Template: annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Strathclyde
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher education institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	28/11/2024
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Tim Bedford
	Email address: tim.bedford@strath.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Devon McHugh
	Email address: research-integrity@strath.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Policies and systems

Policies

Strathclyde maintains a range of policies and procedures to promote and monitor good practice and ethical conduct in its research. Central to these is an overarching Research Code of Practice which provides a definition of research and outlines the expectations placed on the University and its staff and students in meeting standards of good research practice. It also signposts researchers to a comprehensive list of academic policies and procedures, including the following key research policies and guidelines:

- Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students;
- Research Data Management and Sharing Policy;
- Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Beings;
- Policy on Animal Research (in accordance with the Concordat on Openness).

In recognition that a positive research culture is required to enable researchers to follow best practice in research, Strathclyde has several policies and initiatives to support this, including:

- Dignity and Respect Policy;
- Safe360 Safeguarding Policy;
- Strathclyde Community Commitment;
- Strathclyde Pledge;
- Non-disclosure Agreement Pledge;
- Researcher Development Time Policy.

Broader details about best practice, support available and further materials to promote understanding in both integrity and research culture are included in Strathclyde's *Guide to Good Research Practice*, an online, interactive resource with videos and quizzes to increase engagement with the topic of research integrity. The Guide and the Research Code of Practice, in combination, provide necessary detail to enable researchers to better understand expectations relating to research integrity, in line with the University's commitment in the Research Integrity Concordat to '*support researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours.*'

Governance systems

The University Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), a strategic committee within Strathclyde's governance structure with reporting responsibilities to University Senate, is responsible for oversight of research and knowledge exchange strategy and policy, and the monitoring of their implementation. Key to this is ensuring that Strathclyde's commitments as signatory to The Concordat to Support Research Integrity are met. Accordingly, the principles of research integrity are supported across all domains by the following bodies with oversight from RKEC:

- University Ethics Committee (UEC);
- Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board (AWERB);
- Research Development and Culture Sub-Committee (RDCSC);
- Researcher Development Concordat Steering Group (RDCSG);
- Knowledge Exchange Sub-Committee (KESC);
- Research Sub-Committee (RSC);
- Open Research Action Group (ORAG).

RKEC also has ultimate responsibility for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (also termed 'Researcher Development Concordat'), which is a key mechanism for enhancing research culture at Strathclyde. Moreover, the Research Development and Culture Sub-Committee also provides strategic oversight on research culture and researcher development topics, and is developing and piloting a set of key performance indicators to monitor and drive improvements in these areas.

The Strathclyde Doctoral School (SDS), which is governed by a dedicated management board, contributes to the promotion of research integrity and a positive research culture through its work to enrich the postgraduate researcher (PGR) experience, intensify research outputs and opportunities, and ensure development is designed and delivered at the highest levels.

Support systems

The Research Policy and Information Team located in the Research and Knowledge Exchange Services (RKES) directorate is responsible for implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat and is therefore a core part of support systems for research integrity. Their remit includes: maintaining and advising on the Research Code of Practice (which includes the research misconduct process); providing secretariat support for RKEC, UEC and ORG; supporting the Associate Principal to implement the research misconduct process; and preparing the annual Research Integrity Statement in accordance with the Concordat. The Research Policy Manager, Dr Devon McHugh, acts as the first point of contact for research integrity queries via the dedicated research-integrity@strath.ac.uk mailbox. The Research Policy and Information Team also maintains external and internal webpages related to research integrity, with resources to support researchers to understand the

standards, values and behaviours associated with research integrity. This includes a recently developed Guide to Good Research Practice, which mirrors the Strathclyde Research Code of Practice with additional guidance on best practice and signposting to further guidance and support.

Moreover, Strathclyde provides dedicated support in several areas 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;
- Research Data Management and Sharing;
- Open Access and Open Data;
- Responsible Research and Innovation;
- Trusted Research;
- Cyber security;
- Dignity and Respect.

This provision is often delivered via cross-disciplinary/departmental groups involving specialists from the Information Governance Unit, Strategy & Planning, Information Services, Human Resources and RKES, working with academics wherever appropriate.

