Staffordshire University

Code of Practice for Research

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Staffordshire University Code of Practice for Research

1.0 **Introduction to the Guidelines**

1.1 Staffordshire University expects all research undertaken at the University or conducted in its name to be carried out to the highest standards of integrity. The University intends to increase national and international appreciation of the reach and significance of its research. Research integrity and good research conduct are key to achieving this goal. The definition of research integrity used in this Code of Practice draws on existing definitions in a way that is applicable to all areas of research. The core elements are:

- Honesty in all aspects of research,
- Rigour, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards
- Due diligence in terms of research design,
- Transparency and open communication,
- Care and respect for all participants and subjects of research

1.2 The Code of Practice for Research supports the University's Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Strategy by describing the principles that should underpin the conduct of research by University staff, students and honorary and emeritus title holders. The Code covers all forms of research undertaken by Staffordshire University, including research commissioned by industry, commerce and the voluntary sector. The Code sets out the standards of performance and conduct expected of all those engaged in research at Staffordshire University, including staff, students, emeritus and visiting titleholders and applies across the University as a whole.

1.3 The Code demonstrates the University's commitment to **the Concordat to Support Research Integrity** which provides a national framework for research conduct and its governance (http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatTo SupportResearchIntegrity.pdf)

2.0 **Applicability**

2.1 The Code of Practice applies to University students, employees, individuals who hold visiting, honorary and emeritus titles it is applicable to all subject areas and to all parts of the University..

3.0 Principles

3.1 For the purposes of the Code of Practice, 'research' refers to the definition adopted by the UK Research Integrity Office in September 2009 (UK Research Integrity Office, Code of Practice for Research, p. 5): http://www.ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Code-of-Practice-for-Research.pdf

Research is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors, the invention and

generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devises, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research". **In the context of the Code of Practice, the definition of research excludes the production of student assessments which do not require original research (e.g. the critical analysis and evaluation of existing published material including text books and academic journals).**

3.2   The University's Code of Practice reflects the international framework and standards for research integrity as described in the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010), the European Code for Research Integrity (2010) and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity published by Universities UK in 2012.

3.3   In its Code of Practice, Staffordshire University upholds the commitments set out in the 2012 UK Concordat:-

- **Commitment 1** – maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research,
- **Commitment 2** – ensuring that research is conducted to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards,
- **Commitment 3** – supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers,
- **Commitment 4** – using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise,
- **Commitment 5** – strengthening the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

3.4   The University requires research to be conducted according to the highest standards of rigour and integrity and observe the following core principles:

- Care and respect for all participants in and subjects of research Honesty in all aspects of research
- Transparency and open communication
- Rigour, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards

3.5   The core principles apply to all aspects of research including the preparation and submission of grant and project proposals, the publication and dissemination of findings and the peer or expert review of proposals or publications.

3.6   Staffordshire University expects research conducted under its name to:

- Follow legal, ethical and financial requirements stipulated by the University and other relevant organisations involved in the research,

- Observe and uphold honesty, integrity and professionalism and maintain professional standards,
- Show probity in the use of finance and other resources and comply with both the University's financial regulations and procedures and the regulations and procedures of any funding bodies supporting the research,
- Attribute and acknowledge the direct and indirect contribution of colleagues and collaborators,
- Ensure the rights, safety and wellbeing of all individuals associated with or involved in the research,
- Maintain effective project management to agreed project plans
- Undertake relevant and appropriate professional development and ensure that other individuals involved in the research receive appropriate and relevant training, development and support,
- Record the progress of the research, question findings and preserve the security and confidentiality of primary data associated with the research,
- While protecting the confidentiality of data, researchers should aim to achieve a timely and wide dissemination of research findings.
- Disclose to the University and other relevant bodies any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of the research,
- Report any concerns prompted by the conduct of other researchers and feel confident that the expression of these concerns will be taken seriously by the University.

