

**2020/21**



# Code of Good Research Practice

# UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON CODE OF GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

## 1) INTRODUCTION

The University of Wolverhampton's Code of Good Research Practice has been developed to articulate the importance of integrity and rigour in all research carried out at and in partnership with the University. The Code offers assistance to researchers in helping them to determine how to apply the baseline standards set by policies and regulations of the University, as well as by wider legal and contractual requirements and ethical norms, to the situations which face them in everyday practice of research.

## 2) SCOPE

The Code applies to all members of the University's academic and non-academic staff; research fellows, assistants and associates; research administrators; students undertaking research as part of a programme of study (taught or research); visiting researchers as well as all those with honorary positions conducting research within, or on behalf of the University of Wolverhampton.

This includes collaborative work conducted on and off campus, where the lead is not a University of Wolverhampton employee, or is clinical contract holder, consultant or contractor. The Code also covers any person(s) not affiliated with or acting on behalf of the University, but who use University premises for research. The Code applies to all research projects conducted, whether externally funded or not. It is applicable to all disciplines of research and applies to all stages of a research project, from beginning to end.

Throughout the document, the term 'researcher' is used to mean any individual carrying out research or other activity in the scope of this Code.

## 3) OUR VALUES

The University of Wolverhampton has core values; values which guide the decisions we make and how we engage with communities, our partners, staff and students both locally and globally.

**Collaborative** - We have a responsibility to collaborate and to be clear in the way we interact with each other, guiding the decisions we make

**Ambitious** – To be a progressive and influential sector leader enhancing economic impact and accelerating ambition across the entire University community.

**Respectful** – We will behave respectfully and ethically in all that we do. We will be inclusive and fair in our interaction with each other

**Effective** – We will act professionally and transparently when engaging with our communities locally and globally.

The University is committed to its values and maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity in its research and is committed to ensuring that all researchers should be able to pursue their work in an atmosphere free of prejudice and harassment.

## 4) GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All researchers at the University are expected to conduct research in accordance with the core elements of research integrity, namely honesty in all aspects of research, rigour in line with prevailing disciplinary standards and norms, transparency and open communication, and care and respect for all participants in and subjects of research.

Researchers at all levels must conduct a risk assessment of any planned research to determine:

- a) the ethical considerations that are relevant to the proposed research
- b) the potential for risks to the organisation, the research, or the health, safety and wellbeing of researchers and research participants; and
- c) what legal requirements govern the research.

Researchers must try to anticipate any risks that the proposed research might produce results that could be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful. Researchers must report any risks to, and seek guidance from, the appropriate person(s) in the University and take action to minimise those risks. In the first instance, researchers at the University must report anticipated risks to their Associate Dean (Research).

All research requires ethical review to facilitate the conduct of University activities in a manner that manages ethical risk appropriately, and which safeguards researchers.

In addition all Staff and Research Student projects must undergo full ethical review (and secure approval) before any data collection starts.

Those undertaking approved research should remain alert to emerging ethical issues throughout the life of the project; where issues are identified after project start, or where there are significant amendments to the design or execution of the project, re-approval may be required.

Researchers must familiarise themselves and act in accordance with both University policy and processes and with external requirements pertaining to the conduct of their work. They should observe the highest standards of research integrity and embed good practice in all aspects of their work. To facilitate such efforts, this document provides guidelines on good practice in research.

## **5) RESEARCH DESIGN**

When designing research projects, researchers must ensure that:

- a) the proposed research addresses pertinent question(s) and is designed either to add to existing knowledge/practice about the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it;
- b) the design of the study is appropriate for the question(s) being asked and addresses the most important potential sources of bias.
- c) the design and conduct of the study, including how data will be gathered, analysed and managed, are set out in detail in a pre-specified research plan or protocol;
- d) all necessary skills and experience will be available to carry out the proposed research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields;
- e) sufficient resources will be available to carry out the proposed research and that these resources meet all relevant standards;
- f) any issues relating to the above are resolved as far as possible prior to the start of the research.

Researchers must be prepared to make research designs available to peer reviewers and journal editors when submitting research reports for publication.