Communications and engagement

Internal communications and engagement

Within the four Faculties (Engineering; Humanities and Social Sciences; Science; and Strathclyde Business School), information is communicated via staff and student structures as follows:

- Responsibility for research integrity and research culture is distributed through the Faculties via the Vice Deans with responsibility for Research who represent their Faculties on RKEC. Agreement made at committee level is disseminated via Faculty, Departmental and School management structures.
- Research staff representatives attend RKEC and relevant RKEC Sub-Committees to include their perspectives in decision-making and facilitate communication of key information to researchers.
- Research student representatives attend RKEC and the Strathclyde Doctoral School Management 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.
- Centrally, professional services directorates communicate with researchers at all career stages and disciplines via dedicated Sharepoint Sites (such as the

RKES Portal, which holds a wide range of guidance and information relating to research funding, research governance and policy, engaging externals in research and support and training for researchers), corporate communications (such as Inside Strathclyde) and researcher forums (such as the Researchers' Group and Researcher Meet-ups).

External engagement

Strathclyde is a member of various external organisations of relevance to research integrity issues:

- **Universities Scotland (US):** Strathclyde contributes to discussions and activities that support and strengthen research integrity at a sector level through engagement with the Universities Scotland Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) and its sub-committees. The Associate Principal for Research and Innovation (Named Person) is an active member of the US RKEC.
- **UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO):** Strathclyde is a subscribing member of UKRIO, through which the Research Policy and Information Team attend events and access guidance and resources.
- **UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI):** Strathclyde is engaged with the newly established UK CORI both as a subscriber to its e-newsletter and through attendance and participation in conference sessions delivered by UK CORI Co-Chairs. In June 2024, Strathclyde was invited to participate in a UK CORI meeting at the University of Dundee at which Scottish institutions provided their perspective on research integrity challenges and current priorities.
- **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA):** Recognising that responsible research assessment is key to promoting good research practice, Strathclyde joined CoARA in late 2022 and has contributed to multiple external events on the topic including at an ARMA drop-in session on 'CoARA and DORA – Do we need both?' (October 2023), a CESAER workshop on 'CoARA and its consequences for benchmarking' (November 2023) and a CoARA-organised webinar on 'Everything you need to know about CoARA Action Plans' (April 2024). In addition, Strathclyde was instrumental in establishing the UK CoARA National Chapter and is now a co-lead organisation for the National Chapter (further details on this are reported in the activities undertaken in 2023-24). In this role, members of the Research Policy and Information Team have met one-on-one with colleagues at several other UK universities that are considering joining CoARA to provide advice and guidance.
- **UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN):** Strathclyde became an Institutional Member of UKRN in September 2022. UKRN is a national peer-led consortium that seeks to understand and address factors that contribute to poor research reproducibility and replicability. Neil Jacobs, Head of UKRN Open Research Programme, participated in a Panel event in March 2024 as part of Research Integrity and Culture Week and is in regular communication with the Research

Policy and Information Team regarding UK-wide activities related to responsible research assessment.

- **Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA):** The Research Policy and Information Team and staff in OSDU are members of ARMA which supports external peer discussion of key issues relating to research management, including ethics, research governance and research integrity, and gives access to events, resources and training. In 2023-24, members of the Research Policy and Information Team have acted as co-champions for the REF and Research Evaluation Special Interest Groups, including advising on how responsible research assessments enable, reward and recognise good research practice.
- **Scottish Research Integrity Network:** Strathclyde is also engaged with the Scottish Research Integrity Network (SRIN), a forum aimed at sharing excellence, good practice and expertise in the field of research integrity across all research active institutions in Scotland. Members of the Research Policy and Information Team attend SRIN meetings regularly and engage with the network via a dedicated Microsoft Teams channel.

Through these memberships and networks, as well as through attendance at other sector events, Strathclyde engages in and influences discussions on research integrity, strengthening understanding and application of research integrity issues within the University as well as contributing to the advancement of sector-wide approaches.

Culture, development and leadership

Research integrity is seen as an integral part of promoting a positive research culture and the Researcher Development Concordat, which has received internal investment to support its activities, has proven to be an effective vehicle for progressing and monitoring research integrity activities.

Professional and personal development is a core component of research degrees at Strathclyde ensuring that our doctoral graduates have the skills and experience to be successful both in their studies and their future careers. Our PGR Researcher Development Programme (RDP), delivered by Faculties, Professional Services and external partners, is mapped to the UK's Researcher Development Framework and Statement (RDF/S), which articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers. The tailored RDP provides the postgraduate research community with a range of opportunities to continue their personal, professional and career management skills development and enhance their transferable skills, attributes and competencies for future employability both inside and outside of academia. Specific Research Integrity training is delivered through PGR induction (delivered twice annually and supplemented by our online PG Essentials module), via face-to-face workshops and as a 20-hour online resource available to all students. The Convenor of the University Ethics Committee also delivers a 'Researchers' Guide to Ethics' training course to PGRs throughout the year.

