Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2023-24

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response	
1A. Name of organisation	University of Dundee	
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher Education Institution	
1C Date approved by Governing Body	TBC	
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	Research integrity and misconduct	
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Inke Näthke	
	Email address i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk	
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Josine Opmeer	
	Email address: jopmeer001@dundee.ac.uk	

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- Policies and systems
- Communications and engagement
- Culture, development and leadership
- Monitoring and reporting

Policies and systems

Our research environment is underpinned by a culture of integrity, good governance, best practice, and support for researcher development, consistent with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Research Governance and Policy Sub-committee (RGPSC), which reports to University Research Committee, oversees development, review and implementation of university-level policies related to research governance including research integrity. This includes overseeing the University's research policy roadmap, which provides researchers with a guide to a suite of university-level policies and processes that must be read and understood before undertaking any research.

The named senior member of staff with responsibility for overseeing research integrity at university-level is the Convener of the RGPSC. Contact details for research integrity and whistleblowing are provided on the University's Concordat to Support Research Integrity website pages.

Communications and engagement

Research Integrity Training

The University hosts online research integrity training, *Responsible and Ethical Practice in Research and Publication*, with separate sites for staff and students. The training was developed in conjunction with an external expert and comprises a video, booklets and quiz on each of the following topics:

- Introduction to research integrity and the responsible and ethical conduct of research
- Ethical approval and practice
- Plagiarism and recycling of text and research outputs
- Authorship
- Collaborative research and data management and integrity
- Peer review and publication ethics

British Sign Language versions of the videos are available, along with accessible pdf and Word versions of booklets. The training is complemented by 2-3 case studies per topic and moderators notes to support in-person discussions.

The online training is mandatory for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and their supervisors, with all PGRs required to complete the training before their upgrade review. The training was licensed to three other higher education institutions during 2023-24.

The University's Doctoral Academy provides additional resources to support the professional development of PGRs including the 'Thinking Forward' series; this includes information about the national research concordats, specific videos on research integrity and open research, and a progress tracker and activity sheets, to introduce researchers to key information and encourage them to take ownership of their own professional development. Further training for staff and students takes place via each School Research Ethics Committees.

Research Integrity Leads and Advisors

The Research Integrity Leads (RILs) in Schools play a key role in promoting a culture that supports individual and institutional research integrity. This includes awareness raising and the provision of confidential, impartial advice on the responsible conduct of research to staff and students, including those who may be considering making an allegation of research misconduct. Larger Schools have Research Integrity Groups (RIGS) which include additional Research Integrity Advisors.

The Research Integrity Leads and Advisors from all Schools form a Research Integrity Network, chaired by the Convenor of the RGPSC, which meets 2-3 times a year and collaborates via a shared Teams site. The network provides a forum for discussing matters confidentially and informally, whether it be seeking advice from other members or sharing best practice. In addition, the network has a dotted reporting line to the RGPSC, should members wish to raise a general issue with the Sub-committee's combined expertise.

Other Engagement

The University is an active member of the Scottish Research Integrity Network (SRIN), which it co-founded with the University of Edinburgh. The Convenor of the RGPSC is the Chair of the UKRIO Advisory Council and a member of the Board of Trustees. UKRIO webinars and resources are promoted to staff and students internally via the Research Integrity Leads and Advisors network and the Doctoral Academy.

Culture, development and leadership

The University has held the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award since 2010 and in June 2024 was successful in retaining the Award at the 12-year external review point.

In early 2024, the University approved the establishment of a new governance and leadership structure with the aim of delivering a significant step change in the University's research culture and environment. This included the appointment of a new Assistant Vice-Principal (AVP) for Research Culture and Environment and the establishment of a Research People, Culture and Environment Sub-Committee. This new Sub-Committee, which will report to the University Research Committee, is to be chaired by the new AVP, and to focus strategic attention on research people, culture, and environment.