## **6) RESEARCH GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION**

Where available, the University expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, scientific and learned societies, and relevant professional bodies.

All researchers should be aware of the legal requirements, which regulate their work including health and safety legislation, data protection legislation and the Freedom of Information Act.

Detailed information is available from the Research Policy Unit's 'Research Policies, procedures and Guidelines' web site [www.wlv.ac.uk/researchpolicies](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/researchpolicies)

### **6.1) Funder requirements**

Research funders can reasonably expect the University to ensure that an adequate policy framework exists that promotes and promulgates good research practice, that emphasises integrity and rigour in research and that facilitates the development of a culture in which the following general principles can be understood and observed. Such expectations are set out in Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity which has been signed by the University's leading funders, including UKRI, HEFCE and the Wellcome Trust. Compliance with the Concordat is a condition of receipt of funding.

Many funders have published their own policies, including UKRI's Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct and the Wellcome Trust's Guidelines on Good Research Practice. A list of relevant policies and guidance from various funders is provided at the end of this document. Researchers should ensure that they are aware of and abide by all policies and guidelines that apply to their research.

Research Councils and charities fund for public benefit, and impose certain obligations and restrictions on the use of their funds, for example a requirement to disseminate research findings, and a proscription on funding research for the purpose of direct commercial or private gain. Researchers should be aware of these obligations and seek advice where required.

Researchers should report any significant changes in the direction of funded research to the funder or other relevant body. Best practice would be to discuss any change in direction of the research with the funder prior to its implementation. Most funding agreements will provide a mechanism for handling this process.

The Project Support Office can provide guidance on funder requirements and funding agreements.

#### **6.2) Adherence to legal and ethical guidelines**

All research carried out at the University must also comply with relevant legal, regulatory, professional and ethical requirements and standards. This includes submitting research proposals for ethics review where appropriate and abiding by the outcome of that review. Researchers must also ensure that research projects are approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.

Researchers should be familiar with guidance on University procedures for ethical assessment, review and approval found on the webpage [www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics)

For guidance on all legal matters, visit <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/>

#### **6.3) Overseas research**

When conducting, or collaborating in, research in other countries University researchers must comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly researchers based abroad who participate in UK hosted research projects must comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their own country.

#### **6.4) Insurance and indemnity**

University researchers must ensure that all research projects have sufficient arrangements for insurance and indemnity prior to the research being conducted. Guidance on University procedures for insurance may be found at <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/staff/services/finance/departmental-services/insurance--inventory/>

#### **6.5) Health and safety**

University researchers must ensure that all research carried out under their auspices, or for which they are responsible, fulfils all requirements of health and safety legislation and good practice. Researchers must bear in mind that certain types of research can present particular issues of health and safety. They must ensure that all research which involves potentially hazardous or harmful material or which might cause harm to the environment complies with all legal requirements and other applicable guidelines. Researchers should also consider any implications with respect to their own health & safety and that of any participants. The University's guidance on Health and Safety may be found at <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/staff/services/hsd/>

#### **6.6) Finance**

University researchers must ensure that the terms and conditions of any grant or contract related to the research are adhered to. The University issues guidelines regarding the purchasing or procurement of materials, equipment or other resources for research and the hiring of staff for research projects.

Researchers must comply with the University's guidelines regarding the use and management of finances relating to research projects. They must cooperate with any monitoring and audit of finances relating to research projects and report any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them. <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/wlv/pdf/UoW-Financial-Regulations.pdf>

## 7) ETHICAL PRACTICE

### 7.1) Ethical Principles

The University and researchers should adhere to the following principles, which set out the responsibilities and values relevant to research. While some elements may seem self-evident, and there is some overlap, these principles aim to encourage all involved in research to consider the wider consequences of their work and to engage critically with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges that are inherent in the conduct of high quality research, rather than treating codes of practice such as this as just another procedure to be followed.