Training for staff, including Technicians, Early Career (including postdoctoral researchers, research fellows and research assistants), Mid-Career & Established Academics, is delivered by our Organisational and Staff Development Unit (OSDU). In particular, the Unit's Strathclyde Programme in Academic practice, Researcher development and Knowledge exchange (SPARK), Strathclyde Programme in Research and Leadership (SPIRAL) and Strathclyde Supervisor Development Programme aim to deliver relevant content relating to research, supervision and knowledge exchange. SPARK's specific Researcher Development provision 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 while the Supervisor Programme provides comprehensive development opportunities for new and experienced doctoral Supervisors. All three programmes contribute significantly to the culture of research integrity at Strathclyde.

Specific training on research integrity issues, including research data management, is available 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. Online and in-person sessions on open access and research data management are also run regularly, open to staff and research students. One-to-one training sessions on research data management and sharing are provided on request by the cross-directorate Research Data Management and Sharing (RDMS) team.

Research Integrity events are now included as standard within OSDU's Researcher Development provision:

- 'Research Integrity in Practice' (SPIRAL Programme) – a twice-yearly, half-day workshop to support staff to understand and apply the principles of Research Integrity in their everyday work, and to explore how misconduct may arise and ways to alleviate such pressures, as well as drawing attention to Strathclyde's policies and procedures in these areas.
- 'Promoting Research Integrity Through Supervision' (Strathclyde Supervisor Development Programme) – a half-day workshop to support PGR supervisors to consider their own understanding 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.
- 'Responsible Research & Innovation' (SPIRAL Programme) – a half-day workshop to introduce researchers to key principles and tools for responsible research and innovation, allowing them to explore these concepts in their own research contexts. The course ran in 2022 as a blended five-week workshop and was re-structured into its current format in 2023.
- Staff researchers have access to the online suite of 'Research Integrity' workshops which is also available to PGRs.

Leadership in Research Integrity

Demonstrating the strength of Strathclyde's commitment to research integrity, the Associate Principal with responsibility for Research and Innovation has designated responsibility for ensuring that Strathclyde responds to and upholds the Concordat. This responsibility extends to research and knowledge exchange policies, ethics, postgraduate researcher development and research governance. To ensure confidentiality and encourage disclosure of concerns around misconduct, any queries related to research integrity are directed to a dedicated email address (research-integrity@strath.ac.uk) which is only accessible to the Associate Principal and select members of the Research Policy and Information Team based in Research and Knowledge Exchange Services (RKES). The Associate Principal is supported in this work by the Deputy Associate Principals with Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation portfolios and the Vice Deans Research within Faculties.

Monitoring and reporting

The reporting requirements for the Research Integrity Concordat and Researcher Development Concordat (and associated HR Excellence in Research Award process) form the basis of monitoring and reporting on matters related to research integrity. Annual reports are prepared by the Research Policy and Information Team and Organisational and Staff Development Unit for consideration by the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. During the year, activity is monitored and directed through the RKEC sub-committees, namely the Research Development and Culture Sub-committee and Research Sub-committee. Periodic reporting on the other research concordats and agreements, including the Concordat on Open Research Data, is also undertaken.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Summary of 2023-24 activities

Review of research integrity policies

As part of our continuous improvement of research integrity-related practices, policies and procedures, the Research Code of Practice, Strathclyde's core research integrity policy, is reviewed annually, following significant revisions in 2022. As a result of this year's review, an additional section on the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (gen AI) has been added (clause 3.8) that provides recommendations for using gen AI in line with the principles of research integrity, including encouraging rsearchers to adhere to the European Research Area Forum's *Living Guidelines on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Research*. This policy position was developed by a short-life working group from March to May 2024, commissioned by Prof Tim Bedford, and led by Professor Wendy Moncur. The group's remit was to position the University of Strathclyde to steer a course in

using Generative AI (Gen AI) and LLMs in research in accordance with principles of ethical, responsible, and lawful research and innovation. Opportunities for participation were advertised to all academic staff. The group's membership was drawn from multiple disciplines across the University, and representatives of RKES.

Embedding research integrity into university strategy

In January 2024, the forthcoming University strategy, Strathclyde 2030, was launched. This strategy outlines how Strathclyde will, from 2025-2030, deliver on its ambitions for Outstanding Education and Student Experience, World-leading Research, and Transformative Innovation and Impact. Goals from the previous strategy were revised and renewed and the list of key performance indicators was confirmed. Research integrity features strongly as part of world-leading research, with a specific strategic aim for research culture and integrity and a commitment to setting clear and understandable standards for research integrity. Alongside this, a new key performance indicator on research culture was created, which will be measured by a basket of indicators which are under development in consultation with the research community.

Embedding research integrity into research quality

Seeking alignment with related work aimed at enhancing the quality of Strathclyde's research, the annual Research Quality Review (RQR) process has been used to promote good research practice in accordance with the Research Integrity Concordat. As part of this, departments have been supported in this 2023/24 review period to develop quality criteria and assessment processes for the assessment of research outputs. Taking a people-centred and collaborative approach, the Research Policy and Information Team ran a workshop to guide Research Quality Leads through the INORMS SCOPE Framework for Research Evaluation to consider what they value about research (including, for example, good research practice) and how they can capture this within output assessments. Following this, they have been provided with a template for articulating quality criteria and supported through the development of this.

In line with the REF, the RQR takes a broad definition of research quality. The assessment of research undertaken through the RQR therefore encompasses: the contribution to knowledge, including the integrity of the research process as well as the findings and outputs produced; the vitality and sustainability of the enabling environment and research culture; and the reach and significance of impact beyond academia. This process is reviewed and refined each year (following the INORMS SCOPE Framework for Research Evaluation) with input from Department/School and Faculty research and KE leads to ensure alignment and complementarity with all aspects of university business as well as responsiveness to external requirements, including preparation for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029.

Encouraging engagement with research integrity

In March 2023, Strathclyde held its second Research Integrity and Culture Week, aimed at promoting research integrity and a positive research culture. The Week comprised of 22 events as well as online resources on a dedicated Sharepoint Site. It was jointly organised by the staff leading on activities related to the Research Integrity Concordat and the Researcher Development Concordat in two professional services units: Research and Knowledge Exchange Services and the Organisational and Staff Development Unit. Events included a sector-wide event on 'Research Integrity in the Age of AI' followed by an interactive 'AI Integrity in Practice' fishbowl session to support further discussion and deliberation on how organisations can best support research integrity in the use of AI. The next day, a further sector-wide event was held on 'Where next for Responsible Research Assessment', with speakers from DORA, CoARA Boost and the UK Reproducibility Network discussing next steps for reforming research assessment so that it enables good research practice and supports the diverse range of practices that maximise research quality and impact. Other sessions covered a range of topics, including open research, data management and sharing, EDI in research, responsible research and innovation, trusted research and questionable research practices.

The Week attracted over 350 participants (168 internal and 188 external), through both in-person and online attendance. The events were designed to be inclusive and accessible, leveraging hybrid technologies to enhance participation. The SharePoint site registered about 800 views, indicative of approximately 250 unique visitors. The Week was evaluated by external evaluators who reported positive feedback, with 100% of internal respondents saying they would recommend it to a colleague. The opportunity to network, discuss emerging topics with experts and collaborate with people from other organisations were highlighted as particular benefits. Nonetheless, this still represents a small proportion of the target audience internally (all staff involved in research, e.g. leading, conducting or enabling research) so further consideration of how best to engage this wider audience is required.

In addition to Research Integrity and Culture Week, a policy event aimed at raising awareness of recent policy developments related to research integrity and culture was held in October 2023 and was attended by 57 Strathclyde staff members. This event covered the major revisions to the Research Code of Practice as well as introducing new policies approved in 22-23, such as the:

- Research Data Management and Sharing Policy: This enhanced requirements around data management planning to ensure the highest standards of data collection, organisation, storage, sharing and preservation. The policy requires that all staff and PGR student projects have a data management plan (DMP) –

proportionate to the research being undertaken – in place prior to commencement and maintain it throughout the research lifecycle.

- The Institutional Rights Retention Policy (IRRP) for Research Publications: This has been developed to support authors to retain the copyright to their publications and comply with funder requirements. The policy also enables Strathclyde to disseminate its research and scholarship as widely as possible.

- The Researcher Development Time Policy: This was approved to support research staff in taking adequate time for professional development as well as the development of their research identity and leadership skills. The policy will be implemented at the start of the 2023/2024 academic year, accompanied by guidance for Researchers and their Managers to support them to effectively apply this policy.

