

## ANNEX 1: FRAMEWORK FOR GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Framework for Good Research Practice provides guidance for researchers on how to conduct their work, and themselves, in many aspects of the research process. University of Staffordshire expects all research undertaken at the University or conducted in its name to follow the guidance set out in this Framework. The Framework outlines the expectations and responsibilities of its researchers in different aspect of research design and process, and aims to help prevent poor research practice, and potential research misconduct.

### **1.2 How to use this Framework**

All researchers should make themselves familiar with the content of this Framework and must apply it to their own research practice. It is intended that researchers will return to sections of the Framework at different stages, to seek particular guidance on specific aspects of research process.

The Framework seeks to guide researchers in applying the broad principals of good research practice outlined in the [Code of Conduct](#). Researchers must follow the Framework in all research, unless they have received explicit approval from the University Research Ethics Committee. Failure to comply with the Framework could lead to instances of research misconduct, and investigation in accordance with the Procedure for the Investigation of Research Misconduct [[procedure-for-the-investigation-of-research-misconduct.pdf \(staffs.ac.uk\)](#)].

## 2.0 Research design

2.1 University of Staffordshire expects all research methodology to be rigorous and well-planned to ensure that results are as robust and unambiguous as possible, and to enable reproducibility of studies. When designing research projects, researchers should refer to the Code of Conduct for Research and Research Integrity [[research-code-of-conduct.pdf \(staffs.ac.uk\)](#)] to ensure that they are adhering to the principles and expectations outlined in sections 4 and 5.

2.2 When designing research projects, University of Staffordshire and researchers should ensure that:

- a) the proposed research addresses pertinent question(s) and is designed either to add to or, solidify existing knowledge about the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it;
- b) the design of the study is appropriate for the question(s) being asked and addresses the most important potential sources of bias;
- c) the design and conduct of the study, including how data will be gathered, analysed and managed, are set out in detail in a prespecified research plan or protocol;
- d) all necessary skills and experience will be available to carry out the proposed research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields;

e) sufficient resources will be available to carry out the proposed research and that these resources meet all relevant standards; and

f) any issues relating to the above are resolved as far as possible prior to the start of the research.

2.3 When initiating a research project Researchers should conduct a risk assessment of the planned study. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring PGRs that they supervise are fully assessing risks throughout their research. Where appropriate Research Innovation and Impact Services will support with this: The risk assessment should:

a) follow the Ethical Review Policy

b) identify potential for risks to the organisation, the research, or the health, safety and wellbeing of researchers and research participants; and

c) understand what legal requirements govern the research.

2.4 The responsibility for this lies with the lead researcher (while disciplinary differences use different terms, often called Principal Investigator) and the Dean. Delivery of these processes are agreed as part of the Project Manager and Procedures Check List sign off.

<https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=7434>

2.5 Where the design of a study has been received ethical, regulatory, or other approval, organisations and Researchers should ensure that any subsequent alterations to the design are subject to appropriate review to determine that they will not compromise the integrity of the research, or any terms of approval previously given. As best practice, University of Staffordshire recommends that ethical considerations should be considered in research design on an ongoing basis and should take place throughout the research process.

*2.6 University of Staffordshire's Risk Management Policy*

<https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=6286> sets out the systems for managing risk. These are used to ensure that when there are risks that proposed research or its results may be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful, those risks are identified and addressed. The Risk Handbook supports this policy

<https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=6283>. Research Innovation and Impact Services can provide guidance and support to researchers on projects where such risks are identified.

2.7 Researchers should try to anticipate any risks that the proposed research might produce results that could be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful. The Guide for Principal Investigators and Project Teams <https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=8680> sets out who risks should be reported to and who to seek guidance from on risks to minimise risks.

2.8 Researchers should be prepared to make research designs available to peer reviewers and journal editors when submitting research reports for publication.

2.9 Researchers should seek to disseminate their research and maximise the impact of their work with external audiences, (subject to considerations of confidentiality). Researchers should make every attempt to track and understand the impact of their research and record this through the systems provided by University of Staffordshire. Guidance on this can be provided by the Research Impact Manager.

### 3.0 Research involving human participants, human material, or personal data

3.1 The University and individual researchers must ensure that any research involving human participants, human material, or personal data complies with national and international legal and ethical requirements and conventions. University of Staffordshire expects the dignity, safety, rights, and wellbeing of research participants to be the primary consideration in the design and conduct of research studies.

3.2 Appropriate care should be taken when projects involve vulnerable groups, such as the very old, children or those with mental illness; and covert studies or other forms of research which do not involve full disclosure to participants.

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

3.4 Researchers must ensure that the following are primary considerations in all research design and conduct:

- Dignity and rights of participants;
- Informed consent is secured;
- Where underage or vulnerable people give informed consent, their carers/ guardians also give appropriate consent;
- Confidentiality and security of any personal information relating to the participants in the research

3.5 Projects involving human participants, human material or personal data, should follow the University of Staffordshire Ethical Review Policy <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/work-with-us/research-governance/ethics>. Researchers should apply for approval for research projects involving human participants, human material or personal data for review by all relevant ethics committees and abide by the outcome of those reviews. They should also ensure that such research projects have been approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.