The principles below are based on those of the [UK Research Integrity Office](#) and the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)

- Principle 1: Excellence
- Principle 2: Honesty
- Principle 3: Integrity
- Principle 4: Cooperation
- Principle 5: Accountability
- Principle 6: Training and Skills
- Principle 7: Care, Safety and Respect

Researchers should work to ensure that, throughout the lifecycle of their investigations, ethical issues relating to their research projects are identified and managed. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass areas where regulation and approval processes exist as well as areas where they do not. All appropriate licences, permissions and approvals must be in place before research starts and be updated as necessary if plans change.

### 7.2) Ethical Review, Approval & Practice Procedures

The University has developed a [Handbook for Ethical Approval & Practice Procedures](#)

The procedures for ethical review, approval and practice in this handbook have been designed to assist in the application and assessment of ethical approval requests, implementation of good conduct in research, and in the prevention of misconduct. This is to ensure that researchers conduct research of the highest quality.

The handbook is written for all researchers who are planning to carry out a research project, and staff involved in assessing applications for ethical approval. It may be used as a reference in the preparation of bid for grant funding.

### 7.3) Ethical Considerations

As part of ethical review researchers at all levels (UG, PGT, PGR & Staff) must identify whether the following ethical considerations are relevant to the proposed research, and projects including these factors must undergo full ethical approval:

- a) **Health & Social Care:** Any project involving the NHS or Social Care, its staff, patients, data or facilities; or individuals covered by the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- b) **Animals:** Any project involving animals.
- c) **Humans & Personal Data:** Any projects involving people, their data or tissues, particularly those which are high risk either due to their participant profile, design or methodology. Significant risks include:
  - i) Potentially vulnerable groups, e.g. children / minors, prisoners, those with cognitive impairment or those in unequal relationships;
  - ii) Requirement for co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access (e.g. students at school, members of a self-help group, nursing home residents);
  - iii) Requirement for participants to take part without full knowledge and consent (e.g. involving covert observation or deception of participants);

- iv) Sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, politics, illegal activities);
  - v) Administering drugs, food or other substances to participants;
  - vi) Obtaining tissue samples (including blood) from participants;
  - vii) Any invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedure;
  - viii) Prolonged or repetitive testing;
  - ix) The collection or processing of sensitive personal data (including from secondary sources) without explicit consent;
  - x) Sensitive personal data transfer to partners outside the EEA;
  - xi) Members of the public in a research capacity ('participant research');
  - xii) Any video or audio recording of people;
  - xiii) Offering financial recompense to participants beyond reasonable expenses.
- d) Online Research:** Any projects involving social media data or accessing Massive Multiple Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG):
- i) Researcher-generated data - Using social media as a platform for researchers access large groups of participants to gather information through a variety of standard research methods such as questionnaires, focus groups etc.
  - ii) User-generated content – harvesting naturally occurring data which includes:
    - content users create (e.g. a comment, Tweet, video, blog post etc)
    - data that records users' engagement with content and other users (e.g. likes, shares, retweets, followers, friends etc)
    - other user data that is collected by the social media company possibly without the user being aware e.g. location data.
- e) Sensitive Materials:** Any project involving:
- i) data covered by statute such as the Official Secrets Act and Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2013;
  - ii) highly controversial subjects, such as pornography, but does not necessarily involve human participants.
  - iii) viewing or dissemination of illegal materials.
- f) Environment:** Any project posing a significant potential risk to a physical environment or material culture. This includes but is not limited to levels of pollution greater than that permitted under UK law.
- g) Institutional Research:** Any institutional research including pedagogic research, educational research and all individual research and scholarship related to learning, teaching and assessment and the student experience, if the work could provide evidence for strategic decision making and enhancement.
- h) International:** Any project involving:
- i) travel to areas of acute political sensitivity;
  - ii) cultural, governance or legal frameworks which are unfamiliar to the individual undertaking the work or not equivalent to those used in the UK;
  - iii) requiring licences or permissions from international bodies.
- i) Safety of those involved:** Any project posing a significant risk to the safety and well-being - whether physical, psychological, emotional or reputational - of those involved, including participants and/or the project team. 'Significant risk' is defined as outside that which a normal person would be exposed to in daily life.
- j) Collaborator or Funding Source:** Any project where any of the following may apply:
- i) the funder or collaborator's ethos and values are at odds with the University's;
  - ii) funds or other project resources have been unethically obtained;
  - iii) the funder or collaborator has a poor ethical track record;
  - iv) the relationship could negatively affect the University's reputation;
  - v) the terms of the funding are prohibitive (e.g. in restricting publication or influencing research design).