Promoting good research practice through responsible research assessment

As a socially progressive and values-led institution, Strathclyde recognises that world-leading research must be underpinned by a positive research culture that recognises and rewards quality in all its forms, promotes research integrity and supports the career development of researchers. To achieve this research assessment procedures must support our values as a signatory to DORA, a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) and our responsibilities under the Concordat to Support Researcher Development and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Strathclyde's five-year action plan for embedding responsible research assessment was approved by RKEC in September and published online shortly after. It has been downloaded over 850 times and was referred to by the CoARA Steering Board as "exceptionally well made". As a result, Strathclyde was invited to speak at a webinar on developing CoARA action plans, which had over 500 registrations. In 2023/24, progress against the action plan has seen the Research Policy and Information Team liaise with other professional services colleagues to understand the current challenges and opportunities for research assessment reform across the University with a view to developing a consultation for the research community. In addition to this internal activity, Strathclyde was instrumental in setting up the UK CoARA National Chapter, contacting all UK signatories to organise an inclusive meeting on whether there would be interest in establishing a National Chapter. Strathclyde then led the development of the application and then submitted it with Strathclyde acting as one of the co-lead organisations alongside Swansea and Loughborough Universities. The UK National Chapter was approved in February 2024. Strathclyde hosted the first official National Chapter meeting in March 2024 as part of Research Integrity and Culture Week. The aim of this Chapter is to support organisations to embed the principles of responsible research assessment and to promote systemic reform of research assessment across the UK research sector.

Ethics and Governance

Significant new guidance on conducting ethical research with human participants has been included on the revised ethics webpage. This is in line with UK Research Integrity Office guidance and includes topics such as informed consent, human data in the public domain, ethical issues in online surveys and research in the workplace. A Researcher checklist has also been included to provide applicants for ethics approval with clear information on the man points for consideration by the University ethics committees. Information has also been developed on submitting applications for NHS REC and HRA approval.

New training courses were developed and delivered on the following topics:

- NHS ethics applications
- Ethics and governance consideration for Early Career Researchers working in health research

In 2024, Strathclyde established an International Governance Support team in our Research & Knowledge Exchange Services (RKES) and have increased institutional knowledge in Trusted Research & Innovation along with the implementation of processes and associated governance, including a review group for complex cases and to provide guidance and decision making at a senior University level. We continue to engage with the sector in this area, both in the UK and internationally; as a founding member of the Higher Education Export Control Association secretariat, we hosted the highly successful 2024 conference at our Technology & Innovation Centre. This work in Trusted Research & Innovation underpins our Internationally Leading Research as a key part of our Strathclyde 2030 strategic vision, whilst protecting our people, academic endeavour, and reputation. Mainstreaming our approach across the University is key to protecting the integrity of our unique innovation ecosystem and our future work in Trusted Research & Innovation will ensure deeper engagement across our University community to ensure that confident risk-based decisions can be made to facilitate international collaboration.

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers ('Researcher Development Concordat')

The University continues to be strongly committed to the professional and career development of researchers to support good research practice, as demonstrated through our implementation of the Researcher Development Concordat. Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the Researcher Development Concordat at Strathclyde during the past year. A focus of activities has been on communication, streamlining of existing initiatives and the initiation of new large-scale projects (such as the Wellcome Trust funded institutional project on collaborative research cultures) – this approach has allowed us to continue to encourage researcher engagement and work towards higher levels of awareness of available support, while also tackling some of the more complex areas of the institutional Concordat Action Plan. The review and update of our Action Plan in

late 2023 as part of the HR Excellence in Research Award review enabled us to thoroughly examine our progress to date and take into account new institutional developments that had not been considered in the Action Plan before. It also demonstrated that our strategy has been working well so far and that we can continue progress in the same direction

Strathclyde has built on existing efforts to align and harmonise related activities around research culture and research integrity, laying the groundwork for the development of a research culture framework detailing our shared understanding of what a positive research culture looks like. Preparatory work for this has included mapping various culture-focused initiatives across the University, as well as exploring the development of key research culture indicators that will act as key performance drivers for Strathclyde's Strategic Plan for 2030.

PGR Induction

Good research practice has been further integrated into PGR inductions through participation in 'marketplace' style events and induction seminars in October and April. In doing so, PGRs are receiving information on research integrity and research culture from the outset of their programme, from a centralised team, and will be aware of the available resources, training and support. This is intended to promote consistency across the institution, rather than relying on faculty/department/supervisor practices.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Reflection on 23-24 activities

Based on observations and discussions with the research community throughout the year – and in particular at Research Integrity and Culture Week - there appears to be a good, foundational understanding of research integrity matters across the institution – from PGR students to research leaders. However, awareness of specific formal procedures and reporting mechanisms, sources of support and guidance, and ongoing initiatives seemed to be lower. This is reflected in the levels of engagement with the revised Research Code of Practice and Guide to Good Research since their publication. Though targeted activities during 2023/24, such as the policy launch event, have increased engagement, there is still more work to be done. Core to this is increasing literacy around research culture more broadly to encourage engagement with cultural change initiatives. This is something that the Research Development and Culture Sub-Committee will be exploring in the coming year.

