Code of Good Research Practice

There is a strong commitment from Keele University's senior executive team to promote high research integrity standards across the institution. Research integrity is one of the seven focal pillars of Keele University's Research Strategy, with a commitment to continue embedding a positive culture of research integrity and reproducibility.

A.   Keele University's commitment

The following points outline the University's commitment to supporting and developing research integrity and reproducibility at Keele and outlines what our researchers can expect from the institution:

1.   A positive Research integrity culture at Keele

The university is committed to developing and maintaining a supportive research environment where research integrity is proactively and pragmatically embedded within all aspects of research.

The university shall promote research integrity through establishing a Research Integrity Champions Network that spans the whole university, hosting regular research integrity and reproducibility themed talks, celebrating examples of good research practice and sharing examples of failures to help prevent them reoccurring in the future.

2.   Clear policies, practices and procedures

The university shall clearly set out its expectations through this Code of Good Research Practice and associated documentation such as the Research Misconduct Procedure (link) and the Research Integrity web resources.

3.   Research Integrity systems and oversight

From a quality assurance perspective, research integrity-related systems shall be managed through the Keele University Research Integrity Quality Management System. The QMS is comprised of:
-     documentation, such as policies, procedures and guidance which are referenced on the Research Integrity webpages and are hosted in Policyzone
-    Training - to help develop researchers including mentoring
-    audit - to monitor compliance with legislative standards and internal processes on a risk-proportionate basis

Oversight of research integrity at Keele University is described in the Research Integrity Policy (LINK), with the implementation of this Code of Good Research Practice and the Research Integrity

improvement action plan reported on a quarterly basis to the [Research Committee](#), a committee of [Senate](#).

4. Support for Researchers

From understanding our policies, procedures and guidance, to delivery of processes such as dealing with allegations of research misconduct, Keele University shall ensure that there is no stigma attached to researchers who find that they need assistance.

Mistakes happen and the University is committed to supporting and developing our researchers to help prevent them. Keele shall defend researchers when they have complied with Keele's local policies and the national research integrity standards. However, Keele will take the appropriate actions if researchers have been intentionally or non-intentionally negligent.

5. Research Misconduct

The University shall ensure that all investigations into the conduct of research are managed through a robust, transparent and fair process as detailed in the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#). Reasonable steps shall be taken to safeguard the reputation of whistle-blowers and those who are exonerated. Keele does not sanction the inappropriate use of legal instruments such as non-disclosure agreements.

The outcomes of any investigations into allegations of research misconduct shall be reviewed by the Research Committee to ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

B. Expectations of Keele University researchers

This Code of Good Research Practice applies to all people who conduct research on behalf of Keele University, this includes staff, independent contractors, consultants, students, visiting or emeritus staff, volunteers and those with honorary contracts.

All researchers are expected to work to the following principles of good research practice:

From the revised [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#):

1 - Honesty - all researchers must be honest in all aspects of research and in response to the actions of others, including when applying for research funding, analysing data, reporting research findings, acknowledging the contributions of others and reporting cases of suspected misconduct. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty must be avoided.

2 - Rigour - all researchers must ensure that they are using the most appropriate methods, follow any agreed protocols, including for data handling and analysis, and take care at all stages of the research process.

3 - Transparency and open communication - declaring potential competing interests, making research findings widely available, whether positive or negative results, and sharing your findings with other researchers and the public. It is acknowledged that researchers may need to protect their own research interests and any intellectual property rights that may have been produced, or abide by confidentiality obligations which restrict the publication of results. The Partnerships team or Project Assurance Contracts team within the Directorate for Research, Innovation and Engagement can provide support if researchers are unsure of their intellectual property or contractual obligations.

4 - Care and respect - for all participants, subjects, beneficiaries and users of research including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. All researchers must consider the ethical implications of their research.

5 - Accountability - of researchers to create a supportive research environment where researchers and organisations are held to account when the standards of good research integrity are not met. This includes reporting cases of potential research misconduct and supporting the university to respond to such allegations as required.

Additional principles:

6 - Excellence - all researchers should strive for excellence at all stages of the research process from idea conception to dissemination of findings, through high quality, ethical research.

7 - Safety - all research must be conducted in a manner that minimises risk to researchers, participants, the University, the environment and the public. This includes safeguarding considerations for researchers and participants.

8 - Regulatory compliance - researchers must be aware of and comply with any relevant legislation or regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, the Human Tissue Act, Data Protection Act, Nagoya Protocol, Clinical Trials regulations and the use of Animals in Scientific Procedures Act.

9 - Professional standards - all research should be conducted in accordance with guidance published by professional societies, funders and other agencies such as charities or agencies such as the Health Research Authority which publishes the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.

10 - Responsibility - all researchers, irrespective of seniority, are responsible for contributing to the supportive research environment and culture at Keele. This includes supporting others especially those in the early stages of their career and our postgraduate and undergraduate students.

10.1 - Training

Keele University expects all new research students to fulfil relevant research training requirements. The formal requirements are set out in the University's Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees Section 2.2 (Research Training) and Regulation 2D (4), (6) and (10).

The University provides an extensive research training programme for doctoral students. The objectives

of the programme are to develop skills and understanding in a number of key areas including research skills and techniques, research environment and research management. Further information regarding these training opportunities can be accessed via the Academic Development Team and the Research Governance Toolkit.

All new academic staff (including contract researchers and career young staff) shall also ensure that their training needs are fulfilled, contacting their supervisors or line managers if unsure.

Research integrity and reproducibility should be included in the undergraduate teaching curriculum where appropriate and postgraduate taught students should also receive relevant training.

All research staff irrespective of their current career stage and as part of their personal and professional development, should seek out relevant research integrity and reproducibility training and continue to look for good practices and examples to apply to their own research.

Document History

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Version History

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