

Executive Summary Paper

Committee:	University Court			
Title	Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report			
Sponsored by	Professor Cam Donaldson, PVC Research			
Author (if different from sponsor)	Paul Woods, Department of Governance			
Please tick ✓ as appropriate)	For information	<input type="checkbox"/>	For discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
	For noting	<input type="checkbox"/>	For approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
	For endorsement	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1. Purpose of the Paper and Summary of Key Issues and Information

What is the purpose of the paper and what key issues do you want to bring to Court's/Senate's/the committee's/Executive Board's attention?

The University is committed to meeting the Commitments of the Universities UK *Concordat to support Research Integrity*. As part of that commitment the PVC Research presents the annual statement on research integrity to the University Court which:

- provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues
- provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation
- provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken and indicates any lessons learned from the process

The final version of the statement will be published on the University's Research Integrity webpage.

2. Recommendations

What decisions or actions are required by Court/Senate/the committee/Executive Board?

Court is invited to approve the report.

3. Freedom of Information

Unless you specify otherwise, this paper will be deemed available for unredacted release under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) 2002 Act. If some, or all of the paper, should not be released, briefly explain the reason. Examples include: commercial sensitivity, personal information.

4. Consultation undertaken/required	
Who have you consulted when developing the paper?	PVCR AVP Research Director Graduate School Director RIO University Research Committee
Has this paper been submitted to the Student Action Group for Engagement (SAGE)?	Not applicable
Have you already submitted this paper to any other committee for discussion and/or approval? If yes, please state which committee	No
Will you require to submit this paper to any other committee following its consideration/approval at this meeting? If yes, please state the committee and date of meeting[s.]	The final version will be submitted to the University Senate following approval by the University Court.

5. Promulgation of Decision/Actions and Implementation	
Who will be responsible for ensuring the decision taken by the Court/Senate/committee and/or actions arising from the meeting are promulgated to the relevant people for implementation?	URC Secretary
Who will be responsible for overseeing any resultant changes or implementation plan as a result of the decision taken or actions arising from the meeting?	PVC Research

NB. Please ensure that all sections of the form have been completed. Incomplete forms will be returned which may result in your paper not being included in the meeting papers and will have the result of delaying business.

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2019-20

Introduction

The University is committed to meeting the Commitments of the Universities UK *Concordat to support Research Integrity*. As part of that commitment, the PVC Research provides an annual report on research integrity to the University Court which includes:

- a summary of key activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues;
- a statement on how the institution creates and embeds an environment of research integrity;
- a summary of current processes for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct and a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place are transparent, timely, robust, fair, and ~~that they continue to be~~ appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken and a statement on lessons learned from any investigations;
- Governance structures relevant to the development and application of research integrity policy and guidance.

Key Activities in 2019-20

The following summary outlines actions and activity undertaken to support research integrity during session 2019-20:

- In response to the publication of the revised *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* in October 2019, a gap analysis has been initiated to map current University policy and procedure to the revised Concordat in order to enable development of a research integrity policy and implementation plan. It is intended that the policy will be presented to the University Senate and the plan will be overseen by the University Research Committee. The gap analysis will also take into account the particular challenges faced in the current Covid-19 pandemic context.
- The AVP Research Excellence now undertakes the role of institutional Research Integrity Champion and the Research and Innovation Office (RIO) is taking a coordinating role for research integrity matters. Further work will be done to define the role of local (i.e. School/Support Department/Research Centre) research champions based on the requirements of the Concordat. The remit of the Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee will be broadened within a new 'Research ethics, integrity and culture' framework.
- University has engaged with the Scottish Research Integrity Network in an effort to share best practice, learning resources and training opportunities and help to contribute to the development of a consistent Scottish sector approach to research integrity. It is intended to continue this wherever possible¹ and in particular to share approaches to the current challenge of developing and applying guidance on research conduct, ethics and integrity in the Covid-19 pandemic context.
- A gap analysis and consequent action plan for the new *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* (Sept 2019) has been drafted and considered by the Developing Academic Researcher Excellence (DARE) Steering Group. Research Integrity is

¹ GCU staff from RIO, Department of Governance and the Graduate School now have access to the Scottish Research Integrity Network Microsoft Teams Group.

highlighted explicitly and embedded throughout the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* and throughout the GCU gap analysis and action plan. The Graduate School is organising the running of the new Vitae CEDARS staff researcher experience survey at GCU and CEDARS data will provide particular insight on the staff experience regarding research integrity and feed into ongoing development.

- Web and intranet content is being reviewed periodically and content will continue to be refreshed and enhanced.

Environment

As noted above, a gap analysis has been initiated to map current University policy and procedure to the revised Concordat to enable development of a research integrity policy and implementation plan. One aspect already identified is that the University aims to enhance the visibility and accessibility of research integrity advice by developing the role of local research integrity champions within Schools, Research Centres and relevant support departments. Researcher development, as identified in the action plan for the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* will embed research integrity in all development activity.

Current Formal Processes and Procedures

The University is confident that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation. Nevertheless, as part of the gap analysis referred to above, the processes are under review to ensure that they continue to be robust and appropriate to needs of the University.

The *Code of Good Practice for Researchers* outlines procedures to be followed in cases of academic misconduct.

Other procedures relevant to staff:

- Research Data Management Policy
- Guidance for Researchers – Data Protection
- Conduct & Capability Policy - applies to current staff (but note that the University may continue the investigation to its natural end regardless of the complainant and/or the respondent resigning or otherwise withdrawing from the process; the complainant withdrawing his/her allegation; and/or an admission of guilt on the part of the respondent)
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- GCU Financial Regulations

Other procedures relevant to students:

- Procedures for Academic Misconduct in Research Degrees (referenced in *Code of Good Practice for Researchers*)
- Code of Student Conduct (also referenced in *Code of Good Practice for Researchers*)
- Student Attendance & Engagement Policy (Research Students)
- Research Data Management Policy

It should be noted that issues of research misconduct can be received via the University Complaint Handling Procedure and are referred to the procedures under the Code of Good Practice for Researchers.

Formal investigations

- 2 investigations of research misconduct in 2019-20 (to date).
- 1 case of possible research misconduct by postgraduate research student reported in 2019-20 which is currently being investigated.

Lessons Learned

- To explore and implement a procedure for online similarity checking in cases of co-authorship;
- Lessons learned in relation to any ongoing cases will be added upon their conclusion.

Governance

The University Research Committee has overall responsibility for matters in relation to research integrity policy. The following subcommittees and groups have responsibility for supporting the processes, procedures, guidance and development for research integrity matters:

- Research Integrity and Ethics Subcommittee
- Research Degrees Committee (for postgraduate research students)
- Developing Academic Researcher Excellence (DARE) Steering Group