Plans for 2024-25

Research Integrity and Culture Week 2025

Research Integrity & Culture Week has proven to be a successful format for engaging staff and students in these important topics, and one which can be built

on for future activities. It is clear that prioritising research integrity and culture matters for a single week focuses attention and motivation, where training and development offered throughout the year does not. Responding to feedback from the external evaluation in 2024, for Research Integrity and Culture Week 2025 we will:

- Continue to provide networking opportunities for colleagues, particularly connecting colleagues with keen interests in research integrity and culture.
- Keep events open to external audiences as much as feasible, to support cross-institutional collaboration.
- Cover a broad range of topics related to research integrity and culture, including new and emerging topics, organised into the four areas of research culture used in the UKRI/Vitae Research Culture Framework.
- Consider how best to enable inclusive participation through hybrid or online events.
- Consider ways of encouraging greater engagement and interaction across the Week.

REF Code of Practice

As the REF 2029 guidance develops, Strathclyde will be looking to revise its REF Code of Practice to align with changes to the exercise. Part of this will include looking at best practice in responsible research assessment to ensure that our REF preparations reward and recognise the diverse practices that maximise research quality and impact (including research integrity, open research and research data management and sharing). These preparations will also provide an example for other areas of the institution of implementation of the principles of responsible research assessment for future reforms.

Ethics and governance

Development of an online ethics application system has continued to progress in this review period. Following a review of the Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Beings, it has been agreed that a substantial revision will be undertaken to clarify the guidance and update with sector developments. Work on this is underway. The intention is to provide simpler documentation than the current CoP and to divide this into three sections:

- The broad principles of ethics review.
- Guide to completing an application for ethics approval.
- An expanded glossary including links to further information.

New guidance is being prepared to complement the updated Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Beings. Links to the updated Code of Practice and guidance will be included in the online ethics application form (expected to be completed in AY24-25). The University Ethics Committee Convener and Manager

are in discussion with the Organisational and Staff Development Unit to further develop ethics training for staff, including specific training for supervisors. Finally, monitoring of Departmental Ethics Committee activities will be increased to promote consistency of review and ensure compliance with all governance obligations. A light touch process will be developed and introduced in AY24-25.

Promoting good research practice through responsible research assessment

In line with our action plan, Strathclyde will consult with the research community to gain further understanding of the challenges and opportunities for embedding responsible research assessment. A dedicated working group will be established to lead on delivery of activity related to responsible research assessment, with representation from the key professional services groups with responsibility for research assessment policies and procedures. This group will be responsible for identifying priority actions for reform and developing necessary resources to implement reforms. Strathclyde will also continue to act as co-lead for the UK CoARA National Chapter to promote systemic reform of research assessment.

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers ('Researcher Development Concordat')

Focus over the next year will be placed on a set of four core activities, including:

- Developing and delivering a number of large-scale projects specifically targeted at Researchers, such as the Researcher Online Hub as well as new programmes to enhance Researcher access to career development support;

- Contributing to wider University initiatives that will impact Researchers, such as the University's Wellbeing Strategy and the review of Strathclyde's appraisal system, with a view to ensuring Researcher needs and contexts are appropriately considered;

- Embedding recently developed processes and initiatives, such as Research Integrity & Culture Week as well as our Researcher Development Time Policy, into common practice to ensure they can offer longer-term benefit to Researchers and Managers of Researchers; and

- Enhancing resources and support available to Researchers and Managers in a small number of strategic areas, such as equality, diversity & inclusion, policy & decision-making and professional development.

Across all of these areas, activity will continue to take place through close engagement with stakeholders, colleagues working in related initiatives and groups, the Researcher Development Concordat governance structure as well as national networks to build well designed activities based on best practice and our stakeholders' needs.

Continuous improvement of research integrity related practices, policies and procedures

In response to the publication of the UK Committee on Research Integrity's indicators for research integrity, the Research Policy and Information team will review its practices, policies and procedures to identify any potential actions that might enhance our strategy to promote good research practice. In addition to this, planning for a major review and update of the Procedure for Handling Allegations of Misconduct has commenced and will be progressed in 2024/25. The revisions will draw heavily on the UKRIO Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (Version 2.0, published 10/03/23).