3.6 When working with human participants or personal data, researchers should follow the procedures for consent, confidentiality and security set out in the [Research Ethics Review](#).

3.7 Researchers should ensure the confidentiality and security of personal data relating to human participants in research, and human material involved in research projects. Where such data is being

generated the research design should include an explanation of how confidentiality and security of personal data will be achieved.

### 3.8 Consent and Welfare of Participants

When participants take part in research studies, researchers must ensure:

- The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be given priority at all times;
- 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 the University Research Ethics Committee or other approved body, consent should be explicit and written;
- Participants must be provided with adequate accurate information in an appropriate form, to give informed consent. Particular regard must be given to the needs and capacities of vulnerable groups, such as the very old, children and those with mental illness.
- 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;
- 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 Law and the Human Tissue Act 2004;
- It is recognised there may be complex situations where wider implications discovered through the research may impact on the need to maintain participant confidentiality, for instance when the researcher feels concerns for the safety of a participant arises. Wherever possible, provisions for such a disclosure should be taken into consideration at the research design stage and included in an application for ethical approval, for instance if the nature of the research project concerns sensitive issues. However, if such a situation arises, researchers must discuss such circumstances with the University Research Ethics Committee or School Ethics Coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity, or other approved body, and to ensure a full assessment is made on the benefits and risks.
- There may be instances where researchers have a duty of care under UK law to report to relevant authorities when a participant discloses information related to serious and immediate harm to others, for example, child protection offences (physical or sexual abuse of minors), the physical abuse of vulnerable adults, money laundering, and other crimes covered by prevention of terrorism legislation, or where there is concern that professional standards are compromised. It is imperative that researchers are clear to their participants from the start of any limits to

confidentiality, for example warning convicted offenders that confidentiality will be breached should the participant reveal a previously undetected offence. These limits to confidentiality will be considered on a case-by-case basis on its own merits, and with approval by the University Research Ethics Committee.

- Where sensitive data is being stored (which could include for example personal sensitive data, or commercially or politically sensitive data), this must be included and detailed in the application for ethical approval. Researchers should consult with the Security Manager in Digital Services to ensure the proposed storage infrastructure, are sufficiently secure and meet University requirements, or if alternative secure storage is procured.

3.9 Researchers should inform research participants that data gathered during the course of research may be disseminated in different forms for academic or other subsequent publications, conferences, and meetings. Normally this data will not be in an identifiable form, unless previously agreed to, and subject to limitations imposed by relevant legislation, applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.

3.10 Researchers who are members of a regulated profession must ensure that research involving human participants, human material, or personal data complies with any standards set by the body regulating their profession.

3.11 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 ([www.rcplondon.ac.uk](http://www.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/>).

3.12 If proposing to undertake research involving participants who lack capacity to consent to take part in the project, 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.

3.13 Young persons over the age of 16 are generally thought to be able to give informed consent but researchers are advised to seek advice depending on the nature of the work, particularly if it involves potentially sensitive topics. Research involving children under 16 will normally require the informed, opt-in, consent of parents, carers or guardians. There may be situations where, with approval in advance from the University Research Ethics Committee, opt-out or alternative consent may be permissible for research involving children under 16years old. Consent processes for such situations must be explained and agreed by the University Research Ethics Committee or other approved body. The researcher(s) must demonstrate that opt-out consent is appropriate and necessary for the nature of the research project and the validity of the research outcomes. This could include, for instance, if opt-out or alternative consent is the recommended procedure by a professional regulating body (such as the British Psychological Society) for a particular research design and population.

3.14 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, following the completion of the study, participants must be informed of the real facts immediately and with no delay. In these circumstances, justification for this course of action must be included in the application for ethical approval when submitted to the School's Panel of Ethical Reviewers or the University Research Ethics 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 informed consent would not be given upon disclosure of a deception.

3.15 If Researchers consider that human participants in research are subject to unreasonable risk or harm, they must report their concerns to the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The Deputy Vice Chancellor has overall corporate responsibility for ensuring University of Staffordshire upholds national and international ethical and legal requirements governing Human Participants, Human Material or Personal Data.

#### Additional considerations

##### *Research involving prisons*

3.16 Research conducted in prisons, involving prisons, prisoners, youth offenders, people on probation or on license, people working in prisons or in the probation service, is subject to additional ethical considerations. Ethical approval must be sought in the first instance by the University Research Ethics Committee. All researchers wanting to conduct research with staff and/or offenders in prison establishments, the Probation Service or within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) Headquarters are required to also formally apply for research approval to the HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service/about/research>

3.17 HMPPS provide detailed guidance on applications for NRC approval. Researchers should be aware that approval can take several weeks or months, and so should ensure this is factored into their research project timescales. Projects which also require approval from health and social bodies will need approval through the [Integrated Research Application System \(IRAS\)](#).