- k) Conflicts of Interest:** Any project involving any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Approved projects require effective management of the interest to be put in place before work starts.
- l) Publicly available:** Any work that is intended to be placed in the public domain including social media.

#### **7.4) Research involving human participants**

All research involving human participants, human material and human data must comply with all the relevant legal and ethical requirements. Particular care must be taken with research involving vulnerable groups such as the very elderly, children and those suffering mental illness; and covert studies or other projects which do not involve full disclosure to participants

All research involving human participants or personal data carried out by University employees or on University premises must abide by University ethical guidance on [Recruiting Research Participants](#).

Researchers are required to consider the ethical risk of any procedure within a research project which involves human participation or personal data. Advice must be sought from the relevant Faculty ethics panel in case of doubt. Where the need for formal review is identified, reasonable and proportionate independent ethical review must be carried out prior to research work commencing.

The ethical issues that researchers encounter in their work may vary according to the type of research they undertake. As such, researchers should familiarise themselves with the ethical guidance relevant to their subject area or issued by their funder. Those undertaking social research involving human participants may find it particularly useful to consult the ESRC's Framework for Research Ethics.

#### **7.5) Safeguarding & Prevent**

Researchers should familiarise themselves with the University Safeguarding and Prevent statement

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/staff/media/departments/office-of-the-vice-chancellor/documents/Safeguarding-and-prevent-statement-April-2019.pdf>

##### **a) Safeguarding**

The University has a duty, both in law and as a responsible organisation, to take reasonable care of children and adults at risk coming onto its premises or otherwise engaging with the university. The University encounters children and adults at risk in a variety of settings, including through its research activities. The term safeguarding is used to define actions taken to protect vulnerable groups from harm.

Everyone who comes into contact with children/adults at risk (and their families) has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all researchers should make sure their approach is centred on the vulnerable individual. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child/adult at risk.

Researchers should seek to manage effectively the risks associated with activities involving children and adults at risk through:

- Completing a risk assessment to identify risks and means of reducing or eliminating these;
- Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis;
- Ensuring that the appropriate DBS checks, or other appropriate screening checks are conducted, depending on eligibility, for any individuals conducting research which involves working with children or adults at risk.

Concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk could arise in a variety of ways and in a range of situations. For example, a child/ adult at risk may report or show signs of abuse, someone may hint that a child/adult at risk is or has been subject to harm, or that a colleague is an abuser, or someone may witness abuse.

Where a researcher suspects or is informed that a child or adult at risk has been, is being, or could be harmed it is not the responsibility of that person to decide whether abuse has taken place. Concerns should be shared in the first instance with the researcher's line manager/supervisor as outlined in the Safeguarding and Prevent statement.

**b) The Prevent Duty**

Prevent is part of the Government counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST and aims to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent focuses on all forms of terrorism and operates in a 'pre-criminal' space'. The Prevent strategy is focused on providing support and re-direction to individuals at risk of, or in the process of being groomed /radicalised into terrorist activity before any crime is committed.

Radicalisation is comparable to other forms of exploitation; it is a safeguarding issue that researchers working in the education sector must be aware of. Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group adopts increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

The Prevent Duty 2015 requires us to ensure that all researchers understand the risk of radicalisation and how to seek appropriate advice and support. Researchers may interact with people who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and must be able to identify early signs of an individual being drawn into radicalisation. Researchers should be able to recognise key signs of radicalisation and be confident in referring individuals to the organisational safeguarding lead or the police thus enabling them to receive the support and intervention they require.

**7.6) Health and Social Care Research**

The Health Research Authority's (HRA) [UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research \(2017\)](#) sets out the broad principles of good research governance in the research areas of health and social care. The Policy Framework applies to all research that relates to the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Health.

It includes clinical and non-clinical research; research undertaken by NHS or social care staff using the resources of health and social care organisations; and any research undertaken by industry, charities, research councils and universities within the health and social care systems that might have an impact on the quality of those services.

