strathclyde. A wholescale review of the PGR lifecycle from regulations to administrative processes and systems was conducted and an extensive

set of recommendations designed to enhance the overarching approach to supporting the PGR lifecycle have been documented. Where practicable recommendations have been implemented. Following review, induction for PGRs is conducted twice annually and a suite of resources has been created to support new PGRs. This is supplementary to the PG Essentials online induction module .

6.2. Introduction of Additional Training for Staff Researchers

Ensuring that cognisance of research integrity continues to be a feature of the life of our researchers as their careers progress is of crucial importance in maintaining a culture of research excellence. Research Integrity events are now included as standard within OSDU's Researcher Development provision. These workshops will be delivered online while face-to-face teaching is suspended.

- "Research Integrity in Practice" (SPIRAL Programme) – a twice-yearly, half-day workshop to support staff understand and apply the principles of research integrity in their everyday work, explore how misconduct may arise and ways to alleviate such pressures, as well as draw attention to Strathclyde's policies and processes in these areas.
- Research Integrity and Ethics (Strathclyde Supervisor Development Programme) – a half day workshop to support PGR supervisors consider their own understandings of good research practice, make informed choices based on the principles of research integrity and consider how they can embed a culture of integrity within and beyond their supervisory relationships.
- Staff are able to access the online suite of 'Research Integrity' workshops also available to PGRs.

6.3. RKEC Short Life Working Group on Research Integrity

At the second regular annual meeting of RKEC specifically focused on Research Integrity in September 2019, a short life working group focused on Research Integrity was approved. The aim of this subgroup was to map current research integrity activity across the institution and then to use this information to highlight areas of best practice enabling peer-to-peer learning and to inform the provision of improved central support in the form of policy and training. This group has undertaken to meet with a broad range of staff involved in research over the course of academic year 2019/2020 to gather information on awareness of research integrity, sources of information/training currently used by researchers, examine the appropriateness of the current Research Code of Practice and explore current issues experienced in relation to research integrity. This work will underpin work in 2020/2021 to improve awareness through improved guidance and training.

7. Activities for the Coming Year

7.1. RKEC Research Integrity Working Group

In Autumn 2020, the RIWG will examine plans to implement the recommendations arising from information gathering exercise undertaken in AY2019/2020. Outputs from this are expected to include a new version of the Research Code of Practice accompanied by improved online provision to bring the issues covered by the Code alive for researchers. This will be launched along with appropriate supporting training and initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and engagement with Research Integrity.

7.2. Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Strathclyde became a signatory to the revised Researcher Development Concordat in June 2020. A Concordat Officer has been successfully recruited and is due to take up post on 1st October 2020. Over the coming year, the Concordat Officer will undertake a gap analysis to develop an action plan designed to address the University's obligations under the three principles: Environment and Culture; Employment; and Professional and Career Development. Research Integrity is embedded throughout the revised Researcher Development Concordat and this role has been designed to work alongside the RIWG to ensure that all guidance and training is aligned with the both Concordats.

The Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) asks questions relating to Research Integrity and Research Misconduct. CEDARS ran at Strathclyde during July 2020 and will be analysed and reported by the Concordat Officer during late 2020 with results feeding into the RIWG.

7.3. Outcome of Ethics Review

Over the course of AY2019/2020, the new Chair of the University Ethics Committee has undertaken a wide ranging review of the operation of ethics services at Strathclyde. The results of this review are due to be reported to RKEC in September 2020. The recommendations of this report will be applied during AY 2020/2021.

7.4. 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
2019/2020	Failure to recognise/report student falsification	Staff	Formal Investigation Complete	Rejected

i https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf

ii

https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaffairs/policies/RKEC_ResearchCodeofPractice2017.pdf