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

In November 2023, the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee met to discuss the use of Generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) in research. Committee members were asked to consider how Gen AI is currently, and could in future be, used in research and research management at Strathclyde to accelerate research, whilst maintaining our legal, ethical and professional obligations and standards. Members were provided with background information, including the UKRI report on 'Transforming our world with AI', the Research Funders Policy Group joint statement on the use of generative AI tools in funding applications and assessments and academic publications on AI in the research process. Short oral reports from Strathclyde researchers Dr Maria Sledmere and Dr Esperanza Miyake, who study the use of AI, provided discussion prompts. Key points noted by the Committee were:

- Gen AI should be viewed as a 'prosthetic technology'. It doesn't replace creators but can serve as a tool, a creative interface and a writing companion.

- Gen AI and digital technologies are not neutral. Language is used daily in a biased way, which is then fed into Gen AI so it learns to use language in this way. Biases exist in the data available, which means data being fed into Gen AI is skewed. Human practices are biased, so consideration needs to be given to who is designing the technology and the algorithms.

- Gen AI amplifies and perpetuates these existing biases and inequalities; for example when using Gen AI for a literature review, it will only sort through literature that is available online in an accessible format, therefore privileging those outputs over different output forms.

- Researchers are dividing into those who embrace Gen AI and those who avoid it. Researchers need to embrace Gen AI to avoid being left behind but should understand the limitations of the technology.

It was agreed that a University position on the use of Gen AI in research was required to support researchers to become familiar with the tools and how they

could be used responsibly. Training and development would be needed alongside this, including consideration of what fundamental research skills cannot be outsourced to Gen AI (e.g. critical thinking).

To take this work forward, a short-life working group was established under RKEC with the remit of positioning the University of Strathclyde to steer a course in using Generative AI and LLMs (GenAI) in research in accordance with principles of ethical, responsible, and lawful research and innovation. Opportunities for participation were advertised to all academic staff. The group's membership was drawn from multiple disciplines across the University, and representatives of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Services Directorate to ensure alignment with other areas of research policy. From March to May 2024, the Group met to develop a set of recommendations for the University's strategy on Gen AI. Core to this was the adoption of the <u>Living Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research</u> developed by the European Research Area Forum. These guidelines are a living document based on existing frameworks such as the <u>European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity</u> and <u>the guidelines on trustworthy AI</u>. Adoption avoids locally developed guidelines becoming rapidly outdated and aligns Strathclyde with international (EU) requirements from funders and collaborators as a default. To support this, further recommendations were made around communication strategies (e.g. referencing the guidelines in the Research Code of Practice and developing a Sharepoint page for rapid update of guidance), aligning with existing University processes (e.g. embedding questions about Gen AI in ethical review of research) and integrating Gen AI guidance into existing training (e.g. Responsible Research and Innovation staff training, and in the PGR research practice development module).

In addition to the Working Group, Strathclyde held an event as part of Research Integrity and Culture Week 2024 to promote awareness of key considerations related to research integrity when using Gen AI in research. An expert panel of internal and external researchers was convened as part of a Scottish Research Integrity Network meeting, open also to colleagues from outwith the network, to provide different perspectives on ethical and integrity considerations of using Gen AI technologies in research. This included the following presentations:

- Training and supporting responsible users of Gen AI. Dr Andrew Porter, Research Integrity and Training Adviser, Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute

- AI by default? Thinking through in/equality, AI and research integrity. Dr Esperanza Miyake, Chancellor's Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Strathclyde

- Research integrity and the ways of using AI. Prof Viktor Dorfler, Professor of AI Strategy, Department of Management Science, University of Strathclyde

Feedback demonstrated that the session was well received and <u>a recording was uploaded to Youtube</u> for those who were unable to attend. This panel discussion was followed by a fishbowl event to allow attendees to discuss the issues raised in more detail.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

As outlined in the Research Code of Practice, Strathclyde adopts the Research Integrity Concordat definition of research misconduct and has processes in place for the reporting and investigation of research misconduct. Any allegation of research misconduct involving a researcher at the University is treated as a serious matter and is investigated according to the following procedures:

- Allegations of research misconduct concerning registered University students will be considered under the terms of the University's Student Discipline Procedure: Academic Misconduct.
- Allegations of research misconduct concerning University staff will be investigated in accordance with the Process for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct.
- Allegations of research misconduct concerning any individual with visiting, honorary or emeritus status at the University should be addressed in writing to the relevant Dean who will undertake an initial assessment of the allegations, confidentially undertaking informal enquiries as necessary to clarify the nature of the allegations. The Dean may delegate the undertaking of informal enquiries, ensuring that such input avoids conflicts of interest and provides an appropriate level of expertise in the scientific area. As those with visiting, honorary or emeritus status are not University employees, workers or registered students, the process for any further investigation required and for determining subsequent actions will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the relevant Dean.