**a) NHS Research**

Most research involving NHS patients, staff or facilities will come under the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care and will require review by a National Research Ethics Service (NRES) Committee. Some other research will also require NRES review for legal and policy reasons.

The NHS Health Research Authority (HRA) protects and promotes the interests of patients and the public in health and social care research. <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/>. Details of when NRES review is needed are provided on the HRA website. In some cases it may be also appropriate to seek the views of relevant patient groups.

**b) Institutional Sponsorship**

Research which falls within the scope of the UK Policy Framework requires a research sponsor; the Sponsor is a company, institution or organisation which takes responsibility for the quality and governance of the project. The UK Policy Framework states that a Sponsor is 'The organisation or partnership that takes on overall responsibility for proportionate, effective arrangements being in place to set up, run and report a research project'.

Formal confirmation from the Sponsor must be obtained prior to an application for the permissions and approvals for health and social care / community care research in the UK using the Integrated Research

Application System (IRAS). The [Institutional Sponsorship Policy - Health and Social Care Research](#) sets out the policy and procedure that researchers must follow when making an IRAS application.

### c) Good Clinical Practice (GCP)

The University expects that all clinical research involving human participants is undertaken in line with the principles of GCP. [Good Clinical Practice](#) (GCP) is an international ethical and scientific quality standard for the design and conduct of clinical research involving humans. GCP is a set of core principles, which applies to all clinical investigations that could affect the safety and wellbeing of human participants. GCP is internationally recognised as best practice and compliance (including up to date training) and is a legal obligation in the UK/Europe for all trials of investigational medicinal products. GCP was developed by the regulatory authorities represented in the Tripartite International Conference on Harmonisation and provides international assurance that: (i) Data and reported results of clinical investigations are credible and accurate, and; (ii) The rights, safety and confidentiality of participants in clinical research are respected and protected.

### 7.7) Research involving human tissue

All activity involving the acquisition, storage and use of human tissue (including cells, serum, saliva etc) as defined by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) under relevant material for the purposes of research is covered by a number of different pieces of legislation all of which researchers must fully comply with. This includes but is not limited to the Human Tissue Act 2004, NHS Act 2006 and Mental Capacity Act 2005

Researchers must not use their own biological or personal material in their research.

[The University Policy for Use of Human Tissue in Research](#) aligns with the requirements of the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). The aim of this Policy is to ensure University compliance with the Human Tissue Act 2004 and ethical considerations in relation to research using human tissue.

### 7.8) Research involving animals

The University and its funders require that research involving animals should have been subject to the following (through the appropriate bodies):

- Ethical Review Process
- Home Office licence application.

Researchers are required by law to consider the opportunities for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animal involvement in research – the principle of "The Three Rs". The University recommends that researchers refer to the relevant national guidelines on the appropriate and ethical use of animals in research. Publications using data acquired from animal research must follow the principles of the ARRIVE Guideline (Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments.)

All animal research is overseen by the University Life Sciences Ethics Committee and in compliance with University's Policy on the Use of Animals in Scientific Research [in development]. In accordance with the Concordat on the Declaration of Openness in Animal Research, the University supports the goal of appropriate openness and transparency with respect to our use of animals.

### 7.9) The Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) is an international agreement establishing a legal framework to govern access to genetic material including the associated traditional knowledge, and ensure that benefits arising from the use of these resources are shared fairly.

Researchers are required by law to undertake due diligence when using genetic resources, and should refer to University [guidance on complying with the Nagoya Protocol](#).

### 7.10) Research misuse, non-proliferation and dual-use research

Researchers must consider any risks that their research will generate outcomes that could be misused for harmful purposes both when setting up research collaborations, communicating results and teaching

(particularly teaching postgraduates in [ATAS](#) (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) regulated subject areas). Where risks exist, they must seek advice and take active steps to minimise them.

Researchers must also comply with all legal requirements relating to non-proliferation and dual-use, particularly export controls. Export controls apply to the transfer (by any means) of goods, technology, software and/or knowledge from the UK to a destination outside the UK that may be used for military purposes or for Weapons of Mass Destruction purposes.

