Principles of Good Research Conduct

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Purpose	To define the expectations regarding good research conduct that the University places on individuals conducting research under its auspices, in the form of a set of overarching principles.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
V1.0				01/01/2019
V1.1	No changes following review in June 2021		Richard Malham, Head of Research Policy, Integrity and Governance, Research and Innovation Services	25/06/2021

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Introduction

1. World leading research quality and scholarship of the highest order remain at the heart of what St Andrews does. These rely on all research carried out at, and in partnership with, the University being conducted with integrity and rigour: by observing the highest standards of good research conduct.

2. Therefore the University is committed to promoting and supporting a culture of research integrity, that fosters and supports honesty in research and also discourages unacceptable behaviour by dealing seriously and sensitively with all allegations of research misconduct, in accordance with the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. This requires that we have guidelines on good research conduct, a clear definition of research misconduct, and a policy and procedure for handling and investigating allegations of research misconduct. We also undertake activity to ensure that all researchers are aware of these. These activities are summarised in an annual research integrity statement, published on our website.[1] These principles (hereafter 'this Policy'), and the relevant policies and guidance on the webpage, are consistent with the commitments outlined in the Concordat.

3. As with our Research Misconduct Policy, this Policy and the relevant policies and guidance on the webpage, apply to all individuals undertaking research at, in, or under the auspices of the University. For the purposes of this Policy and the Research Misconduct Policy, the follow definitions are used:
   - 'Research' refers to 'a process of investigation leading to new insights', excluding 'routine testing and routine analysis' and 'the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research'[2]
   - 'Researcher' refers to any individual undertaking any research activity under the auspices of the University. This includes, but is not limited to: employees, students[3], independent contractors, consultants, visiting staff or students, emeritus staff, and staff on a joint clinical or honorary contract[4]

4. Researchers themselves are primarily responsible for acting with integrity by observing good research conduct. The University expects researchers to make themselves aware of and observe the standards of research conduct that are: set out in this Policy and the relevant policies and guidance on the webpage; established or emerging in their discipline/field, for example, published in the guidelines of learned societies and relevant professional bodies; and placed upon them legally and contractually by the University or external entities.

5. This Policy, and the relevant policies and guidance on the webpage, are intended to assist researchers by highlighting relevant University policies and the University's expectations of their conduct, and defining research misconduct.

6. To seek advice on the interpretation and implementation of this Policy, contact researchintegrity@st-andrews.ac.uk.

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7. The everyday situations that researchers face can vary considerably depending on the type of research being undertaken. At all times, but particularly when there are no specific policies and/or guidelines that

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[1] The annual statements can be found on this page https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/research-integrity

[2] This definition is taken from Annex C of the REF2014 Assessment framework and guidance on submissions

[3] Students' research-related activity is bound by these guidelines and the Research Misconduct Policy. The University expects all individuals undertaking research under the auspices of the University, including students, to understand and observe good research conduct in any research-related activity. These expectations reach beyond activity that meets the Good Academic Practice policy's definition of academic misconduct: they apply irrespective of whether, or the degree to which, the research-related activity is related to "work submitted" as part of a required component of a module or degree programme or in pursuit of gaining an academic allowance or advantage. Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a student, it will be handled using whichever policy and procedure is considered to be most suitable, given the details of the allegation.

[4] This definition is taken from the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research http://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/

can help resolve the situation, researchers are expected to behave in accordance with the following principles.

8. **Sharing responsibility** for a culture of good research conduct**.** All researchers, and -- given their leadership role -- especially senior researchers such as heads of academic units and team leaders, should ensure that a culture of good research conduct and mutual co-operation is created in which all researchers, especially students and those who are new to the community, are encouraged to observe good research conduct, develop their skills and openly exchange ideas.

9. **Honesty** in relation to all aspects of one's research activity and in response to the actions of other researchers. Researchers should develop, undertake, review, report and communicate research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way. Researchers should do their utmost to honestly present their research goals and intentions, question their own findings, ensure the validity and justifiability of their work including the accuracy of their findings, acknowledge the work and contributions of others, provide fair employment references for colleagues, and declare personal or institutional conflicts of interest whether real or perceived. Researchers should strive for impartiality and independence by resisting inappropriate influence from commissioning or otherwise interested parties, from ideological or political pressure groups, and from economic or financial interests. Researchers should neither engage in research misconduct nor conceal it, and should report all suspected cases of research misconduct in line with the Research Misconduct Policy.

10. **Rigour**, in line with established or emerging disciplinary standards: in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.

11. **Openness and transparency** with other researchers and with the public regarding one's research activity and conflicts of interest. Researchers should promote and engage in the open exchange of ideas, methods, data and results and their discussion, scrutiny and debate. There should be transparency in the collection, analysis and interpretation of information. Openness presupposes appropriate storage and availability of data, and accessibility for interested parties. However, openness and transparency should always be subject to any considerations of confidentiality, protection of academic and intellectual property rights, and the potential consequences of dissemination.

12. **Personal accountability** regarding one's research activity to: society; the profession; the institutions under the auspices of which the research is taking place; the participants, staff and students involved; and any other stakeholders, including, in many cases, research funders. Although collaborators and other contributors carry their share of the responsibility for any research and its outcome, researchers are personally responsible for making themselves aware of, and taking all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with, funder, institutional, legal, ethical, health and safety, and moral obligations. These include: the principles detailed in this Policy, relevant guidance and policies detailed on the University's webpages, including the definition of research misconduct; agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project; and -- for members of a regulated profession -- the requirements and guidance of the body regulating their profession. To meet this aim, researchers should actively seek guidance, training, resources and support from their employer and/or professional body.

13. **Care and respect.** Researchers should actively identify and minimise potential harm and risks relating to their research in accordance with legal, ethical and/or health and safety provisions. They should seek to ensure the dignity[5], rights, safety and wellbeing of all involved in research and minimise risk or harm to research subjects, patients, participants, other researchers, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment. Researchers should actively seek advice where required and report any suspected infringements. Researchers should actively identify any risks associated with their work, and if there are any, actively put in place mitigations to reduce the risk.

14. These principles apply to all activities that constitute the research endeavour, including but not limited to: applying for research funding; planning research; undertaking research; documenting and storing

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[5] Please see https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/staff-employee-relations-dignity-and-respect/dignity-and-respect-at-work-policy.pdf

research findings; disseminating research findings; and reviewing the work of other researchers, such as when reviewing funding proposals and/or scholarly outputs.

15. The University has a responsibility to support researchers to uphold these principles, by:
- Issuing and disseminating documentation defining the standards of research conduct we expect from our researchers, and a policy and procedure for handling and investigating allegations of research misconduct
- Raising awareness of, and offering training related to, these standards
- Providing points of contact for verbal guidance and further information
- Issuing an annual statement that summarises actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues
- Reviewing the above provisions

Acknowledgements and bibliography

We wish to acknowledge the use of the following documents in the development of this Policy, listed in no particular order.

Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct. The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), 2009.
The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. All European Academies (ALLEA), 2017.
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