3.18 Researchers should be aware that guidance and governance for this type of research is subject to regular update and change. Researchers are strongly advised to regularly consult the HMPPS website for the latest guidance and requirements.

3.19 Research in private prisons may be subject to different ethical approval processes from those managed by HMPPS. It is the responsibility of the individual researcher to ensure they have secured all relevant ethical approval for the research project before it commences. When designing and planning any research conducted in prisons or involving prisoners or young offenders, researchers must ensure that all appropriate ethical, legal and regulatory approvals are secured.

3.20 Researchers should be mindful of the power differentials between researcher and potential participant(s) and ensure that relevant consent is secured. The Offender Health Research Network

(OHRN) has published guidance on research involving the criminal justice system <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk>, and <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/toolkit/Handbook3rdEd.pdf>

### Education research

3.21 Education research taking place in most learning environments will require approval or registration by a registrar or similar officer. In some cases, a gatekeeper letter will be formally provided to ensure the research process is officially documented. Researchers must ensure all legal procedures are followed; particular attention should be paid to learning environments or processes involving vulnerable persons. Participants' vulnerability is not restricted to physical vulnerability. It is the researcher's responsibility to take into account situations where the participants are in a dependent relationship, may feel coerced to take part or may deemphasise possible risk or negative consequences to themselves or others. Researchers should continuously consider ethical considerations and make decisions about the value of the research relative to the potential harm to participants. As outlined in paragraph 3.3, research should only be initiated and continued if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

3.22 It is good practice, at the research design stage, to discuss ethical consideration with colleagues and members of the Panel of Ethics Reviewers who can provide support around proportionality, making ethical judgements and inclusion criteria for potentially vulnerable participants.

### Heath and NHS research

3.23 Researchers working with, for, or under the auspices of, any of the UK Departments of Health and/or the National Health Service must adhere to all relevant guidelines, for example the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care and the National Research Ethics Service's Guidance for Applicants. Researchers involved in clinical trials on medicinal products for human use should comply with the principles of Good Clinical (Research) Practice.

3.24 Researchers have an ethical duty to publish the findings of all clinical research involving human participants. This includes positive, negative, and inconclusive results. In addition, it is government policy to promote public access to information about any research and research findings affecting health and social care, including the principle that trials should appear on public registers. In this context "trials" means all comparative studies of health interventions, not just ones conducted in a clinical setting.

### Research involving Human Tissues

3.25 In designing and planning a project which proposes to utilise Human Material, Researchers must refer to the Human Tissue Policy. This Policy outlines the requirements of, and exceptions to, the Human Tissue Act (2004). Before any research which may involve human tissue (regardless of whether it is believed to be 'excepted' or not) is undertaken, advice must be obtained from the University's Human Tissue Advisor.



3.26 As mapped out in the Tissues Consent Policy (at Appendix A in the Human Tissue Policy), Researchers must ensure appropriate consent is secured and that approval for the project is secured through the appropriate ethical review and regulatory processes. Where there is consent to use material for one purpose, it may not be used for another purpose without appropriate consent for that purpose. Different consent requirements apply when dealing with tissue from the deceased and the living. The Human Tissue Act lists the purposes for which consent is required, ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/schedule/1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/schedule/1)).

3.27 The Human Tissue Act (2004) established the Human Tissue Authority to regulate activities concerning the removal, storage and use of body parts, organs and tissues. The Human Tissue Authority license organisations for the removal and storage of tissues for research such as tissue and brain banks. Their code of practice and standards can be assessed at [www.hta.gov.uk/guidance-professionals/codes-practice](http://www.hta.gov.uk/guidance-professionals/codes-practice)

3.28 The University's Human Tissue Advisor [humantissue@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:humantissue@staffs.ac.uk) should be contacted to answer any queries concerning compliance with the HTA.

#### 4.0 Research involving animals

4.1 In the case of research involving animals there is a requirement for researchers to demonstrate they have considered the use of alternative methods of research before the use of animals is proposed. The likely impacts on animals should be weighed against the improvement in knowledge and understanding of the living world.

4.2 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 ([www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals)).

4.3 Research involving animals must adhere to all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines in particular Home Office controls. The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986) provides a definition of an animal<sup>1</sup> 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. Regulation detailing 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 licenses.

4.4 Researchers must secure approval through appropriate ethical and peer review processes and follow all relevant regulatory processes. Researchers must be aware that they may require Home Office

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<sup>1</sup> The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986) Act defined a protected animal as:  
*Subject to the provisions of this section, "a protected animal" for the purposes of this Act means any living vertebrate other than man and any living cephalopod.*

licenses for the institution, the investigator, and the project. The University will maintain a central catalogue recording details of any research involving animals.

4.5 When conducting or collaborating in research in other countries, organisations and researchers based in the UK should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted, including those related to research involving animals. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad that participate in UK hosted research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their own country.

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

## 5.0 Research data management

5.1 University of Staffordshire recognises that high standards in the management of research data are essential to good conduct of research at the institution. Principal Investigators, or those in equivalent roles (noting disciplinary differences of the terms used for these roles), have lead responsibility for ensuring that research data management requirements are followed during a research project or programme.

5.2 The below sets out University of Staffordshire's Research Data Management Framework, which Researchers are expected to follow:

- a) Managing data according to the research funder's data policy, best ethical practice and all relevant legislation. Complying with all legal, ethical, funding body and organisational requirements for the collection, use and storage of data, especially personal data, where particular attention should be paid to the requirements of data protection legislation. Specifically, the legitimate interests of the subjects of research data must be protected.
- b) Comply with any subject specific requirements for the retention of data. For example, certain disciplines, such as health and biomedicine, may require research data to be retained for a considerably longer period.
- c) 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. Where this is a condition, and undertakings have been made to third parties or to protect intellectual property rights, Researchers must maintain confidentiality.

- d) Consider how data will be gathered, analysed, and managed, and how and in what form relevant data will eventually be made available to others at an early stage of the design of the project. In order to meet these expectations, the Principal Investigator (or equivalent) 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.
- e) Researchers should collect data accurately, efficiently, and according to the agreed design of the research project. Researchers should ensure that it is stored in a secure and accessible form.
- f) Ensure that research data relating to publications is available for discussion with other researchers, subject to any existing agreements on confidentiality. Keeping clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed and the results obtained, including interim results. Researchers should record and make metadata available and discoverable to other researchers in a way that helps them to understand the research and reuse the potential of the data. Published results should always include information about how to access the supporting data.
- g) Making 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, unless a different time is specified by a funding, collaborating, or approving body.
- h) Data should be kept intact for any legally specified period and otherwise for 10 years at least, subject to any legal, ethical, or other requirements, from the end of the project. It should be kept in a form that would enable retrieval by a third party, subject to limitations imposed by legislation and general principles of confidentiality.
- i) Wherever possible, data should be deposited permanently within a national collection and registered with the University.
- j) 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.
- k) If research data is to be deleted or destroyed, either because its agreed period of retention has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, it should be done so in accordance with all legal, ethical, research funder and organisational requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.
- l) Researchers must comply with all University IT regulations and policies in relation to Data Protection and management of data.
- m) When conducting or collaborating in research in other countries, organisations and researchers based in the UK should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted, including those concerning data management. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad who participate in UK hosted research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their home country, including those concerning data management.

5.3 As good practice, where appropriate, University of Staffordshire encourages staff to publish data sets in a publicly available repository with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI®) number. This system provides a

persistent unique identification of objects. A DOI can be assigned to any entity — physical, digital or abstract — that you wish to identify. This is useful for sharing with an interested user community or managing as intellectual property. Sharing data in this way attributes the data to the researcher(s) and creates a way for others to cite the work if they reference it.

**Useful Internal Documents:**

Policy	Link
Data Management Policy & Procedures	<a href="https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/data-protection/data-protection-policy">https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/data-protection/data-protection-policy</a>
Data Security Policy	<a href="https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/data-protection/data-classification-handling-and-disposal-policy">https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/data-protection/data-classification-handling-and-disposal-policy</a>
Open Access Mandate	<a href="https://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/docs/pdf/staffordshire-university-open-access-mandate.pdf">https://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/docs/pdf/staffordshire-university-open-access-mandate.pdf</a>
Retention of records policy	<a href="https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/data-protection/retention-of-records-policy">https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/data-protection/retention-of-records-policy</a>
Responsible use of research metrics	<a href="https://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/docs/pdf/responsible-use-of-research-metrics-statement.pdf">https://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/docs/pdf/responsible-use-of-research-metrics-statement.pdf</a>

5.4 Further external information on data management: <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/making-your-research-data-open/>

## 6.0 External peer review

6.1 University of Staffordshire recognises that external peer review makes a significant contribution to good practice in research and expect 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.

6.2 University of Staffordshire recognise that acting as a peer reviewer at all stages in a research career will increase academic knowledge and understanding of the research process and see this as part of career development. The University expects members of staff who act as external peer reviewers to uphold the highest standards of thoroughness and objectivity, while observing the peer review guidelines adopted by the body on whose behalf they are carrying out the peer review.

6.3 Researchers 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 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 those acting as peer reviewers to declare any relevant conflicts of interest, for further information see section 14.

6.4 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 the research. 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. Such as the editor of the relevant journal or chair of the relevant grants or ethics committee.

## 7.0 Publication and authorship

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

7.2 The University will not suppress the publication of research outputs nor attempt to influence the presentation or interpretation of findings.

7.3 Advice and guidance will be provided by the University to researchers on the publication and dissemination of research findings. Members of staff are required to deposit copies of their research publications in the University repository, in accordance with the University's Open Access (OA) Policy and OA mandate, including timescales and format of the deposited output.

7.4 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. The University fully endorses a responsible use of research metrics and encourages all researchers to follow the principals outlined in the University's Statement <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/docs/pdf/responsible-use-of-research-metrics-statement.pdf>

### Authorship

7.6 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.

7.7 The University strongly recommends that authorship, and author order on publications, should be agreed at the start of a research project and reviewed regularly throughout the development of the research, as roles change and develop. The final author order should be agreed before the submission of the final manuscript for peer review.

7.8 With regard to the publication of research findings by researchers associated with University of Staffordshire, 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 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.

7.9 While there are disciplinary differences in authorship order and differing disciplinary norms of co-authorship, the basic principle which should be followed is that anyone who has contributed to an output should be credited as an author, and anyone who is credited should have contributed. This should also include individuals from outside of academia who have substantially contributed to the output, such as industrial collaborators.

7.10 The University welcomes the development of Contributor Roles Taxonomies, such as CRediT from the CASRAI Project (<https://credit.niso.org/>). The University recommends that, where appropriate, authors utilise this, or comparable taxonomies or categorisations for defining and conceptualising author contributions.

7.11 Taxonomies such as CRediT recognise that bibliographic conventions for describing and listing authors on scholarly outputs can fail to adequately represent the range of contributions that researchers make to published output, and instead seek to describe the broad range of typical contributions to scholarly published output.

7.12 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.

7.13 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 [www.icmje.org/recommendations/archives/2006\\_urm.pdf](http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/archives/2006_urm.pdf)

7.14 While both the Vancouver Protocol and CRediT Taxonomies originated from a particular scientific community, the principles can fruitfully be applied to other areas of research, where appropriate.

7.15 The University expects that on any publication which utilised the University's facilities or resources (physical or otherwise), and on which the author was a student, member of staff, or honorary titleholder at the time the research was undertaken, to list University of Staffordshire amongst their affiliations in the final publication.

## 8.0 Research environment

- 8.1 Through the Research Code of Conduct, University of Staffordshire promotes an environment which fosters and supports research of high ethical standards, mutual co-operation, professionalism, and the open and honest exchange of ideas. Researchers

- should foster a culture where good conduct in research and knowledge exchange is promoted, and inappropriate conduct is identified and addressed.
- 8.2 University of Staffordshire's Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research and Innovation Policy sets out the institutional expectation for research and innovation environments. This includes being free from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, bullying, psychological abuse, and physical violence, for all individuals that are employed on, participate in, or otherwise come into contact with, the research and innovation activities that we engage in.
- 8.3 The Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research and Innovation Policy sets out the responsibilities of those involved in running research and innovation projects, with respect to anticipating, mitigating and addressing potential exploitation, abuse or harm which may arise. It also sets out how the University will respond to such incidents or issues.
- 8.4 The University is responsible for taking any reports of safeguarding concerns seriously, and responding promptly to such concerns, placing the victim/survivor at the heart of the response.
- 8.5 Members of Executive, Deans of Schools, Associate Deans, and Heads of Departments are responsible for the conduct of the research that is undertaken in their departments. They are therefore responsible for:
- creating a departmental culture in which exploitation, abuse and harm are not tolerated.
  - ensuring that any relevant concerns raised are dealt with.
- 8.6 The University has a number of policies and processes providing information and routes for reporting concerns or incidents in a range of areas.
- Staff: Bullying and Harassment Policy - The policy outlines procedures to be followed if a member of staff feels they are being harassed or bullied in the course of their work or as a result of their employment by the University.
  - Students: Student Conduct Procedure - Document explaining our expectations of students and what will happen if a student acts in a way which does not meet the core values.
  - Available to all: Code of Conduct for Research and Research Integrity, section 7  
[\[research-code-of-conduct.pdf \(staffs.ac.uk\)\]](#)
- 8.7 Consideration must also be given to the need for specific additional arrangements to be made for reporting routes on individual research projects. Appropriate routes for reporting, handling, and escalating concerns about safeguarding or safeguarding incidents should be built into the research design from an early stage. Wherever possible, relevant stakeholders should be consulted to ensure that an approach can be developed which will be accessible to, and appropriate for those concerned.
- 8.8 At University of Staffordshire we are committed to promoting and enabling a positive culture where staff, students and visitors are confident to be their authentic selves. We focus on inclusion as a way to ensure equality of opportunity for all our people and to demonstrate our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights. To enable the University to meet

its commitment to University of Staffordshire's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/support/equality-diversity-inclusion/equality-framework-and-reports/framework-and-objectives>, the needs, rights, and contributions of people with protected characteristics should be embedded in the design and delivery of our research. Equality Impact Assessments should be viewed as an integral part of good management practice to support with this. Equality Impact Assessment Guidance is on IRIS <https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=11271>.

8.9 Through this [Code of Conduct for Research](#) and the [Ethical Review Policy](#), the University provides direction to its researchers in meeting the legal and ethical requirements of conducting research.

## 9.0 Responsible research

9.1 University of Staffordshire expects any research carried out in its name to be conducted in a way that takes account of the wider impacts of the work. Responsible research recognises it has the ability to not only produce understanding, knowledge and value, but also have unintended:

- consequences
- questions
- ethical dilemmas
- social transformations.

9.2 [University of Staffordshire's Ethical Review Policy](#) governs research ethics. Researchers should take every opportunity to reflect on the potential ethical and societal implications of their research. This goes beyond consideration of ethics, public engagement, risk, and regulation. It requires careful consideration of, and action to address, the potential impacts on wider society and environment. We expect our research to endeavour to support a sustainable economy – one that operates within safe environmental limits and delivers social value. Our research is better when the benefits for society can be realised, and any potential downsides avoided.

9.3 The Horizons Tools kit developed by the Knowledge Transfer Network can help to identify what to consider in responsible research design. It covers the environmental boundaries that keep our planet in good health, the social and political foundations that enable our societies to flourish, and the essential needs for us human beings to survive and thrive [https://ktn-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Horizons\\_2018.pdf](https://ktn-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Horizons_2018.pdf).

9.4 Recognising the University's wider responsibility for guardianship of the environment, and its role in society, the University has committed to achieving major change in environmental sustainability through research <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/about/environment/environmental-sustainability-strategy>. The University has committed to carry out research and innovation activities to address the grand challenges around sustainability as set out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



9.5 To achieve these goals, a strategic framework has been developed with an expectation that our research will:

- Enable and promote the creation of research outputs and impacts in the areas of environmental sustainability and climate change
- Ensure all research bids and projects are framed in the context of the grand challenges arising from the UN Sustainable Development Goal's including those relating to environmental sustainability and climate change.

## 10.0 Leadership and supervision

10.1 The University encourages career development of our researchers and provides training and mentoring of new and existing researchers. The institution is working towards implementing the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/concordat/full>.

10.2 Researchers involved in the supervision and development of other researchers should be aware of their responsibilities and ensure that they have the necessary training, time and resources to carry out that role, and request support if required.

10.3 Researchers should ensure that a research climate of mutual co-operation is created in which all members of a research team are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of ideas is fostered.

### Postgraduate Researcher Supervision

10.4 The above principles should also apply to the supervision of Postgraduate Researchers. Academic members of staff who will undertake doctoral supervision must attend internal supervision training.

10.5 Before agreeing to supervise a Postgraduate Researcher, supervisors should satisfy themselves that they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to supervise the project which the candidate wishes to undertake, that the project is appropriate for the degree concerned and can reasonably be undertaken with the resources available and in the required timescale, and that they are confident, as far as is possible, that the candidate has the capacity to undertake the project successfully.

## 11.0 Training and mentoring

### Research Integrity Training

11.1 As outlined in the [Code of Conduct](#), research integrity is an essential part of research and research culture. It gives confidence to others, including the public, that the methods and results of research are reliable, credible and trustworthy. Research integrity covers a range of areas - from adhering to institutional policies, standards and protocols, to reporting research findings clearly and transparently.

11.2 In order to support the community's understanding of the principles and practices that protect the integrity of research. University of Staffordshire is a member of UKRIO (UK Research Integrity Office). They offer a regular programme of webinars and events, which all staff can access.

- Link to UKRIO Research Integrity Events <https://ukrio.org/events/webinar-series/>
- Link to UKRIO Research Integrity Resources <https://ukrio.org/research-integrity-resources/research-integrity-resources/>

11.3 University of Staffordshire offers qualified mentors to assist in the training and career development of new researchers and also provide career development and educational opportunities for researchers who are more established in their careers. The mentoring supports the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

#### Research Skills Training

11.4 University of Staffordshire supports the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The University offers a wide range of training for researchers to enable them to carry out their duties and to develop their knowledge and skills throughout their career, repeating training where necessary to ensure that skills are kept up to date.

11.5 Researchers should identify needs for training when they arise and report them to their manager or other appropriate person as identified by their department.

11.6 All academics are required to complete Ethics Awareness Training.

11.7 Postgraduate Researchers are required to read and familiarise themselves with the [Code of Conduct for Research and Research Integrity](#), the Framework for Good Research Practice, the [PGR Code of Conduct](#), and Regulations covering their programme of research which set out the standards and organisational policies and procedures they are expected to comply with when researching at University of Staffordshire [[Research integrity – University of Staffordshire \(staffs.ac.uk\)](https://staffs.ac.uk/research-integrity)].

## 12.0 Collaborative working

12.1 Researchers should be aware of the standards and procedures for the conduct of research followed by any organisations involved in collaborative research that they are undertaking. Researchers should pay particular attention to projects which include participants from different countries or where work will be carried out in another country due to the additional legal and ethical requirements and other guidelines that may apply. The University of Staffordshire Due Diligence Process supports partner checks.

12.2 When conducting or collaborating in research in other countries, organisations and researchers based in the UK should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad who participate in UK hosted research projects should comply

with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their home country.