Planning for a major review and update of the Procedure has commenced in 2023-24. The revisions will draw heavily on the UKRIO Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (Version 2.0, published 10/03/23).

The University also has a Public Interest Disclosure Policy which can be invoked in certain circumstances and under which an investigation may be carried out to determine if any impropriety or breach of University regulations has occurred.

Enabling reporting of concerns

The University is committed to acting with no detriment to whistle-blowers who have made allegations of misconduct unless such allegations are made maliciously. This means that the University will take reasonable steps to safeguard the reputation of anyone who appropriately reports concerns about research misconduct, which includes avoiding the inappropriate use of legal instruments, such a non-disclosure agreements. All allegations of research misconduct are taken seriously and investigated in line with the processes outlined in the Research Code

of Practice and the University takes steps to resolve any issues found during the investigation. This can include imposing sanctions, requesting a correction of the research record and reporting action to relevant external bodies. If involvement in research misconduct procedures at any point has an impact on the emotional and mental wellbeing of the complainant or the respondent, the University has a suite of support and guidance resources for staff and for students, including access to counselling. The information listed here with regards to making allegations of research misconduct is stated in the Guide to Good Research Practice and reiterated at research integrity training and events to reassure staff and students that they would be supported if they reported research misconduct.

Inappropriate behaviours, such as bullying and harassment, can occur alongside serious and intentional cases of research misconduct as the researcher attempts to cover their actions. Even where inappropriate behaviours are not associated with research misconduct, they can damage the research culture. The University actively encouraged reporting of any incidence of inappropriate behaviour, so that it can be challenges and addressed and so that support can be provided to those affected. To enable this, the University has established a framework, Safe360°, for protecting people's health, safety, wellbeing and human rights within the context of university activity. It underpins the University's duty of care and enhances support mechanisms for students and staff, integrating national guidance and University policies and procedures. As part of Safe360°, the University runs an online reporting tool – Report & Support – which can be used to report inappropriate behaviours such as harassment or discrimination or to raise concerns about safety and issues that undermine the University's inclusive environment. If reports of research misconduct are made via Report & Support, or reports of other inappropriate behaviour mentions potential research misconduct, the report will be shared with research-integrity@strath.ac.uk so that the potential misconduct can be investigated through the appropriate procedures.

Lessons learned

In 2023-24 we implemented a new record keeping system for enquiries and allegations around misconduct, and have delivered training and development opportunities around research misconduct as part of Research Integirty and Culture Week 2024. In line with Strathlcyde's value commitment to working in a people-centred wat, we have been working more closely with colleagues across a range of functions to support the wellbeing and mental health of those impacted by allegations and investigations.

This year we have additionally commenced planning for undertaking a comprehensive review and revision of the Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research, including the appeals process. Multiple areas for improvement in implementing the Procedure have been identified, including around communications (both in setting out the procedure in a clear way and in

communicating with those involved in invesitgations), alignment with external initiaives (including UKRI policy and UKRIO guidance) and internal policies, and in how allegations of misconduct are reported externally.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

During the reporting period (2023-24), one allegation of misconduct was still under investigation from the previous year, and three new expressions of concern were received.

An allegation of misconduct related to misrepresentation was considered under the Preliminary Stage (Receipt of Allegations) in 2021-22. It was determined that further investigation should be undertaken, and this was progressed to a formal investigation during 2022-23. This investigation has now concluded, with the allegation upheld, and has been referred to disciplinary procedures.

The first expression of concern received in 2023-24 related to potential plagiarism. This was considered under the Preliminary Stage (Receipt of Allegations) and found that there was no case to answer. The second expression of concern related to misrepresentation within publications and remediary measures were taken to address the issues identified. The third expression of concern involved potential for plagiarism and misrepresentation; this was considered under the Preliminary Stage (Receipt of Allegations) and it was found that there was no case to answer. None of these cases constituted a formal allegation of misconduct.

As reported in previous statements, four formal investigations had been conducted prior to this year. These related to authorship and IP (2020-21 investigation complete – allegations not upheld); plagiarism, including self-plagiarism (2021-21 investigation complete – allegation upheld); failure to recognise/report student falsification (2019-20 investigation complete – allegation not upheld); and failure to follow ethical guidelines (2016-17 investigation complete - allegation upheld).

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	**Number of formal investigations**	**Number upheld in part after formal investigation**	**Number upheld in full after formal investigation**
Fabrication	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Falsification	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Plagiarism	1	*0*	*0*	*0*
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	1	1	*0*	*1*
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Other*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*
Total:	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**
*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.				