

Annual Statement on Research Integrity for academic year 2021-22

This statement has been prepared by the University of the West of Scotland in accordance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019).

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 2021-2022.

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

The annual statement covers the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022.

1. Policies, procedures and governance Update

- i. Following a review of the existing approach, a proposal for a new Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee was approved by Senate in October 2021 as a successor to the University Ethics Committee. The terms of reference for the new committee (including membership and functions) include the provision for institutional ethics application review panels.
- ii. The university has adopted a new academic freedom statement, approved by the University Senate.

2. External Engagement

The University has taken out a subscription to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), an independent charity which provides support and webinars in relation to matters of research integrity, research ethics and research misconduct.

3. Guidance Support and Training for researchers

Within the University Code of Ethics, there is a formal commitment for Schools of the university to ensure that every member and assessor on the School Ethics Committee receives systematic training in ethics.

- i. Post Graduate Research Students are offered the following:
 - Ethics & Integrity overview session as part of the PGR Welcome Week
 - Introduction to research ethics workshop
 - How to submit your ethics application workshopA suite of online modules are also available:
 - Becoming an ethical researcher
 - Ethical decision making
 - Underpinning values for ethical research
 - Ethical concerns associated with different forms of research
 - Ethical concerns associated with different research methods and activities
 - Research ethics in practice
 - Working with human participants

- Understanding research ethics approval
 - Working ethically in challenging circumstances
 - Working ethically in a global environment
- ii. Staff have access to the following additional resources
Section on Ethics on staff induction Moodle page
Ethics has been included in Research staff induction
 - iii. A review of central training provision for research integrity and ethics was undertaken and findings presented with recommendations to the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee. It was agreed to purchase additional Research Integrity training materials to be made available to staff and students from academic year 2022/2023.
 - iv. Additional school level training for staff and students is also available. For example, the School of Business and Creative Industries provides online video guides and synchronous staff and postgraduate research student training sessions.
 - v. To provide regular opportunities for staff to discuss integrity and ethics, the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee have endorsed the setting up of a Research Integrity discussion forum in academic year 2021/22, a safe place for Staff and PGRs to discuss and to ask questions and tap into expertise on a range of topics related to Research Integrity. In addition to existing UWS policy and procedures the Chair has recommended that there is a community of practice established at UWS where the academic community can share experiences and support each other with the implementation of the highest standards of academic integrity. The forum will grow organically under the stewardship of the Vice Chair of the Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee.

4. Research misconduct

- i. Two complaints triggered formal investigations into research misconduct during this academic year. In both cases the complaints were not upheld.
- ii. Learning from misconduct investigation: There were no specific recommendations or issues arising in relation to the complaints that needed to be translated into learnings or change.
- iii. The research misconduct procedure will be reviewed during the next academic year. Currently, allegations of research misconduct are dealt with under the Procedure for raising concerns and the complaints procedure. The Academic Integrity and Ethics committee have requested that a short life working group is set up consider if UWS should have a separate Research Misconduct Procedure based on the "Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research" authored by the UKRIO.

This statement has been reviewed by the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee and approved by the Court of the University of the West of Scotland.