This Code of Good Practice is consistent with the commitments outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012).

Professional Standards

The Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life identified Seven Principles of Public Life, namely, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. University staff are expected to follow these principles. The following are of particular relevance to research:

Honesty

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 individuals in the University's employment must refrain from plagiarism, piracy or the fabrication of results and committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

Openness

While recognising the need for researchers to protect their own research interests in the process of planning their research and obtaining their results, the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public. Once results have been published, where appropriate, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to others, on request. In addition, where available, the University expects researchers to observe the standards of practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, scientific societies and other relevant professional bodies.

Leadership and co-operation in research groups

The culture and tone of procedures within any organisation must be set by individuals in authority. Within the University, it is the responsibility of the Principal, Deans of Schools, heads of academic units and senior staff to ensure that a climate is created which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good research practice and safely. Within a research group, responsibility lies with the group leader. These individuals should create a research environment of mutual co-operation, in which all members of a research team 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 and research students are provided. Research misconduct is least likely to arise in an environment where good research practice (e.g. documentation of results, peer review of research, regular discussion and seminars) is encouraged and where there is adequate supervision at all relevant levels. It is a responsibility of Deans of Schools and heads of academic units to convey clearly the standards and protocols for research in their relevant areas, and to ensure that adherence to those standards is a matter of course.
Documenting results and storing primary data

Throughout their work, researchers are required to keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed 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. For similar reasons, copies of data generated in the course of research must be kept securely within the University in paper or electronic form, as appropriate. The University expects such data to be securely held for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project, as required by several Research Councils.

Publishing results

It is usually a condition of research funding that the results are published in an appropriate form, usually papers in refereed journals. This has long been widely accepted as the best system for research results to be reviewed - through the refereeing process - and made available to the research community for verification or replication. The issue of authorship is important in the context of good research practice. In line with the general guidance given by the journal Nature, the University expects anyone listed as an author on a paper to accept personal responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the paper, and that they can identify their contributions to it. The practice of honorary authorship or ‘ghost writing’ is unacceptable.

Acknowledging the role of collaborators and other participants

In all aspects of research, 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.

The needs of new researchers

Researchers who are new to the research community may face particular difficulties. Responsibility for ensuring that students and other new researchers understand good research practice lies with all members of the community, but particularly with heads of academic units and team leaders.

Integrity in submitting research proposals

Principal Investigators should take all reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy and completeness of information which is contained in applications for funding. Applicants should not seek to identify or approach external assessors during the review process.

Integrity in reviewing research proposals and articles submitted for publication

Researchers who act in the capacity of reviewers for grant applications or research articles should treat all information provided to them in the strictest confidence. Where there is a conflict of interest (personal or institutional), or where an individual believes that they do not possess the relevant expertise to comment on a particular proposal or article, researchers should inform the funder or publisher of their concerns and, where appropriate, decline the invitation to act as a reviewer.
Integrity in managing research projects

Principal Investigators should take all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with sponsor, institutional, legal, ethical, safety and moral obligations in managing projects.

Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of interest, whether perceived or actual, arise when a researcher's judgement is, or may be, compromised by secondary interests such as financial gain or personal relationships (e.g. with funders, reviewers of grant applications or articles submitted for publication, industry, politicians, family). It is the responsibility of researchers, team leaders, heads of academic units and senior staff to identify and declare any conflict of interest, whether legal, ethical, moral, financial, personal or other nature, so that it does not become a complicating or actionable issue.

The University's Code of Practice on Conflict of Interest Policy is available at:

http://www.dundee.ac.uk/governance/policies/#tc

Research Misconduct

The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct and has a written procedure for investigating and resolving such allegations. Any member of the University who believes that an act of research misconduct has occurred or is occurring should notify the Dean of School. If, for any reason, this is not possible or appropriate, the individual should contact the University Secretary.

The University's Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Research is available at:

http://www.dundee.ac.uk/rgp/researchmisconductwhistleblowing/

Assistance with Interpretation of this Code of Practice

Researchers can seek advice on the interpretation and implementation of this code of practice from Research & Innovation Services and/or the Convenor of the University’s Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee (contact the Research Policy Manager (c.randall@dundee.ac.uk) in the first instance).