The AVP will work closely with the new Head of Research Culture and Environment and Researcher Advancement and Culture Manager, both located in Research and Innovation Services (RIS) and appointed in the reporting period, to implement an evidence-based approach for nurturing an inclusive and positive research culture and oversee the action plan for delivering on the University's commitment to the Researcher Development Concordat.

A Wellcome Trust Institutional Funding for Research Culture award, which started in May 2024 for a period of two years, aims to create a step-change through ten unique projects that centre around primary care initiatives; leadership transitions; precarities in career progression; and breaking barriers between disciplines and communities (Research Culture - University of Dundee).

All Schools are scheduled to have an Associate Dean whose remit is to develop and help implement practises that enable a supportive and inclusive culture starting September 2024 with the title Associate Dean for People Culture and Performance. Their remit will include all matters relating to EDI, staff development, and any other related discipline specific work. They will work closely with the Research Integrity Leads and are members of the School Executive Group, providing direct input into and connection to School Leadership. This role developed from Associate Deans positions with varying, but related titles and role profiles (Professional Culture, People and Culture and similar) in different Schools, who had similar remits but were not formally established. Recognition of the value these role holders brought to the schools has led to the decision to formally establish them in all schools, often also appointing these roles holders as Deputy Deans.

Monitoring and reporting

The RGPSC seeks assurance that policies and processes are sufficiently robust within individual broad areas of governance that underpin research culture and integrity. In this respect, the Sub-Committee received annual reports from the following areas in 2023-24: Health, Safety and Welfare Committee; Tayside Academic Science Centre Research Governance and Oversight Committee (clinical research); University Research Ethics Committee (UREC, non-clinical research ethics); and the Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee, all of which have representation on the Sub-Committee. UREC monitors the activity of the University's School Research Ethics Committees through reports presented to each meeting and annual reports.

Reporting of clinical trials is monitored and supported by a Clinical Research Governance Coordinator. In 2023-24 the University had 100% trial reporting compliance within mandatory timelines, with no trials in arrears.

The University is also a subscriber to the PubPeer online platform for post-publication peer review. The University therefore receives an alert each time a query is posted that is associated with the University of Dundee. Each of these alerts is interrogated to determine what follow-up actions are required. In the 2023/24 academic year five issues were highlighted and dealt with via this route, one of which was also reported via another route and resulted in a preliminary investigation (see section 3).

The University encourages PGRs to participate in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) run by Advance HE, with outcomes followed up by the Doctoral Academy. In the latest survey (March to May 2024) 90% of the 452 PGRs from the University who responded agreed that their understanding of research integrity had developed during their programme, three percentage points above the Global benchmark.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

The University is aware that succession planning will be needed to update or replace its current training provision and is taking part in the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) pilot of its 'An Introduction to Research Integrity' resource (running from April 2024 to March 2025), with participants including both academic and professional services staff and PGRs.

Following the introduction of a new Policy for the Use of Tissue within Clinical and Non-clinical Research Studies in 2022-23, two widely communicated open training sessions were held in 2023-24, one in-person, one online, to raise awareness and encourage engagement with the policy, including the use of case studies and scenarios. These sessions provided valuable feedback on the policy, resulting in updates that will be put to the first meeting of the RGPSC in 2024-25 for approval. Drop-in sessions are planned for the first quarter of 2025 to allow researchers to raise specific questions.

In recognition of the importance of ensuring research security in international collaborations, and the role of awareness raising and compliance in ensuring research integrity, the University developed a Sanctions and Export Controls policy, created a new post of Trusted Research & Compliance Manager (based in RIS), and set up a Trusted Research Working Group in the 2023-24 academic year. The Trusted Research & Compliance Manager will also be responsible for further developing the University's processes and guidance to ensure compliance with the Nagoya Protocol.