## **8) RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

All individuals involved in research at Wolverhampton are expected to observe the highest standards of integrity, honesty and professionalism in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of others. This applies to the whole range of research work including, but not limited to: designing studies and experiments; generating, recording, archiving, analysing and interpreting data; sharing data and materials; applying for funding; presenting and publishing results; training new researchers, staff and students; and peer reviewing the work of other researchers. The direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others should be acknowledged.

The University expects research results to be checked for accuracy and consistency by the researchers responsible for them before being made public. Researchers must be able to explain and justify how results were reached.

The University is committed to upholding the commitments outlined in Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity. This requires those involved in research to abide by national, European and international standards of research integrity and to embed good practice in every aspect of their work. All researchers should be aware of their responsibilities under the Concordat. A summary of the standards to which researchers are expected to adhere is provided in the University's Statement on Research Integrity.

Further guidance on the University's expectations for integrity in research is provided by the University [Research Integrity website](#).

### **8.1) Research Misconduct**

Allegations of misconduct in research are rare but the University takes them very seriously. The University is committed to ensuring that allegations of misconduct in research are investigated with all possible thoroughness and vigour.

All members of the University, and individuals permitted to work in University institutions, have a responsibility to report any incident of misconduct, whether this has been witnessed, or is suspected.

### **8.2) Definitions of Research Misconduct**

In the context of these procedures, misconduct is taken to mean:

- a) **Fabrication:** This includes the creation of false data or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent.
- b) **Falsification:** This includes the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery and/or consents.
- c) **Plagiarism:** This includes the general misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission.
- d) **Misrepresentation:** Including:
  - i) Misrepresentation of data, for example suppression of relevant findings and/or data, or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence, presenting a flawed interpretation of data;
  - ii) Undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication;
  - iii) Misrepresentation of interests, including failure to declare material interests either of the researcher or of the funders of the research;
  - iv) Misrepresentation of qualifications and/or experience, including claiming or implying

- qualification or experience which are not held;
  - v) Misrepresentation of involvement, such as inappropriate claims to authorship and/or attribution of work where there has been no significant contribution, or the denial of authorship where an author has made a significant contribution.
- e) **Mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data &/or primary materials:** Including failure to:
- i) keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed and the results obtained, including interim results;
  - ii) hold records securely in paper or electronic form;
  - iii) make relevant primary data and research evidence accessible to others for reasonable periods after completion of the research;
  - iv) manage data according to the research funder's data policy and all relevant legislation;
  - v) wherever possible, deposit data permanently within a national collection.
- f) **Breach of duty of care**, which involves deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence:
- i) disclosing improperly the identity of individuals or groups involved in research without their consent, or other breach of confidentiality
  - ii) placing any of those involved in research in danger, whether as Respondents, participants or associated individuals, without their prior consent, and without appropriate safeguards even with consent; this includes reputational danger where that can be anticipated;
  - iii) not taking all reasonable care to ensure that the risks and dangers, the broad objectives and the sponsors of the research are known to participants or their legal representatives, to ensure appropriate informed consent is obtained properly, explicitly and transparently;
  - iv) not observing legal and reasonable ethical requirements or obligations of care for animal subjects, human organs or tissue used in research, or protection of the environment;
  - v) improper conduct in peer review of research proposals or results (including manuscripts submitted for publication); this includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence; misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for peer review purposes.
- g) **Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct:** failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers, or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding. Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties through the use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements

The University's approach to managing these issues relating to members of staff is described in detail in the University's Procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research (staff) [https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/research/documents/Procedures-for-dealing-with-allegations-of-misconduct-in-research-\(staff\)-\(2019-20\).docx](https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/research/documents/Procedures-for-dealing-with-allegations-of-misconduct-in-research-(staff)-(2019-20).docx).

The procedures relating to discipline of students for misconduct in the prosecution of research are set out in the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

### **8.3) Conflict of interest**

Researchers should declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest, both financial and professional. Section 4: Staff Interests of the [University's Transparency Policy](#) contains further information on the declaration of personal interests.

Researchers should ensure that they abide by any conflict of interest requirements of funders or that are otherwise relevant to their research.

