

**Academic Year 2022/23****Introduction**

1. The primary objective of the Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee is to ensure that the governance and policy context for the undertaking of research within the University is optimal. More specifically, the Sub-Committee is responsible for:
  - 1.1 reviewing governance processes and associated research and related policy extant at both University and the local level, and identifying need for improvement and development including the involvement of external stakeholders;
  - 1.2 establishing systems which accommodate the needs of good institutional governance, that are externally accountable, and which take into account the diversity of the institution's research activities;
  - 1.3 ensuring that institutional research governance processes are transparent and inclusive and are well communicated throughout the University;
  - 1.4 promoting "buy-in" by facilitating dialogue and dissemination of good and consistent practice across the Schools;
  - 1.5 attempting to minimize the burden of governance and policy demands on research staff commensurate with achieving high levels of internal and external confidence in the University's processes.
2. In 2022-23, the Sub-Committee was chaired by Professor Inke Nathke, Associate Dean for Professional Culture in the School of Life Sciences. Dr Beth Hannah acted as Deputy, chairing one meeting.
3. [Membership of the Sub-Committee](#) includes staff from the primary areas of research governance activity within the institution, including the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee, Tayside Medical Science Centre (TASC) Research Governance and Oversight Committee, the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and the Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee. The Sub-Committee met four times during academic year 2022-23 and reported to the University Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) with the minutes of its meetings included with RKEC papers.
4. This report summarises the actions and activities that support the University's commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and summarises annual reports from the areas of research governance across the University that report to the Sub-Committee.

*Concordat to Support Research Integrity:*

5. Consistent with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the actions and activities reported below aim to facilitate the development of a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers; this includes strengthening understanding of research integrity issues and developing the policy and procedural framework to support research integrity.

6. **Researcher Training:** The University provides online research integrity training, *Responsible and Ethical Practice in Research and Publication*, for both staff and students. The training is mandatory for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and their supervisors and was updated during the reporting period to include British Sign Language versions of the videos. Case studies are also provided to support Schools to run complementary in-person training. The resource was licensed to four other UK higher education institutions during 2022-23. An additional online resource provided by the Doctoral Academy for PGRs, the 'Thinking Forward' series, provides further information on research integrity and other concordat topics including open research and the career development of researchers along with tools to track progress. A seminar series, Curiosity in Culture, was also launched during the reporting period by the School of Life Sciences; open to all staff and students from across the University, the series covered a wide range of topics varying from harassment and bullying to open science with the aim of initiating discussions to help enhance the University's culture.
7. **Research Integrity Leads and Advisors:** At University-level, the named senior member of staff with responsibility for overseeing research integrity is the Convener of the Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee. Contact details for research integrity and whistleblowing are provided on the University's [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) webpages.
8. At School level, [Research Integrity Leads and Advisors](#) play a key role in promoting a culture of research integrity, with larger Schools having Research Integrity Groups (RIGs), which meet regularly. Leads and Advisors provide independent impartial advice on the responsible conduct of research to staff and students (including those who may be considering making an allegation of research misconduct), promote research integrity training, and raise awareness to ensure staff and students understand good research practice and how to raise concerns. All Leads and Advisors are members of the University's Research Integrity Network, an informal forum, convened to provide members with the opportunity to discuss emerging issues, seek advice in confidence and share best practice.
9. **Scottish Research Integrity Network (SRIN):** The University is a member of the Scottish Research Integrity Network, which it co-founded with the University of Edinburgh. The first in-person meeting of the network since the COVID pandemic was held in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Dundee in March 2023. The wide ranging agenda included: sessions on Trusted Research from the Research Collaboration Advice Team (which provides advice from government on the changing research security landscape), the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure and a co-author of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators report on Efficiency, Equity, Quality and Security in International Research; an update and workshop on research integrity training, led by the Chair of the SRIN Training Sub-Group (on which the University was represented); and a discussion on the work of the UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI) led by a member of Committee. The meeting highlighted the need for the University to respond more actively to the Trusted Research agenda in 2023-24.
10. **UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO):** The University subscribes to [UKRIO](#), an independent charity, which provides a range of support and resources aimed at promoting integrity and high ethical standards in research. These include regular webinars on a variety of topics, which are promoted to staff and students internally via the Research Integrity Leads and Advisors network and the Doctoral Academy. The Convenor of the Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee is the Chair of the UKRIO Advisory Council and a member of the Board of Trustees.
11. **Research Governance and Policy:** The University's [research governance and policy webpages](#) combine information on research governance and policy, including the Concordat to Support Research Integrity,

in one place. The pages include a [Policy Roadmap](#) to assist researchers in identifying the policies relevant to their research.