- 12.3 Researchers should try to anticipate any issues that might arise as a result of working collaboratively and agree jointly in advance how they might be addressed, communicating any decisions to all members of the research team.
- 12.4 As a minimum, an agreement should cover:
- arrangements for the management and coordination of the project
  - responsibilities (including funding) and liabilities of the partners
  - IP arrangements
  - reporting and publication arrangements, access to results and confidentiality provisions
  - consequences of termination or default and ways of handling disputes.
- 12.5 In particular, when contracting with a partner on a proposed research project, the lead academic should work with Research Innovation and Impact Services to secure an appropriate agreement which clearly outlines the specific roles of the researchers involved and on issues relating to intellectual property, publication, and the attribution of authorship, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research. Agreements should also cover procedures for any issues or problems that might arise and the investigation of any allegations of misconduct in research, should they occur.
- 12.6 Researchers should be aware of the standards and procedures for the conduct of research followed by any organisations involved in collaborative research that they are undertaking. They should also be aware of any contractual requirements involving partner organisations, seeking guidance and assistance where necessary and reporting any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them.

### 13.0 Intellectual Property and asset management

- 13.1 University of Staffordshire expects members of staff conducting research to be aware of and apply the University's Knowledge, Commercialisation and Intellectual Property Policy.
- 13.2 University of Staffordshire expects Researchers to ensure that any contracts or agreements relating to research include provision for ownership and use of intellectual property. Intellectual property includes but is not limited to: research data and other findings of research; ideas, processes, software, hardware, apparatus and equipment; substances and materials; and artistic and literary works, including academic and scientific publications.
- 13.3 Researchers should not give prior disclosure of research or the findings of research when this might invalidate any commercial property rights that could result from said research. However, the institution recognises, that any intellectual property discovered or developed using public or charitable funds should be disseminated in order to have a beneficial effect on society more widely. This presumption may be rebutted where there is an express restriction placed on any such dissemination. Any delay in publication and dissemination pending protection of intellectual property should be minimised.

13.4 Researchers should comply with any additional conditions relating to intellectual property required by funding bodies.

13.5 This standard guidance might not apply in some instances; for example, copyright of articles prepared for publication in journals or books. As a rule, the University considers intellectual property rights to include confidential information, copyright, design rights, moral rights, patents and patent applications, database rights, publication rights and any similar rights whether registered or not (“Covered IP”) in the following:

- Inventions (whether patented or not);
- Works created using University equipment or facilities including films, photographs, digital media works, audio works, manuscripts for publication in academic journals, monographs, book chapters, books;
- Confidential information contained within University laboratory notebooks (whether electronic or hard copy) or other University information storage systems including theses or papers;
- Any works or intellectual property rights arising from works or services commissioned by the University;
- Materials (in any form, and including biological materials),
- Computer software;
- Databases (provided such databases extend beyond use by or for University itself);
- Teaching materials including course notes and audio and visual aids (“Teaching Materials”).

13.6 As a general principle the University recognises undergraduate or taught Postgraduate Researchers as owners of any intellectual property (including intellectual property created as part of project work that is part of a formal educational programme) they produce while a registered student at the University, unless there is significant use of the institutional financial, human or intellectual resources (beyond normal academic supervision of such projects). Where there is significant use of the institutional financial, human or intellectual resource, ownership of any intellectual property created by Postgraduate Researchers participating in research formally managed by university academics is covered by the Knowledge, Commercialisation and Intellectual Policy.

13.7 Researchers should attempt to anticipate any issues that might arise relating to intellectual property at the earliest opportunity and agree jointly, in advance, how they might be addressed. Any decisions should be communicated to all members of the research team.

## 14.0 Conflicts of interest

14.1 University of Staffordshire recognises that conflicts of interest (i.e., personal, or institutional considerations, including but not limited to financial matters) can inappropriately affect research. Conflicts of interest must be identified, declared, and addressed in order to avoid poor practice in research or potential misconduct.

- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 The existence of an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on anyone's part. However, any private, personal or commercial interests which give rise to such a conflict of interest must be recognised, disclosed appropriately and either eliminated or properly managed.
- 14.4 Any known potential conflicts of interest should be declared to the Dean of School or Head of Department at the outset of developing a research project. If the work is externally funded, conflicts of interest must be declared in the Research Project Approval Form (RPAF). They should also be declared to any ethics committee which reviews their research; and when reporting their findings at meetings or in publications.
- 14.5 Should a potential or actual conflict of interest arise during a piece of research, researchers are expected to alert the Dean of School or Head of Department as soon as they become aware of them. Failure to declare known conflicts of interest may be viewed by the University as misconduct.
- 14.6 When working with a partner or funder which may present an ethical conflict of interest, an ethical review must be carried out, following the procedure set out in University of Staffordshire's due diligence process.
- 14.7 When addressing a conflict of interest, University of Staffordshire will consider whether it is of a type and severity that poses a risk of fatally compromising the validity or integrity of the research. In this case, we should not proceed with the research. If the issue can be adequately addressed through declarations and/or special safeguards relating to the conduct and reporting of the research, then it can continue once these are in place.
- 14.8 University of Staffordshire defines a conflict of interest as a set of circumstances that create a risk that an individual's ability to apply judgement or act in one role is, or could be, impaired or influenced by a secondary interest. Even a perception of competing interests, impaired judgement or undue influence may be damaging to University of Staffordshire's reputation.
- 14.9 Generally, conflicts might occur if individuals have, for example:
- a direct or indirect financial interest
  - non-financial or personal interests
  - competing loyalties between an organisation they owe a primary duty to and/or some other person or entity.