## **9) OPEN RESEARCH**

Open Research refers to the principle that all knowledge should be open and accessible as early as possible in the discovery process. This includes results, data, protocols, published outputs and other aspects of the research lifecycle. Open Research is collaborative, transparent, reproducible and publicly available and at its core is the principle that research brings the most benefits the more widely it is shared.

Open Research is being increasingly recognised in the policies of research funders, organisations and publishers as a way to accelerate the progress and impact of research by making the process more transparent, collaborative and efficient. This is articulated in the University's [Open Research Statement](#).

Whilst recognising the need for researchers to protect their own intellectual property rights (IPR), the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public. The aim in disseminating charity-funded or University research is to increase knowledge and understanding: its purpose should not be primarily to seek publicity for the researcher, for the University or for the funder.

The University is committed to disseminating research and scholarship as widely as possible, whilst affirming academic freedom to choose the location and nature of publication. In keeping with this commitment, the University supports its staff in making their research available through Open Access. Where research funders include Open Access requirements as a condition of grant funding, researchers are expected to ensure that they comply with such requirements. Researchers should familiarise themselves with the University's [Open Access Publications Policy](#).

All researchers must ensure all scholarly outputs are recorded in Elements, the University Current Research Information System (CRIS), which in turn ensures that research publications are made available online via WIRE, the University's institutional repository.

Once results have been published, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, on request, provided that this is consistent with any ethical approvals and consents which cover the data and materials, confidentiality considerations, and any intellectual property rights in them. Many funders will have data sharing policies that must be abided by where appropriate. Funders recognise that publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of any intellectual property arising from the research. Any such periods of delay in publication should be kept to a minimum and this should normally be no more than three months.

Researchers should be especially careful when discussing work that is not complete or has not been published, particularly if it has not undergone peer review.

## **10) LEADERSHIP AND CO-OPERATION**

Heads of institutions and their senior colleagues should ensure that a research climate of mutual co-operation is created in which all members of a research team are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of ideas is fostered.

Efforts should also be made to foster an environment where research is conducted in accordance with good research practice and to ensure that all those involved in research are made aware of these guidelines and related policies and guidelines. Senior researchers should make particular efforts to help new members of the research community understand and adopt best practice. Within a research group, responsibility to ensure that good research practice is maintained throughout the research process ultimately lies with the group leader.

## **11) SUPERVISION**

All members of staff engaged in supervision are required to ensure that they achieve and maintain expertise in supervision practice. All supervisors are expected to be aware of current University regulations governing research degrees, to be aware of the requirements of all relevant research policies, procedures and guidelines.

The University also provides guidance for supervisors and the [Research Supervisor Handbook](#) clearly sets out supervisor responsibilities.

The University wishes to ensure that appropriate training and direction of research and supervision of researchers is available. Training in supervisory skills is provided by the Doctoral College as part of the University's staff development programme.

All supervisors should ensure that their supervisees receive appropriate and timely training in research design, regulatory and ethical approval and consent, equipment use, confidentiality, data management, record keeping, data protection, and in the protection of IP.

Supervisors should supervise all stages of the research process, including outlining or drawing up a hypothesis, preparing applications for funding, the design of experimental or research protocols, data recording and data analysis, and writing the thesis.

## **12) TRAINING**

The University offers many courses to enable students and new researchers to understand and adopt best practice in research as quickly as possible. Supervisors should encourage students and colleagues to attend relevant courses as part of their overall career development. Lists of courses are available on the [Doctoral College web site](#). Researchers should also be aware of training offered locally by their School or Department.

## **13) PRIMARY DATA, SAMPLES AND EQUIPMENT**

### **13.1) Ownership and responsibilities**

There should be clarity at the outset of the research as to the ownership and use of, where relevant:

- Data and samples used or created in the course of the research
- The results of the research
- Patient questionnaires
- Equipment paid for by funders.

The responsibilities and procedures for the storage and disposal of data and samples (including compliance with the requirements of any ethics committee) should be made clear at the commencement of any project. Any research collaboration agreement relating to the research should contain clauses describing any necessary arrangements.

