

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST *of* SCOTLAND

UWS

UNIVERSITY CODE OF ETHICS

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A 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY

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UWS Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics establishes the University's approach to raising the ethical awareness of staff and students, and ensuring that all that we do is underpinned by global and future-focussed principles of fairness and opportunity. This document includes references to our Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research and Scholarship and University policies that implement our commitment to these principles, and sets out the mechanisms for ethical monitoring and review of all our activities.

Overall Approach

The University's Corporate Strategy 2014/20 includes a set of principles and truths that guide our activities¹. We supplement this with a Social Responsibility Statement² that in turn refers to the United Nations Global Compact Principles³. In developing the Code we follow the UK Government's Guidance on standards in Public Life⁴, and provide a framework for our researchers⁵ (UWS Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research and Scholarship) based on recognised principles of ethical practice and the principles of beneficence (do positive good), non-maleficence (do no harm), autonomy (respect for rights of self-determination) and justice. Implementation of these is in turn based on the principles of independence, competence, facilitation and openness⁶, and facilitated by the governance structures and procedures outlined in this document⁷.

A member of the University's senior leadership (see Appendix 1) is responsible for ethical issues in Schools and in each of the areas of Education, Research & Enterprise, Engagement, International, Finance, Estates, Procurement and Recruitment. This responsibility includes the management, implementation and communication of ethical policies and procedures, ensuring appropriate training is undertaken on ethical issues, ensuring due diligence is undertaken on ethical issues, ensuring a mechanism for escalation of ethical issues through relevant committees and bringing forward any recommended changes to ethical policies and procedure for consideration by the University Ethics Committee.

Students and staff

Every member of the University must endeavour to meet the highest standards of academic rigour and professionalism, including integrity and ethics in research and education, and must conform to national legislation, all relevant national and international codes of practice, and the policies and guidelines of the University⁸.

In education, research, enterprise and consultancy activities, where ethical considerations are likely to arise staff and students must seek independent ethical review through a School Ethics Committee. The potential impact on the University's reputation must also be considered.

Results of activities should be presented honestly and accurately and disseminated in a transparent fashion that is open to peer review and wherever possible is made accessible to non-specialists. Staff and students should be aware of any real or perceived professional conflicts of interest and conflicts of interests must be disclosed. All members of the Senior Management Team are expected to participate in the UWS Register of Interests.

¹ UWS Corporate Strategy

² UWS Social Responsibility Statement

³ <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc>

⁴ Nolan Principles

⁵ Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research and Scholarship

⁶ A Framework of Policy and Procedures for University Research Ethics Committees, The Association of Research Ethics Committees

⁷ For full details, see the UWS Regulatory Framework Section 14.

⁸ <http://intranet.uws.ac.uk/policy/Pages/Home.aspx>

⁹ UWS Committee Framework – Regulation 14

Schools

Deans will ensure the development and implementation of local guidelines for ethical practices and make them available to all staff and students and ensure that all have regular opportunities to participate in training and to seek and receive advice about ethical issues. Deans will ensure that ethical considerations are taken into account by programme teams and research groups, centres and institutes. The Dean of School appoints the Chair of the School Ethics Committee.

University Committees

The University Ethics Committee Terms of Reference can be found in the UWS Regulatory Framework (regulation 14). The roles of the University Ethics Committee include the consideration of general ethical issues, development of broad guidelines in respect of specific activities (e.g. research), the overseeing of the University Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research and Scholarship, and the guidance and monitoring of School Ethics Committee membership and procedures. In this way there will be consistency and coherency of approach to ethics issues across UWS. The University Ethics Committee reports to Senate.

The School Ethics Committee Terms of Reference can be found in the UWS Regulatory Framework (regulation 14). The School Ethics Committees will formulate local procedures and guidelines for approval by the University Ethics Committee and articulate how these align with the University Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research and Scholarship. Each School Ethics Committee reports to the School Board and to the University Ethics Committee.

Review of the Code

The University Ethics Committee will regularly review this Code, at least every three years, to ensure professionalism, inclusiveness and commitment to improvement; clear and transparent procedures for the review of ethical issues in research, education and institutional practice; respecting privacy, confidentiality and dignity; promoting a culture in which all members feel confident to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing; ensuring that staff and students engage with ethical issues; and developing policies and procedures to reflect these commitments and principles.



APPENDIX I Ethics Governance