Discussion at RGPSC highlighted the need for guidance for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research, leading to the establishment of a working group, with its first meeting in October 2024. The need for working with others across the sector in this area such as UK CORI and UKRIO is well recognised and will be an important element of work by this group. The work will build on existing AI guidance for students (AI guidance for students and teaching - AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Teaching and Assessment will be complemented and updated with research-specific guidance).

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

The Research Integrity Leads network is widely appreciated and has led to productive exchanges between members to help educate less experienced RILs and provide helpful advice for handling queries.

The need for more bespoke training for new RILs has been identified and plans to address this are in place. Regular case study reviews for all RILs will be led by the University's RIL three times per year. As the University is a subscriber to UKRIO, all staff have access to their training and information material, which includes regular webinars or online training events that are advertised across the University.

A UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) local network lead was put in place after the University agreed to join the network in 23/24. This provides access to some UKRN tools

and training. To advance progress and to gain access to additional resource and tools, future plans include the appointment of an institutional UKRN Lead.

The University has agreed to appoint senior leaders in academic culture in all schools, in the form of Associated Deans of People, Culture and Performance (see above). The aim is to harmonise leadership in academic culture and integrity generally and research particularly, across schools at Associate Dean level and create more central support for this area.

The newly appointed Assistant Vice-Principal (AVP) for Research Culture and Environment will chair the Research People, Culture and Environment Sub-Committee, from October 2024. In addition, an Assistant Vice-Principal of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was appointed who has established processes to coordinate work in the EDI space across Schools more effectively. In combination with other ongoing initiatives, such as the Wellcome Trust-funded research culture programme, these appointments will provide focused leadership for the development of research culture initiatives in the future.

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

The University was alerted to a post by an anonymous contributor to PubPeer. The School of Life Sciences Research Integrity Group reviewed the paper and found that the post related to data interpretation and questions about methodology in a journal article but had no bearing on potential integrity breaches. However, their review led to the discovery of a mistake that had occurred during preparation of Figures for the publication. This was immediately reported to and corrected by the Journal.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

Please provide:

- a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).

- information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistleblowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).

- anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

The following University policies relate to research misconduct and whistleblowing:

- [Code of policy and procedures for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in research](#)

- [Whistleblowing policy](#)

The research misconduct policy was last reviewed in 2022 and (as agreed by RGPSC) will be a priority for review in 2024-25, with a focus on aligning the policy with the latest UKRIO procedure for the investigation of misconduct in research and the expected revision of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The University's [Dignity at work and study policy and procedures (harassment and bullying)](#) was updated in 2024.

The policy outlines procedures for investigating and resolving allegations of research misconduct and provides details on reporting potential research misconduct. The Research Integrity Leads in each School are responsible for promoting a culture of research integrity and provide an independent point of contact for staff and students within their School. They promote research integrity training and provide confidential, impartial advice on the responsible conduct of research and the reporting of potential research misconduct. RILs in all schools support each other and create a collective set of knowledge and expertise that provides resilience, with Research Integrity Network meetings creating a safe space for discussion. The University's overall RIL (the named senior member of staff with responsibility for overseeing research integrity) holds informal, approximately monthly drop-in sessions to allow all staff to confidentially ask any questions they may have or raise any issues confidentially.

Culture seminars were delivered as part of the School of Life Sciences Culture strategy [(SLS culture strategy).](#) These event are open to all in the University and create an open forum to discuss all elements of research culture and also provide an opportunity to seek ideas for other topics the research community would find useful.

There were no formal investigations of research misconduct at the University in 2023-24. There were four issues addressed informally following PubPeer alerts and one issue that resulted in a preliminary investigation but found no breach of research integrity. Overall lessons learned include that regular reminders to all staff about the availability of advice if concerns arise, illustrations of the processes in place and general awareness raising are critical. Engaging with external stakeholders such as the Scottish Research Integrity Network, UKRIO and others is highly valuable and ensures we are aware of best practise.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should

be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication	1	0	N/A	N/A
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (e.g. data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
*Other**				
Total:				

*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.