

THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1 Statement of Principles

This Code of Practice (“the Code”) sets out standards of performance and conduct expected of all staff and students engaged in research¹ (“the researcher”) in the University of Sussex (“the University”) based on the following principles:

1.1.1 Research involves, *inter alia*, the pursuit of truth in furtherance of the advancement of knowledge.

1.1.2 Researchers should, in all aspects of their research:

- (i) demonstrate integrity and professionalism;
- (ii) observe fairness and equity;
- (iii) avoid, or declare, conflicts of interest;
- (iv) ensure the safety of those associated with the research;
- (v) observe all legal and ethical requirements laid down by the University or other bodies properly laying down such requirements.

1.1.3 It is the expectation that research methods and results should, subject to appropriate confidentiality in relation to personal or commercially protected information, be open to scrutiny and debate.

1.2 Observance of the Code

All staff and students engaged in research must familiarise themselves with the Code and ensure that its provisions are observed. Deans, Heads of Units and GRC Directors have a responsibility to seek to ensure compliance with the Code in their Units. The University will draw attention to the Code in its induction processes for newly appointed teaching and research faculty. Supervisors of students engaged in research will seek to ensure compliance with the Code on the part of such students.

1.3 Breach of the Code

¹ For the purposes of this Code, “students engaged in research” shall mean those registered for an MPhil by research, a DPhil or a Professional Doctorate.

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Code may be grounds for action to be taken under the University's *Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research* (the Procedure) and/or the University's disciplinary procedures. Alleged misconduct in research relating to a thesis which has been submitted for examination will normally be investigated under the *Procedures for Investigating Plagiarism, Collusion, Fraud or Other Misconduct in Research Degree Theses Submitted for Examination*, as described in the *Handbook for Directors of Doctoral Studies, Research Convenors and Research Supervisors on Research Student Policies and Procedures*, instead of under the Procedure. However, at the discretion of the University related allegations of misconduct in research may be dealt with under the Procedure.

1.4 Advice

Where a researcher is in doubt about the applicability of the provisions of the Code, or about the appropriate course of action to be adopted in relation to it, advice should be sought from the Registrar & Secretary in the first instance.

2. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Good research practice includes the following :

- fundamentals of research work such as: maintaining professional standards; documenting results; questioning one's own findings; attributing and acknowledging honestly the contribution of others;
- leadership and co-operation in research groups
- taking special account of the needs of young or inexperienced researchers; and
- securing and storing primary data.

2.2 These elements to ensure good research practice are expanded on in this Code and attention is drawn to the related University documents:

for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Management of Research Faculty - Guidelines for Deans and Principal Investigators</i> • <i>Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research</i> • <i>Handbook for Directors of Doctoral Studies, Research Convenors and Research Supervisors on Research Student Policies and Procedures</i>
for students engaged in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The relevant University Regulations</i> • <i>Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research</i> • <i>The Responsibilities and Duties of Research Degree Supervisors and Students</i>

2.3 **Purchasing and Expenditure for Research**

2.3.1 Purchasing and expenditure of funds should take place in accordance with the terms and conditions of any grant or contract held for the research, the University's *Financial Regulations*, and the University's *Purchasing Office Procurement Guide*.

2.4 **Professional Standards**

2.4.1 It is important that a culture of honesty and integrity in research is fostered and maintained in the University. At the heart of all research, regardless of discipline, is the need for researchers to be honest in respect of their own actions and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research work, including methodological and experimental design, generating and analysing data, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

2.5 **Leadership**

2.5.1 The creation of a sound research climate is essential to good research practice. Within a research group (where one exists), responsibility for creating such a climate lies with the group leader. Group leaders and other senior researchers should create a research environment of mutual co-operation, in which all researchers are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of research ideas is fostered. They must also ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision of researchers are provided.

2.6 **Young and Inexperienced Researchers**

2.6.1 The education and development of young and inexperienced researchers in the University is a matter of particular concern. The responsibilities for, and standards of, mentoring young or inexperienced researchers are set out in *Career Management of Research Faculty - Guidelines for Deans and Principal Investigators* and in *The Responsibilities and Duties of Research Degree Supervisors and Students*.

2.7 **Data**

2.7.1

- (i) Research data must be recorded in a durable and auditable form, with appropriate references so that it can readily be discovered.
- (ii) Research data must be retained intact normally for a period of at least five years from the date of any publication which is based upon it.

- (iii) It is the duty of the principal investigator in any research project to comply with the Data Protection Act, and to ensure that copyright is not breached.
- (iv) Specific arrangements should be made to protect the security of research data where there is a contractual requirement to do so.
- (v) Each Unit in which research is carried out must establish procedures for retention of research data in a form which would enable retrieval by a third party, subject to any limitation imposed by the confidentiality of personal data.
- (vi) Researchers must comply with these retention procedures.
- (vii) Research data related to publications should be available for discussion with other researchers, except where confidentiality provisions prevail.
- (viii) In general, academic enquiry and debate require openness but confidentiality provisions relating to publication may apply in circumstances where the University or the researcher has made or given confidentiality undertakings to third parties or confidentiality is required to protect intellectual property rights. It is the obligation of the researcher to enquire as to whether confidentiality provisions apply and of the Dean or Head of Unit or GRC Director to inform research workers of their obligations with respect to these provisions.