4.0 **Scope and Responsibilities**

4.1 The primary responsibility to act in accordance with the principles described in Section 3 rests with individual researchers. The University expects all research activity undertaken by members of staff and other individuals as described in paragraph 1.2 to be conducted according to these principles. Specifically:

a) Chief or Principal Investigators, co-investigators, supervisors and other researchers are expected by the University:-

- To prepare research proposal(s) that are ethical and comply with the University's Research Code of Practice and other statements of good national and international practice,
- To consider the ethical requirements of their work and seek ethical approval where appropriate,
- To conduct research with due diligence and comply with the University's Research Code of Practice and other statements of good national and international practice.
- To ensure that their students are aware of and understand the University's Code of Practice for Research, together with the University's research ethics policies and procedures.

c) The University Research Ethics Sub-Committee and Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee are expected by the University:

- To ensure that research proposals meet required ethical standards and comply with University policies and procedures that have been in place to uphold good ethical practice,

d)   Staff and Students are expected by the University:

- To be aware of the process for reporting and investigating allegations of research misconduct (see Section 11, page 8)

e)   The University through Academic Board, the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee and Research, Enterprise and Employability Services (RBES) are responsible for putting in place a research environment that supports research of high ethical standards, mutual co-operation, professionalism and the open and honest exchange of ideas. Final responsibility for ensuring that research is correctly managed and monitored rests with the University. Members of Executive, Faculty Deans, Associate Deans and Heads of School are expected by the University to ensure that the Research Code of Practice is observed by staff , students and honorary/associate visiting and emeritus titleholders.

4.2   Through the induction process, staff new to the University will be made aware of the Code of Practice and the process for reporting allegations of research misconduct.

4.3   Through its professional development support for researchers, the University will promote awareness of good ethical practice in the design, conduct and management of research.

5.0   **Consent and Welfare of Participants**

5.1   The University will ensure that any research involving human participants, human material or personal data will comply with national and international legal and ethical requirements and conventions. Staffordshire University expects the following to be the primary consideration in the design and conduct of research studies:

- Dignity rights
- Informed consent
- Underage or vulnerable people give informed consent and their carers/guardians give consent
- Confidentiality – researchers should ensure both the confidentiality of any personal information relating to the participants in the research and that the research meets appropriate legal requirements

    Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

5.2   Where third parties take part in research studies:

- Consent must be obtained from anyone invited to take part in a research study or project. Consent must be based on a knowledge and understanding of the risks,

benefits and alternatives of taking part. Unless otherwise agreed by an ethics committee or other approved body, consent should be explicit and written,

- Any external body, agency or group involved or associated with the research study must be informed that the research project is planned and where appropriate, give their approval before the research commences,
- Where required, the written approval of the external body, agency or group's ethics committee for the research must be secured before the study commences,
- The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be given priority at all times ,
- When the study involves participants under the care and supervision of a doctor, nurse, school or college principal or social worker for the condition to which the project relates, care professionals must be informed that their patients or clients are being asked to take part and agree to retain overall responsibility for their care, ,
- Researchers should ensure confidentiality of personal information relating to participants in research and that the research fulfils appropriate legal requirements, e.g. Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Tissue Act 2004.
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5.3   Where participants are not in a position to give informed consent the researcher should have regard to the advice of the professional societies or validated bodies. For example: The Royal College of Physicians (http://hiu.rcplondon.ac.uk/), the Economic and Social Research Council, (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/) and the Royal College of Psychiatrists (http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/).

5.4   English law may not currently permit guardians/parents to give consent on behalf of mentally incapacitated adults in certain matters. Care must be taken to ensure compliance with the Mental Capacities Act (2005). Researchers should seek advice as to whether they need to obtain a declaration from the court that the proposed research procedures are lawful.

5.5   Young persons over the age of 16 are generally thought to be able to give informed consent but it might be appropriate to seek advice depending on the nature of the work. Research involving children under 16 will require the informed consent of parents, carers or guardians. .

5.6   Where the nature of the research is such that informing participants before the work is carried out might render the results invalid, for example within aspects of the social and cognitive sciences such as perception, there must be appropriate explanations following the study. In these circumstances, justification for this course of action must be included in the application for ethical approval when submitted for approval to the Ethics Committee or Sub-Committee. Researchers must provide convincing reasons why such research should proceed without the necessary informed consent. Researchers should not mislead participants if it is thought that prior permission will not be obtained. .

6.0 Research Involving Animals

6.1 In the case of work involving animals, there is a general requirement for University researchers to demonstrate that they have considered the use of alternative methods of research before the use of animals is proposed, and that the likely impacts on animals have been weighed against the improvement in knowledge and understanding of the living word.