**Identifying conflicts of interest**

Research	
Applying for grants and negotiating contracts	Staff and students should declare all conflicts when applying for grants, negotiating contracts etc. In particular, financial conflicts need to be

	declared to avoid doubts being cast over the validity of research, and subsequent potential reputational damage.
Publishing	Authors submitting a manuscript should disclose any 'significant financial interest' or other relationship with the manufacturers of any commercial products or providers of commercial services discussed in the manuscript and any financial supporters of the research. The intent of such disclosures is not to prevent an author with a significant financial or other relationship from publishing a paper, but rather to provide readers with information upon which to make their own judgements.
Intellectual property	If a researcher has a financial interest in the licensee (or proposed licensee) of University intellectual property they should disclose this, and step back from the negotiations, which should be managed by Employer Partnerships.
Roles and activities outside of the University	
External appointments (starting a new business, consultancy or advisory work, directorships etc)	Head of department approval should be granted for outside work and the holding of outside appointments, as set out in the regulations and the associated policy.
External appointments (use of University resources)	<p>Members of staff should not make use of University resources when undertaking consultancy work or work for external organisations, unless express permission has been granted by the department.</p> <p>Staff members' primary commitment is to the University, and therefore a maximum of 30 days per academic year can be spent on external appointments. These appointments should be managed so that they do not compete with duties to the University (time, teaching schedule, use of resources etc).</p>

Student supervision and teaching	
Admission, supervision, academic progress	<p>Staff with a close personal or familial relationship with a student or a student's family should not be involved in decisions about that student's admission, supervision or academic progress, or the award of any studentships, prizes or other grants to the student.</p> <p>If a member of a panel making decisions about awarding studentships is the supervisor of an applicant, both the supervisor and the student should declare an interest.</p>

14.10 Researchers should comply with the Universities requirements for addressing conflicts of interest, as well as any external requirements relating to conflicts of interest, such as those of funding bodies.

14.11 Researchers 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 if they consider a direction to be unlawful, unreasonable, or impracticable.

## 15.0 Finance

15.1 Where research has a grant or contract, University of Staffordshire and Researchers should ensure the terms and conditions of any grant or contract related to the research are adhered to.

15.2 The University of Staffordshire Finance Regulations Policy provides guidelines regarding the purchasing or procurement of materials, equipment or other resources for research and the hiring of staff for research projects.

<https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=7894>

15.3 Researchers should comply with organisational guidelines regarding the use and management of finances relating to projects. They should cooperate with any monitoring and audit of finances relating to projects and report any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them.

- Finance Regulations Policy:  
<https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=7894>
- Procurement guidance:  
<https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=11273>

## 16.0 Monitoring and audit

- 16.1 University of Staffordshire may undertake reviews to ensure projects are being carried out in accordance with good practice, legal and ethical requirements, and any other guidelines. For this, a risk based and proportional approach (e.g. financial) for the research is used. Research Innovation and Impact Services provide support with this as part of project delivery.
- 16.2 Researchers should consider any requirements for monitoring and audit at an early stage in the design of a project.
- 16.3 It is the responsibility of University staff to be aware of all terms and conditions of any funded activity, including the monitoring and audit requirements.
- 16.4 Researchers should cooperate with the monitoring and audit of their projects by applicable bodies and undertake such evaluations when required. They should cooperate with any outcomes of the monitoring and audit of their projects. If they become aware of a need for monitoring and audit where it is not already scheduled, they should report that need to the appropriate person(s) (e.g., Finance Department, Research Innovation and impact Services).

## 17.0 Health and safety in research

- 17.1 It is the responsibility of all Researchers to ensure that all research and knowledge exchange carried out under their auspices, or for which they are responsible, fulfils all requirements of health and safety legislation and good practice as set out in the University of Staffordshire Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy <https://iris.staffs.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=3313>. Researchers should be conscious that certain types of activities, for example social research in a conflict zone, can present unique issues of health and safety. They should ensure that all research which involves potentially hazardous or harmful material, or which might cause harm to the environment complies with all legal requirements and other applicable guidelines.
- 17.2 University of Staffordshire has systems to ensure that research and knowledge exchange undergoes all forms of appropriate review in accordance with the organisation's policy on health and safety. The University expects that all activities and processes with significant hazards are risk assessed and adequately controlled and those assessments recorded, shared and regularly reviewed.
- 17.3 Researchers should seek advice from the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing on health, safety and wellbeing issues for which clarification or assistance is required.

## 18.0 Review of the Code of Conduct of Good Research Practice

- 18.1 The Code of Conduct of Good Research Practice will be reviewed annually by the University Research Ethics Committee to ensure it continues to reflect best practice. Substantive changes will be submitted to the Research and Innovation Committee for approval.