2.8 Publications

- 2.8.1 (i) A publication must report research and research findings accurately.
- (ii) A publication must contain appropriate reference to the contributions made by all participants who have made what might reasonably be regarded as a significant contribution to the relevant research.
- (iii) Any person who has participated in a substantial way in conceiving, executing or interpreting at least part of the relevant research should be given the opportunity to be included as an author of a publication derived from that research.
- (iv) Any person who has not participated in a substantial way in conceiving, executing or interpreting at least part of the relevant research should not be included as an author of a publication derived from that research.
- (v) In addition to meeting the requirements of paragraph 2.7.1 (iii), an author must ensure that the work of research students, research staff and support staff is recognised in a publication derived from research to which they have made a significant contribution.

- (vi) A publication which is substantially similar to another publication derived from the same research must contain appropriate reference to the other publication.
- (vii) A researcher who submits substantially similar work to more than one publisher should disclose that fact to the publisher at the time of submission.

2.9 **Conflicts of Interest**

2.9.1.

- (i) A researcher must make full disclosure of any personal potential or actual conflict of interest in research. Conflict of interest includes but is not restricted to personal or close family affiliation to or financial involvement with any organisation sponsoring or providing financial support for a project undertaken by a researcher. Financial involvement includes direct personal financial interest, receipt of personal benefits (such as travel and accommodation) and receipt of material or facilities for personal use. (For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of sponsored studentships or elements of travel/accommodation for students or researchers in connection with the research should be excluded from this definition.) Where it is unavoidable that a purchase is made from a company in which a researcher has a direct financial interest, i.e. he/she or a member of their family stands to gain financially, the researcher is required to disclose this interest. This would include, but is not restricted to, cases where the researcher or a member of their family is an employee, director or partner, has a shareholding of greater than 25% or acts as a consultant to the company. The researcher will be barred from authorising the purchase and should seek advice from the Research and Regional Development Division as to how to proceed.
- (ii) Disclosure of a personal conflict of interest in research must be made to the Dean or Head of Unit as soon as reasonably practicable.
- (iii) A researcher must comply with a direction made by the Dean or Head of Unit in relation to a personal conflict of interest in research. Deans or Heads of Unit may seek advice from the Registrar and Secretary in cases of doubt.

2.10 **Submitting Proposals**

2.10.1 Principal Investigators should take all reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy of information which is contained in applications for funding.

3. **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

3.1 Any special standards of work performance and ethical conduct imposed by law or by the University in relation to particular categories of research are deemed to be included in this code in its application to staff and students engaged in that research in the University. This includes the University's *Ethical Review Process*.

3.2 Units in which researchers undertake research where human beings are the subject of physical or other tests must submit protocols on ethical, health and safety procedures for approval by either the Ethics Committee of the School of Biological Sciences, or the Ethics Committee of the School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences or other ethics committee constituted by the University. Clinical research is also subject to the approval of an NHS Research Ethics Committee.

4. MISCONDUCT AND ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS OF MISCONDUCT

4.1 Misconduct in research is defined as any breach of the University's *Code of Practice for Research*, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic and scientific communities for proposing, conducting or reporting research. It specifically encompasses, but is not restricted to:

- i) Fabrication, including the creation of false data or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent.
- ii) Falsification, including the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery and/or consents.
- iii) Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and or involvement.
- iv) Plagiarism, including the general misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission.
- v) Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to:
 - humans;
 - animals used in research; and
 - the environment.
- vi) Failures to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.
- vii) Intentional damage to, or removal of, the research-related property of another.
- viii) Intentional non-compliance with: the terms and conditions governing the award of external funding for research; the University's policies and procedures relating to research, including accounting requirements, ethics, and health and safety regulations; or any other legal or ethical requirements for the conduct of research.

4.2 Misconduct in research does not include unintentional error or professional differences in interpretation or judgment of data.

- 4.3 For the avoidance of doubt, misconduct in research includes acts of omission as well as acts of commission.
- 4.4 Staff and students have a duty to report misconduct in the prosecution of research, where they have good reason to believe it is occurring, to the Registrar & Secretary. The University will investigate allegations or complaints about misconduct in research or scientific or scholarly fraud.
- 4.5 In particular, any allegation or complaint of misconduct will be investigated and dealt with under the University's *Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research* (the Procedure) and may be subject to action under the University's disciplinary procedures. Alleged misconduct in research relating to a thesis which has been submitted for examination will normally be investigated under the *Procedures for Investigating Plagiarism, Collusion, Fraud or Other Misconduct in Research Degree Theses Submitted for Examination*, as described in the *Handbook for Directors of Doctoral Studies, Research Convenors and Research Supervisors on Research Student Policies and Procedures*, instead of under the Procedure. However, at the discretion of the University related allegations of misconduct in research may be dealt with under the Procedure.
- 4.6 Any complainant who can be shown to have acted maliciously may also be subject to action under the University's disciplinary procedures.

Version 1.1 July 2011

Document history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	March 2000	Original document.
1.1	July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs 1.3, 2.2 and 4.1 – 4.6 revised to reflect the introduction of the <i>Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research</i>. <p>The Procedure replaces the <i>Code of Practice for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct by Staff in Research</i> and <i>The Procedures for Dealing with Allegations or Complaints of Misconduct by Students Engaged in Research</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor revision to paragraph 3.2 to reflect change in NHS terminology.