 6.2   The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986) provides a definition of an animal in the context of research and sets out the legal requirements associated with research or teaching involving animal procedures in the UK. Under the provision of the Act, research involving certain animals requires prior approval from the relevant ethics and regulatory committees. All legal requirements and guidelines produced by other appropriate bodies must be adhered to, in particular Home Office controls. Details of regulation of animal use in scientific procedures, and current legislation, can be located at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/14/contents. Research involving animals under this Act will require Home Office licences.

63 When designing and planning a project, researchers are encouraged by the University to consider at an early stage opportunities to reduce, replace and refine animal involvement and must refer to the recent guidance issued by the Home Office(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals) The University expects researchers to secure approval through appropriate ethical review and regulatory processes and be aware that they may require Home Office licences for the institution, the investigator and the project. A central catalogue recording details of any research involving animals will be maintained by the University.

6.4 If members of the University's staff, students, partners and collaborators consider that any animal or animals involved in research for which Staffordshire University has a measure of responsibility are subject to unreasonable risk or harm, they must report their concerns to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and External, who will ensure that expressions of concern are fully investigated. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and External has overall corporate responsibility for ensuring that Staffordshire University upholds national and international ethical and legal requirements governing the use of animals in research

7.0 Sensitive Environments

7.1   Staffordshire University expects any research carried out in its name to be conducted in an environmentally sound and sensitive manner. University researchers should take every opportunity to mitigate the adverse impact of their work on sensitive environments. In the UK, many professional and learned bodies have published guidance on conducting research fieldwork and bodies such as Natural England and the National Parks offer advice on how the natural environment should be respected

8.0 External Peer Review

8.1 Staffordshire University recognises that external peer review makes a significant contribution to good practice in research and encourages members of the University to act as peer reviewers for publications, grant applications, conferences, policy documents of scholarly and professional societies and the ethical assessment of research proposals.

8.2 The University expects members of staff who act as external peer reviewers to uphold the highest standards of thoroughness and objectivity, and observe the peer review guidelines adopted by the body on whose behalf they are carrying out the peer review.

8.3 Researchers and other members of staff engaged in peer review are expected by the University to maintain confidentiality and not retain, copy or share any material relating to the review unless permitted by the body which commissioned the review. Researchers and other members of staff should not make use of research designs or research findings from material under review without the express permission of the author (s) nor should they encourage or allow others to do so. The University also requires staff acting as peer reviewers to declare any relevant conflicts of interest.

8.4 When undertaking a peer review, members of the University may become aware of possible misconduct such as plagiarism, fabrication or falsification or have ethical concerns over the design or conduct of a study or project. In such cases, the University requires members of its staff to inform, in confidence, an appropriate representative of the body that had requested the review.

9.0 **Publication and Authorship**

9.1 The University recognises that researchers have a duty to publish and disseminate research in a way that reports the work and the findings of the research accurately and without selection or editing that could be misleading.

9.2 Staffordshire University respects the duty of researchers to publish their research and the findings of their research and will not suppress the publication of research outputs nor attempt to influence the presentation or interpretation of findings.

93 Advice and guidance will be provided by the University to researchers on the publication and dissemination of research findings. Good practice requires members of the University to store copies of their research publications in the University repository

9.4 The University expects researchers to have addressed issues relating to the publication and authorship, especially the roles of collaborators and contributors, at an early stage of the design of a project, recognising that roles and contributions may alter during the duration of the research. Decisions concerning publication and authorship should be agreed by members of the research team.

95 The University believes that there is an ethical obligation on researchers to acknowledge and attribute external sources of information. The citation of sources should be carried out in accordance with accepted academic conventions.

9.6 With regard to the publication of research findings by researchers associated with Staffordshire University, the following good practice should be observed:

- A publication must include appropriate reference to the contributions made by those individuals who have made what might be reasonably regarded as a significant contribution to the research project or study,
- An individual who has materially contributed in a substantial way to part of the research should be given the opportunity to be included as an author of a publication derived from that research,
- The contributions made by individuals who have helped in the work being reported should be identified and acknowledged. This could include research staff, research students, professional support staff, sponsors and individuals from outside the University who may have given advice or helped with the collection or analysis of data.

9.7 Staff seeking further guidance on issues relating to authorship and co-authorship are advised by the University to consult the Vancouver Protocol, a copy of which can be found at http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/archives/2006_urm.pdf.