12. A new policy for the Use of Human Tissue within Clinical and Non-clinical Research Studies was fully developed and implemented in the reporting period; this continued work that had been paused during the pandemic due to other priorities. The policy aims to ensure that standards of best practice are applied to research that involves the collection, transport, storage, and use of human tissue, whether for clinical or non-clinical research; this includes registering human tissue under the oversight of the Tayside Biorepository. The Due Diligence policy, which aims to ensure good research practice and compliance with relevant laws and regulations by identifying the potential risks of working with partners in collaborative research, and implementing any necessary measures to mitigate the risks, was revised during the reporting period to ensure it was still fit for purpose.
13. The ethical review and approval of non-clinical research involving human participants proposed by staff and students is overseen by six School/joint Research Ethics Committees (SRECs), under the oversight of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). UREC completed a root and branch review of the University of Dundee Code of Practice for Non-Clinical Research Ethics on Human Participants in the reporting period, further details of which and other activities of UREC during the reporting period can be found in paragraphs 27 to 29.
14. **Nagoya Protocol:** The [Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization](#) lays down a legal framework for the implementation of fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of non-human genetic resources (genetic materials of plant, animal, microbial and other origin) and the traditional knowledge associated with them, with the aim of preventing bio-piracy. The University was audited (November 2022 to May 2023) by the former Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), on behalf of the Secretary of State, to assess compliance with the protocol. To inform the response a comprehensive internal survey and analysis was undertaken to determine whether any of the University's research conducted since 12th October 2015 involving non-human genetic material was in scope of the Nagoya Protocol regulations, along with the provision of detailed information on specific projects requested by the auditor. The University was found to be compliant with the regulations. The exercise increased the awareness and expertise of members of staff in RIS and will be used to inform the development of processes and guidance to ensure the University continues to remain compliant in the future in this complex but important area of research integrity.
15. **Postgraduate Research Experience Survey:** In the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey run by Advance HE (March to May 2023), 90% of students agreed that their understanding of 'research integrity' (e.g. rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has developed during their programme, 3% above the Global and Scottish benchmarks. This was in the context of a high response rate for the overall survey (51%, compared to an average response rate of 30% from the 105 participating institutions).

#### *Clinical Governance and Reporting of Clinical Trials Results*

16. The University is sponsor to a portfolio of clinical trials requiring registration and reporting on a publicly accessible database (EudraCT for trials running through the EU; Clinicaltrials.gov for the USA; and ISRCTN for UK studies) and has an ongoing target of 100% compliance with reporting requirements, supported by the appointment in the previous reporting period of a Clinical Research Governance Coordinator. During the 2022-23 reporting period, the University had 100% trial reporting compliance within mandatory timelines, with no trials in arrears.

### *Responsible use of research metrics*

17. The University of Dundee is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). During the reporting period, the University's commitment to the implementation of the DORA principles and the responsible use of research metrics, including the review of internal policies/procedures, was overseen by the DORA Working Group. This commitment was expressed through the development of publicly available statements of commitment to [DORA](#) and the [responsible use of metrics](#). To complement these, the Working Group developed and commissioned two hand-drawn animated videos to explain the principles of DORA and what is meant by the responsible use of metrics. These were launched to coincide with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DORA in May 2023, promoting the videos and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary events at the same time. Following review, amendments were made to the Policy to Govern the Publication of Research and the Policy to Govern the Management of Research Data to ensure they aligned with the principles of DORA.

### *Research Misconduct*

18. No formal investigations were undertaken by the University of Dundee during the reporting period.
19. The University's [Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#) was amended in October 2022 to reduce the minimum number of people required for an Investigating Committee to three and to expand the pool of senior academic officers of the University from whom the membership of the Committee can be appointed. This change increased the capacity to respond quickly should the need for a formal investigation arise, reducing reliance on the availability of Vice-Principals.

### *PubPeer*

20. The University subscribes to [PubPeer](#), an online platform for post-publication peer review where comments are posted (usually anonymously) on the quality and integrity of published papers (these usually, but not always, relate to potential problems with images from biological or medical research articles in journals). The owners of Pub Peer are clear that potential issues raised via Pub Peer do not constitute allegations of research misconduct. Regardless, all Pub Peer notifications are followed up by the School of Life Sciences Research Integrity Group, alerting Research Integrity Leads in other Schools or external authors, as necessary, with the aim of maintaining the integrity of the scientific record. In the 2022/23 academic year there were 11 issues highlighted and dealt with via this route (none of which resulted in an allegation of research misconduct).

### *Reporting to the Sub-Committee*

21. The Sub-Committee receives and considers annual reports from the various areas of research governance operating across the University to ensure that the appropriate policies and processes are in place. Reports (both written and oral) for academic year 2022/23 were received from the University Health, Safety and Welfare Committee; Tayside Medical Science Centre (TASC) Research Governance and Oversight Committee; University Research Ethics Committee; and the Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee. Brief summaries are provided below:
22. **Health, Safety and Welfare Committee:** As part of its remit, the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee covers health and safety issues arising from all research activities undertaken by the University and

reports to the People and Organisational Development Committee, which approves any new policies. Two new policies were introduced in the 2022-23 academic year. The Core Health and Safety Arrangements Policy consolidated nine existing policies, with the aim of streamlining and simplifying access to relevant policy information for Schools and directorates and is supported by a comprehensive handbook. The Events Management Policy replaces the previous public events policy, extending requirements from just public events to all events.

23. Following an inspection by the Department for Transport in March 2023 regarding the carriage of dangerous goods (which can include biological materials), a Dangerous Goods Security Advisor was appointed; a reinspection was scheduled for September 2023 and would be reported on in the 2023-24 report. The Sub-Committee approved the annual report.
24. **Tayside Medical Science Centre (TASC) Research Governance and Oversight Committee:** The TASC Research Governance and Oversight Committee provides oversight of the systems and processes that exist in clinical research to ensure that the required standards are met. The Committee is responsible for providing assurance to the NHS Tayside Care Governance Committee that clinical research is undertaken in a manner that shows evidence of accountability, responsibility, compliance with standards and management of risk. The Director of Research and Development, NHS Tayside, and the Chair of the TASC Research Governance and Oversight Committee, are members of the Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee.
25. TASC policies are reviewed every two years to ensure good clinical practice, with comments received from members prior to sign off from the Chair of the TASC Research Governance and Oversight Committee and the Director of Research and Development. During the reporting period four policies were reviewed and updated (Training for Personnel Involved in Clinical Research; Study Registration and Publication; Commercial Research; and Selection and Oversight of Vendors for Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products).
26. There were no audits or regulatory inspections of TASC by external bodies during the reporting period. However, the TASC Quality Assurance team undertook 22 on-site audits during the reporting period (one study specific; ten process and facility; two vendor/external (to UoD); and nine University of Dundee Clinical Research Laboratory) to ensure continued Good Clinical Practice compliance and to identify situations that may require quality improvements. One of the external audits was of another NHS Health Board/University's Quality Management System under a two-year reciprocal audit agreement whereby the Quality Assurance Managers from each institution audit each other's systems; the Sub-Committee highlighted this cooperation as an example of good practice. There were no major findings from any of the audits. The Sub-Committee approved the annual report.
27. **University Research Ethics Committee (UREC):** UREC is responsible for upholding the ethical standards of practice in non-clinical research involving human participants in the University in order to protect participants and researchers from harm, preserve participants' rights, and to provide reassurance to the public and funders regarding the ethical conduct of research at the University. It provides oversight, monitoring and guidance to the six School Research Ethics Committees (SRECs), three of which are joint committees covering more than one School, and acts as the first point of contact for the review and approval of proposals to access and use security-sensitive material for research purposes.
28. The School of Business was previously in a joint SREC with the former Schools of Social Sciences and Humanities. Following the formation of the new School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law, UREC approved the establishment of separate committees for the School of Business and the School of

Humanities, Social Sciences and Law from the 2022-23 academic year. The new arrangement has worked well to date.

29. Following a root and branch review of the University of Dundee Code of Practice for Non-Clinical Research Ethics on Human Participants it was replaced by the [Policy for non-clinical research involving human participants](#) in July 2023. The policy is intended to cover all research projects which will include the observation or collection of personal data from humans (including research involving the use of human tissue) but will not involve any clinical/clinically related activities. The Sub-Committee approved the annual report.
30. **Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee:** The Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee (WEAC) acts on behalf of the University Court in ensuring that the University meets its obligations under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (amended 2012) to discharge the functions of an Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body as required under that Act, and to determine policy on all matters relating to animals on University premises. The managers for the Schools of Life Sciences and Medicine both sit on the Committee, and the Deans and Associate Deans for Research are consulted regularly. The WEAC reports to Court after each of its quarterly meetings and was in the process of developing its own website with the aim of improving transparency around the use of animals in research at the University.
31. The WEAC oversees two key documents which are reviewed at least once a year by the Director of Biological Services and discussed and formally adopted by the Committee; the Committee's own terms of reference and the University Policy for the Use of Animals in Teaching and Research. A complete review of the Establishment's systems for assuring legal compliance was conducted in the reporting period and will be continually updated with best practice as it is developed. In this respect, WEAC members participate in a Scottish Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body Hub, which shares common experience and best practice and includes a member of the national Animals in Science Committee in its membership. A Home Office facilities audit took place in April 2023; the feedback report was very good with one minor noncompliance which has since been resolved. The Sub-Committee approved the annual report.

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