

Annual Statement on Research Integrity: 2020-2021

This statement forms part of the University's commitment to outline the actions and initiatives to sustain and enhance the integrity of the University's research.

The University of the West of Scotland is committed to maintaining the highest standards of research excellence and integrity. This statement sets out the actions and initiatives we have undertaken to sustain and further enhance integrity in our research during the academic year 2020-2021.

The University of the West of Scotland fully upholds the principles outlined in the updated version of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK, October 2019) and this statement outlines our progress towards these principles.

We have a long-standing commitment to high standards in research ethics and integrity, which is reflected in our University Strategy 2025 and the UWS Code of Ethics. As a part of our commitment we have drawn upon the Metric Tide¹ and signed up to DORA² to develop our own set of principles outlining our approach to research assessment and management, including the responsible use of quantitative indicators.

The current strategy to 2025 sets out our ambition, academic staff will be required to develop a research or scholarly portfolio that commits them to producing excellent research, innovation or engagement opportunities that are relevant to global societal challenges. To maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research and to have appropriate policies, systems and procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Concordat to support Research Integrity'. Following the review of our existing approach to academic integrity and ethics by a specifically dedicated Short-Life Working Group led by the Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Innovation and Engagement, the Senate on June 9th 2021, endorsed the review and refresh of the current approach to academic integrity and ethics. The results of this review include an integrated approach to academic integrity, ethics and freedoms, recognising their inherent interconnectedness. The approach will be presented early in the academic year 2021-2022 and reported in the next annual statement. The review is informing the design of an integrated governance model.

University contacts for research integrity

Prof Milan Radosavljevic, Vice Principal and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Enterprise and Engagement is the "Named Person for Research Integrity" and acts as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity including research misconduct.

Any person wishing to confidentially raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspices of the University can do so through the Named Person by emailing integrity@uws.ac.uk. Concerns can also be raised initially at a local level via, or with the assistance of, an intermediary such as a Line Manager, Supervisor, Dean of School or Trade Union representative or colleague.

Policies and Procedures

The University of the West of Scotland is committed to providing an appropriate framework to support a research culture that is underpinned by research integrity. This involves, in part, providing clear guidance about policies, procedures and responsibilities, training and

¹ <https://re.ukri.org/sector-guidance/publications/metric-tide/>

² <https://sfedora.org/>

supporting researchers according to their responsibilities, and monitoring the implementation of such policies and procedures.

At our University, Research Integrity is supported currently by the following groups: the University Ethics Committee, the University Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee, The Doctoral College Board, the School of Business and Creative Industries Ethics Committee, the School of Computing, Engineering and Physical Sciences Ethics Committee, the School of Education and Social Sciences Ethics Committee and the School of Health and Life Sciences Ethics Committee.

At a School level the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the School ethics committee provide help, advice and support to individual projects. The Deans of each School work with the Heads of Division, and have the overall responsibility for the performance of academics and researchers in their respective School.

The Court and Senate office is responsible for corporate governance and monitoring compliance with our policies and procedures, ensuring that guidance is accessible and up to date.

The Library supports open research with support from Research Services and delivers workshops and guidance, for staff and students, on research data management; preventing fraud; handling sensitive data; gaining consent for data sharing; citing data sources; responsible use of bibliometrics; and avoiding 'predatory' publishers.

Research integrity activities

Throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic we have continued to support our staff and students by providing guidance and tools to ensure compliance and facilitate informed decisions. These included:

A refresh of our website to include better sign posting

Introduction to Research Integrity and Ethics training continuing as a standing item on the Researcher Induction and as a mandatory part of the research module within the UWS post graduate Certificate in Academic Practice.

A series of Ethics workshops for Doctoral Students, presented by the Chair of the Ethics Committee

Extending the availability of on-line resources incorporating the values and obligations of the Concordat to support Research Integrity to all staff via the interactive modular Epigeum Research Integrity training package.

We have built UWS Vault, a private space that created for UWS staff to save strictly confidential data.

We have also deployed the web application QuestionPro for us across the university to support researchers in the secure capture of online survey data from research participants, allowing enhanced reproducibility and comparison of datasets between studies.

Cyber security training is integrated into the mandatory GDPR training module

We have made research integrity and ethics a standing item at both the Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee and Doctoral College board.

We have continued to work with the Chair to the University Ethics Committee to review our governance model and have started to work on a gap analysis to ensure compliance with the

expectations detailed on the revised Concordat for Research Integrity as part of the overall review of our approach to Academic Integrity and Ethics.

We have commenced a review of the current processes and governance underpinning the management of research integrity (including research ethics and research misconduct) at the University. This will focus on 3 main areas: compliance, communications and governance.

Research misconduct

There was no formal investigation into research misconduct during this academic year.

This statement has been approved by the Court of the University of the West of Scotland.