# Research Integrity Annual Statement
# 2018 – 2019

## University Research Integrity Committee

## Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in July 2012 and is a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and governance. The Concordat's fifth commitment requires a Research Integrity Annual Statement that:

1. Provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
2. Provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
3. Provides a high level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

## Introduction

The University Research Integrity Committee met three times in the academic year 2018/19; 16th October 2018, 22nd January 2019 and 30th April 2019.

The University Research Integrity Committee reports to the University Research and Innovation Committee and helps develop university-wide practices and policies.

Each school has its own Research Integrity Committee and Convenor to deal with research ethics at local level, primarily the approval of ethics applications. The work of each school committee is reported to the University Research Integrity Committee, including information on the number of applications submitted in total, as well as numbers approved, rejected or referred. The University Research Integrity Committee also manages a cross-university ethical approval process for ethics applications submitted across the University, or where researchers involved are from two or more schools.

During this year, Edinburgh Napier University joined over 80 UK universities as a subscriber to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

**Allegations of Research Misconduct**

There were three cases of alleged misconduct in 2018/19. All cases were investigated in accordance with the University's Misconduct policy and RCUK Policy, the Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct and the UKRIO Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

The cases have each been considered by the University Research Integrity Committee under informal investigation.

The first case concerned authorship. It was concluded as having no case to answer. No further action has been taken.

The second case concerned staff contribution to external student work. It was concluded that allegations had sufficient substance to justify a formal investigation, and was referred to Human Resources. The matter was considered in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure and disciplinary action was subsequently taken.

A final case concerned the process of gaining informed consent for research involving students to staff research. It was concluded that allegations had sufficient substance to justify a formal investigation, and was referred to Human Resources. The matter was considered in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure, and it was concluded there was no disciplinary case to answer. The case did not progress to a disciplinary hearing.

## Major Initiatives and Developments

In the academic year 2018/19, the following initiatives were addressed:

1. **Code of Practice**

Following discussions regarding authorship in 2017/2018, the committee agreed updated wording in the Code of Practice on Research Integrity in relation to authorship. The addition to the Code of Practice included greater clarity on how research teams should agree authorship prior to beginning projects.

In addition, the committee agreed updated wording to reflect updated Data Protection legislation, and updated hyperlinks to other documentation. Version 3.0 of the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#) was agreed and published in October 2018.

2. **GDPR**

The committee sought advice from the University Information Governance Manager on how guidance and policy for researchers could be amended to respond to GDPR.

It was agreed that students can process research data under the University's position as Data Controller, but would be required to sign an oath of confidentiality as a data handler. Research staff are already covered in contract by a similar oath. A number of training sessions regarding GDPR were organised to help researchers familiarise themselves with the legislation, and the university's internal procedures.

It was agreed that updated documentation would be considered and rolled out for researchers across 2019/2020.

3. **Research Staff Role Expectations**

Following related work at the University Research and Innovation Committee, the University Research Integrity Committee was asked to consider forming documentation for the responsibilities

and expectations of research staff. The role of this documentation would be to define roles, and help support the career development of researchers at a variety of levels.

Draft documentation was created to outline the behaviours expected from researchers at the University, which is to be submitted to the Research and Innovation Committee in 2019/2020. These documents would be used to help support a vibrant research culture where research integrity was embedded throughout our research.

### 4. Research Integrity and Public Engagement

An increase in public engagement activity at the university led the committee to consider potential issues needing ethical oversight. It was agreed that ethical governance should only be required for some public engagement activities, and that any solution should not discourage researchers.

The committee agreed a process in principle for dealing with ethical oversight of public engagement activity, and will adopt sector wide practice emerging in this area from guidance being developed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

### 5. Novi Survey

Discussions were held at the committee regarding the use of Novi Survey as the university's approved online survey software. Following questions over Novi's functionality, the committee agreed to consider the benefits of an alternate software. Consideration of alternative software will continue over 2019/2020.

### 6. Health and Safety

An adverse events procedure was created and approved by the committee, detailing procedures for PI's and University staff involved in non-clinical trials of investigational medicinal products (non-CTIMP).

Online travel risk assessment documentation has been updated, and training sessions regarding health and safety in fieldwork are being run across the University.

**Alisdair Stapley Clerk to the University Research Integrity Committee September 2019**