Guidelines and Procedures for Good Research Practice

1. Introduction

These guidelines were developed to reflect and engage with policies and codes issued by RCUK (Research Councils UK) and other national and international research bodies and ethical frameworks.

They are intended for: ☐ Researchers ☐ Research support staff ☐ Students ☐ Research managers and administrators

These guidelines set out: ☐ The responsibilities of researchers, research managers and leaders and of the University itself in relation to the conduct of research ☐ The principles of good research conduct ☐ What constitutes research misconduct ☐ The procedures to be followed should allegations of research misconduct be made

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff and students engaging in research to ensure that they adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and to the highest level of ethical standards set out by national and international regulatory bodies, professional and regulatory research guidance and research ethics frameworks.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that a climate is created which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good research practice.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Institute, Directors of Research Centres and Principal Investigators leading a team to ensure a research environment of mutual cooperation is in place, in which all researchers are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open discussion of ideas is fostered. They must also ensure that appropriate supervision and training is provided for researchers for whom they have responsibility.

It is the responsibility of the University of Worcester to promote best practice in research and to ensure the maintenance of high ethical standards in the conduct of any research through its Ethical Review Procedures.

3. Principles of Good Research Conduct

The main principles of good research conduct are:

3.1 To be honest

At the heart of all research endeavour, regardless of discipline or institution, is the need for researchers to be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research, including experimental design, generating and analysing data, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others. All staff and students must refrain from plagiarism, piracy or the fabrication of results. Committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

3.2 To be open

While recognising the need for staff and students to protect their own interests and the interests of the University in the process of planning and carrying out their research, the University encourages them to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public. The University supports the widest dissemination of results possible, unless confidentiality agreements have been put in place and/or it has been agreed that sponsors will own a part or all of the intellectual property.   3.3   To document results clearly and accurately

In order to respond to the needs of funding bodies, the University requires researchers to keep clear and accurate records of the research methods used and of the results obtained, including interim results. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained.   3.4 To be critical of your results

Academics should always be prepared to question the outcome of their research. While fully supporting academic freedom and acknowledging the pressures of time and resources under which researchers often have to work, the University expects research results to be checked before being made public.

3.5 To ensure that data is stored securely and for the appropriate amount of time

Researchers should ensure that all personal data is stored securely. This means that electronic data must be held on a secure server and/or be password protected. Hard copy of data must be kept in a locked filing cabinet or similar.

Data must be stored in an appropriate format, normally for a period of at least 10 years from the date of any publication which is based upon it. Where specific regulations with regard to data retention apply, e.g., from funders, these regulations should prevail, particularly where the required retention period is longer than the University requires.

3.6 To acknowledge fully the role of collaborators and other participants

The issue of authorship is an important aspect of good research practice and, in the context of the growth of multiple authorship in recent years, the University expects anyone listed as an author of a research output to accept personal responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the output. The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research must be properly acknowledged. This applies to any circumstances in which statements about the research are made, including provision of information about the nature and process of the research and in publishing the outcome. Failure to acknowledge the contributions of others is regarded as unprofessional conduct. Conversely, collaborators and other contributors carry their share of the responsibility for the research and its outcome. Authors are also responsible for ensuring that they agree with the way in which their contribution to any research output is presented. Where appropriate, the support of funding bodies should be acknowledged in publications.

3.7 To exercise a duty of care to all those involved in the research

A researcher has a duty of care to all those involved in the research, whether as subjects/participants or as part of the research team, a duty which includes: ☐ Ensuring that those involved are fully aware of all the risks and dangers in advance of that involvement ☐ Protecting the confidentiality of those involved unless consent has been attained to reveal their identity or any other confidential information ☐ Ensuring appropriate informed consent is obtained properly, explicitly and transparently

4. Research Misconduct

Research misconduct includes: ☐ Fabrication of evidence, data, results or consents

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☐ Misrepresentation of evidence, data, results or consents ☐ Undisclosed duplication of publication ☐ Inappropriate attribution of work ☐ Failure to declare a conflict of interests ☐ Plagiarism - i.e. the copying of ideas, data or text without permission or acknowledgement ☐ Mismanagement of data or evidence ☐ Breach of duty of care to subjects/participants

5. Procedures for Dealing with Research Misconduct

Allegations of research misconduct may come from others in the University, for example, colleagues, research assistants or students, or they may come from outside the institution from, for example, other researchers who may feel that their work has been plagiarized or from research participants/subjects.

If an individual has a concern about any aspect of a research project he/she should ask to speak to the researcher(s) in the first instance who should do their best to address any questions. If any concerns are not addressed through this route or if the individual feels this route is not appropriate, he/she should approach the named contact:

Dr John-Paul Wilson, Secretary of the University's Ethics and Research Governance Committee, Graduate Research School University of Worcester Henwick Grove Worcester WR2 6AJ Email: j.wilson@worc.ac.uk Tel: 01905 542196

In his absence (or where there is a conflict of interest with the named contact), the alternate contact is [insert name], contact details as follows:

Professor Antonia Payne Institute of Humanities & Creative Arts University of Worcester Henwick Grove Worcester WR2 6AJ Email: a.payne@worc.ac.uk Tel: 01905 855356

In the first instance, this contact may be made informally. It may be that any issues can be addressed at this stage through informal discussion or by some form of arbitration rather than through a formal investigation. If, however, the individual wishes to make a formal complaint about research conduct, he/she should submit the complaint in writing accompanied by any supporting evidence. This can be done in confidence if the complainant so desires. If the named contact notes any conflict of interest he will immediately refer the matter to the alternate contact.

Investigations of research misconduct will be dealt with according to UK RIO's Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

The named contact or alternate will undertake an initial investigation to determine whether the allegations of misconduct are mistaken, frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious. If this is deemed to be the case, all parties concerned will be contacted. If the contact feels the allegations cannot be discounted, he/she will convene a Screening Panel.

The Screening Panel will determine whether the allegations of misconduct: ☐ are mistaken, frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious ☐ should be referred directly to the University's disciplinary procedures for staff or student ☐ have some substance but due to a lack of intent to deceive or due to their relatively minor nature, should be addressed through education and training or other non-disciplinary approach ☐ are sufficiently serious and have sufficient substance to justify a Formal Investigation

It is the role of the contact to take forward the next stage of the procedure. Where the Screening Panel has recommended a Formal Investigation, he/she will contact all concerned parties as well as the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Director of Personnel (for staff) or the Registrar (for students) and set up a Formal Investigation Panel to review the evidence. The Panel will report its conclusions to the named contact who will inform the respondent and complainant of the conclusions. The named contact will liaise with the Director of Personnel (for staff) or the Registrar (for students) as to whether the matter should be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedures.