

CODE OF GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

Keele University is committed to promoting high standards of research integrity and good research practice across the institution. This Code sets out the University's commitment to supporting research integrity and reproducibility, and the expectations placed on those who conduct research on behalf of Keele University.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to support alignment with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and to provide a clear institutional statement of Keele University's expectations for good research practice. It sets out the principles, standards and responsibilities that support a positive research integrity culture and compliance with relevant legislative, regulatory, funder and internal requirements.

1.2 Scope

This Code applies to all people who conduct research on behalf of Keele University, including staff, independent contractors, consultants, students, visiting or emeritus staff, volunteers and those with honorary contracts. It applies to research activity undertaken under the auspices of the University, including activity conducted with external collaborators, funders, partners or other organisations.

2. POLICY

Keele University's commitment

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

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 the established Research Integrity Committee Network that spans the whole University, hosting regular research integrity and reproducibility themed events, celebrating examples of good research practice, and sharing examples of failures to help prevent them from recurring in the future.

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](#) and the [Research Integrity web resources](#).

Research integrity systems and oversight

From a quality assurance perspective, research integrity-related arrangements are supported through institutional policies, procedures, guidance, training, monitoring, review and assurance activity, comprised of:

- documentation, such as policies, procedures and guidance which are referenced on the [Research Integrity webpages](#) and are hosted in [Policy Zone](#);
- training to help develop researchers, including mentoring; and
- monitoring and review to evaluate compliance with legislative requirements, funder expectations and internal processes on a risk-proportionate basis.

Oversight of research integrity at Keele University is described in the [Research Integrity Policy](#), with the implementation of this Code of Good Research Practice and the Research Integrity and Improvement action plan reported periodically to the University Research Committee, a committee of Senate.

Support for researchers

From understanding 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 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, where concerns arise about compliance with expected standards, the University will take appropriate action in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

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.

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, from the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#):

- **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.

- **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.
- **Transparency and open communication** – declaring potential competing interests, making research findings—whether positive or negative results—widely available, and sharing 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 Partnership Development 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.
- **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 and comply with the [University's Research Ethics Policy](#) and any applicable ethical review requirements.
- **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.

In addition to the principles set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Keele University expects researchers to work to the following additional principles of good research practice:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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](#), [UK GDPR](#) and the [Data Protection Act](#), [Nagoya Protocol](#), [Clinical Trials regulations](#) and the use of [Animals in Scientific Procedures Act](#).
- **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](#).
- **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 postgraduate and undergraduate students.

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, and [Regulation 2D](#).

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 Research & Innovation Hub on the University's intranet.

All academic staff, including contract researchers and early career colleagues, 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.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Research Strategy Delivery is the owner of this Code and has strategic oversight of its maintenance and review. Oversight of research integrity at Keele University is described in the Research Integrity Policy, with implementation of this Code and associated research integrity activity reported periodically to the University Research Committee, a committee of Senate.

All researchers within scope of this Code are responsible for working in accordance with the principles and expectations set out in this document, and with relevant University policies, procedures, funder requirements and legal or regulatory obligations.

Faculties, Schools, supervisors, line managers and relevant professional services teams support implementation by promoting awareness of the Code, signposting relevant guidance and training, and escalating concerns through appropriate University processes where required.

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- [Intellectual Property Management Code of Practice](#)
- [Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice](#)
- [Keele Research Integrity Policy](#)
- [Research Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [Research Strategy](#)
- [Keele Research Ethics Policy](#)
- [Keele Health and Social Care Research Policy](#)
- [Keele Data Protection Policy](#)

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

The code will be reviewed and updated per the document control table below. Updates will be considered through the appropriate University governance route, with approval by Senate following recommendation from the University Research Committee. The approved Code will be published on the [University Policy Zone web page](#).

6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Code of Good Research Practice
Owner	Director of Research Strategy Delivery
Version Number & Key Amendment	1.0 – 30 April 2007: Approved by Research Governance Committee 2.0 – 06 April 2011: Approved by Research Governance Committee 3.0 – 17 April 2013: Approved by Research Governance Committee 3.1 – July 2015: Departmental name changes update 4.0 – 16 April 2017: Approved by Research Committee 5.0 – 01 June 2020: Update following revision to Concordat to Support Research Integrity and introduction of Keele University Research Integrity Policy 6.0 – 29 January 2024: Minor updates as part of review 6.1 – 01 August 2026: Minor interim compliance update, including refreshed links, updated monitoring/review wording, and document control updates.
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Date of Commencement	30 April 2007
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Related University Policy Documents	Intellectual Property Management Code of Practice Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice Keele Research Integrity Policy Research Misconduct Procedure Research Strategy Keele Research Ethics Policy Keele Health and Social Care Research Policy Keele Data Protection Policy
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	