10.0   **Conflicts of Interest**

10.1   Staffordshire University recognises that conflicts of interest can impede research and believes that it is good practice for researchers to understand how conflicts of interest can be identified, declared and addressed.

10.2   A conflict of interest can arise when a researcher's judgement regarding a primary interest, such as scientific knowledge, could be compromised by a secondary interest, such as financial gain. Should a potential or actual conflict of interest arise, researchers are expected to alert the Associate Dean, Scholarship, Enterprise and Research or the Dean of Faculty as soon as is reasonably practical. Failure to declare known conflicts of interest may be viewed by the University as misconduct.

10.3   A member of staff must comply with a direction made by the University in relation to a personal conflict of interest. Staff will have the right of appeal to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and External if they consider a direction to be unlawful, unreasonable or impracticable.

11.0 **Research Data Management**

11.1 Staffordshire University recognises that high standards in the management of research data are essential to the good conduct of research. The University welcomes and endorses the *Common Principles on Data Policy* adopted by Research Councils UK (a copy of which can be found at http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/datapolicy/) and expects researchers to follow Staffordshire University's *Research Data Management Policy* by

a) Keeping clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed and the results obtained, including interim results.

b) Hold records securely in paper or electronic form.

c) Make relevant primary data and research evidence accessible to others for reuse where appropriate and for reasonable periods after the completion of the research. Data should normally be preserved and accessible for at least 10 years.

d) Manage data according to the research funder's data policy, best ethical practice and all relevant legislation.

e) Wherever possible, deposit data permanently within a national collection and register this with the University.

f) If no appropriate national collection exists then following the completion of the research project all data will be deposited in a secure central storage facility to be provided by the university.

g) The legitimate interests of the subjects of research data must be protected.

h) In order to meet these expectations, the Principal Investigator is, at an early stage of their research project, encouraged to produce and then follow a data management plan (DMP). The DMP Online tool from the Digital Curation Centre (https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk/) is recommended for this purpose.

i) Exclusive rights to reuse or publish research data should not be handed over to commercial publishers or agents without retaining the rights to make the data openly available for re-use, unless this is a condition of funding.

j) Comply with all University IT regulations and policies in relation to Data Protection and management of data.

11.2 Principal Investigators or those in equivalent roles have lead responsibility for ensuring that research data management requirements are followed during a research project or programme**.**

12.0 Intellectual Property Asset Management

12.1 Staffordshire University expects members of staff conducting research   to be aware of and apply the University's Intellectual Property Asset Management policy (link *to the IP Asset Management Policy once the   policy has been completed and adopted)*

13.0   Misconduct

13.1 Misconduct in research may arise if the Code of Practice is not observed. Research misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- Fabrication: including the creation and publication of data known to be false   or misleading,
- Falsification: including the manipulation, selection or corruption of data with the intention to deceive,
- Plagiarism or dishonest misrepresentation of other authors,
- Deliberate misquotation or dishonest misrepresentation of other authors,
- Unethical behaviour in the conduct of research, Breach of any relevant duty of care, which may involve recklessness or gross negligence ,
- Fraud, including financial fraud and the misuse of funds and University equipment,
- Unauthorised use of material, data or other information acquired confidentially where permission was not given for disclosure or use,
- Inciting others to commit research misconduct,
- Collusion on, or concealment of, research misconduct committed by others,
- Failure to meet University and external ethical approval procedures to conduct research, including:-

i)   Failure to secure informed consent,
ii) Breaches of acceptable supervision standards
iii) Misrepresentation of skills, qualifications and/or experience, including claiming or implying skills, qualifications or experience which are not held.

13.2   Although the University regards the following as serious, it has concluded that issues of this kind are best addressed through the University's Disciplinary Procedure, and are therefore are excluded from the definition of research misconduct given under paragraph 12.1:-

- Unsound Science, unless known to have been unsound before the start of the research work,
- Honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or evaluation of research methods,
- Misconduct unrelated to a research project or study,
- Failure to maintain scientific rigour (unless repeated or serious).

14.0   Investigation of Research Misconduct

141   The procedures adopted by the University to investigate complaints of research misconduct draw on the principles set out in the UK Research Integrity Office's *Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (2008).* A member of staff who believes that an act of research misconduct has taken place or is taking place, should notify, in writing, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and External, and explain the nature of the allegation and the person or persons against

whom the allegation of research misconduct has been made. The identity of a complainant will not be disclosed during the investigation.

14.2   On receipt of a research misconduct complaint, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and External, will arrange for the subject or subjects of the complaint to receive written notification of the allegation or allegations, together with a note explaining the process by which the complaint or complaints will be investigated. The subject or subjects of the complaint or complaints will be requested to provide within ten working days, a written response to the allegation or allegations.

143   Before the start of an investigation, the Deputy Vice Chancellor will consider the written allegation or allegations with a view to determining whether any immediate action was necessary to prevent further harm or risk to staff, students, participants or other persons. The Deputy Vice Chancellor may also act to ensure that an allegation or allegations can be properly investigated. Initial action taken by the Deputy Vice Chancellor will include informing legal or regulatory bodies. If appropriate, the Deputy Vice Chancellor can seek the advice or views of external experts.

14.4   Complaints judged by the Deputy Vice Chancellor to fall outside the University's Code of Practice for Research will be investigated in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure.

14.5   The results of an initial investigation can take the following form:

   a)   The allegation was unfounded or did not meet the definition of research misconduct as described in the Research Code of Practice. If the complaint was judged to be malicious, action could be taken against the complainant under the University's Disciplinary Procedure,

   b)   The allegation had some substance but was capable of being resolved without further investigation. Under this outcome, the Deputy Vice Chancellor could invoke the University's Disciplinary Procedure

   c)   The allegation merited a full formal investigation.

14.6   The complainant and respondent will be notified of the outcome of the initial investigation.

14.7   A full and formal investigation will require the allegation or allegations to be examined by a Panel chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. In addition to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Panel will consist of:

- Executive Director of Corporate Services or nominee,
- A Dean of Faculty (preferably not drawn from the same Faculty as the complainant or respondent)
- A member of the University's Professoriate (preferably not drawn from the same Faculty as the complainant or respondent).

14.8 The Panel will have access to records and files relating to the allegation and will be informed, in confidence, of the identity of both the complainant and the respondent. Panel members will interview the complainant and respondent and other members of the University who may be in a position to assist the Panel with their investigation. The University would normally expect a formal investigation to be take no longer than thirty working days.

14.9 The Panel will oversee the preparation of a report recording the investigation and the conclusion or conclusions reached by the Panel. The draft report will be disclosed to the complainant and the respondent but its content can only be amended to correct factual inaccuracies.

14.10 At the conclusion of their investigation, the Panel should reach one of the following conclusions:

- The allegation(s) was upheld in full,
- The allegation(s) was upheld in part
- The allegation(s) was not upheld13.12   The Panel will have responsibility for determining the action required by the   University as a result of an allegation(s) being upheld in full or in part.

14.11 The conclusion or conclusions reached by the Panel will be formally reported to the complainant, the respondent and relevant partners or funding bodies. There will be no right of appeal against the Panel's findings.

14.12 The outcome of any investigation of research misconduct will be reported by Deputy Vice Chancellor to the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee and the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

15.0 **Review of the Code of Practice**

15.1 The Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee will oversee the review of the Research Code of Practice two years after its adoption by the University. The review will ensure that the Code continues to reflect best practice. The timing of subsequent reviews will be determined by the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee.

Acknowledgments

When preparing the University's Research Code of Practice, reference was made to:

UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012)

UK Research Integrity Office: Code of Practice for Research (2009)

UK Research Integrity Office: Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (2008)

http://ukrio.org/publications/misconduct-investigation-procedure/

Related Staffordshire University Documents

Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Strategy

University Research Ethics Guidelines and Processes

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/ethics/index.jsp

Disciplinary Policy

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/internal/Disciplinary%20Procedure.pdf

Grievance Policy

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/internal/Grievance%20Procedure.pdf

Research Data Management Policy

IP Asset Management Policy

Reference Documents

UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012)

http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf

Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010)

http://singaporestatement.org/statement.html

Research Councils UK: Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct (2013)

http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (2011)

https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/vitae-concordat-vitae-2011.pdf

European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2010)

http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf

Home Office: Research and Testing Using Animals (2013)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals

Vancouver Protocol (1997)

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http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/archives/2006_urm.pdf.

Research Councils UK Common Principles on Data Policy (2009)

http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/datapolicy/

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