### **13.2) Research data**

Research data should be generated using sound techniques and processes and accurately recorded in accordance with good research practices. When collecting personal data, researchers must comply with data protection legislation. This will include explaining to any participants in their research what they will be doing with their data, who will have access to it, and who (if anyone) they intend to pass it to outside the University. This is doubly important to researchers who intend to share the personal data of their research participants with any collaborators or funders based outside of the EEA, in which case the consent of the research participants is usually required for the transfer to be deemed lawful.

All research data must be managed and curated effectively throughout its lifecycle to ensure integrity, security and quality and where possible to support new research and research data sharing. Data stored locally on a computer should be backed-up. Electronic files containing personal data should be encrypted or password protected and access to them should be limited to as few people as possible. It is of paramount importance that confidentiality, where required, is maintained. Researchers should familiarise themselves with the University's [Research Data Management Guidance](#) and [Research Data Management Policy](#).

Retention periods for research data will vary according to specific contractual requirements and the nature and sensitivity of the research. Most funders consider a minimum of ten years after the completion of a project to be an appropriate period. However, research based on clinical samples or relating to public health may require longer storage to allow for long-term follow-up to occur. Researchers should adhere to guidance provided by funding bodies, professional guidance, as well as the [University document retention schedule](#).

### **13.3) Record keeping**

Researchers should keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and the approvals granted during the research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about the conduct of the research, the results obtained, or inventorship on patentable inventions.

## **14) DISSEMINATION, PUBLICATION OF RESULTS & AUTHORSHIP**

### **14.1) Dissemination & Publication**

The University encourages the publication of and dissemination of results of high quality research but believes that researchers must do this responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of any such dissemination in the wider media. Dissemination will normally be a requirement of research council and charity funding.

Arrangements and responsibilities for the publication of results should be taken into account when planning a study and should ideally be agreed by all investigators at the outset. These should be revisited where role and contributions change over the life cycle of the study. Such discussions might include authorship, authorisation for the content of papers, and the intended place of publication.

Researchers should take into account the following guidance when publishing or disseminating their research or research findings including any plans they may have to publish or publicise research at conferences or on web sites:

- a) Funding sources should normally be acknowledged in any publication or publicity.
- b) Results of research should be published in an appropriate form.
- c) Anyone listed as an author on a paper should accept responsibility for ensuring that he or she is familiar with the contents of the paper and can identify his or her contribution to it. Honorary authorship is not good practice.
- d) The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research should be both specified and properly acknowledged.
- e) Researchers should make every effort to ensure that research is disseminated in a responsible manner, in such a way that results are not overstated. The Research Communications team can provide advice on research dissemination.
- f) Similarly, in accordance with the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, where research has been conducted using animal models, this should be clearly stated in press materials and news stories.

Examples of good publication practice can be found in the [Committee on Publication Ethics guidelines](#), the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Recommendations](#) and on the [Nature website](#).

## **14.2) Publicity**

Publicity may also be important to industrial funders and to fund-raising charities and is increasingly important to the University itself. Advice on press releases and publicity can be obtained from External Relations.

## **14.3) Academic Authorship**

The University has set out principles for determining authorship of publications in the [Academic Authorship Policy](#). The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- a) Researchers who participate in investigation and other academic activities are equitably acknowledged and their contributions are fairly represented;
- b) The work of others is cited and referenced appropriately and acknowledgement of authorship is given to those making a substantial scholarly contribution to the output;
- c) The criteria for attribution of authorship of all research outputs is clarified and appropriate steps to confirm authorship are taken prior to any submission of research outputs for publication; and
- d) The University complies with all relevant external guidelines relating to the attribution of authorship.

## **14.4) Peer Review**

Peer review is an important part of good practice in the publication and dissemination of research findings. Wherever possible, research undertaken by University staff should undergo peer review prior to it being published, publicised or disseminated. If research is placed in the public domain before peer review has been undertaken, it is good practice to make this clear in any publicity.

Researchers who act as peer reviewers should do so accurately and honestly. They should maintain confidentiality and not retain or copy and material submitted to them for peer review. They should not make use of research or research findings from a paper under review without the express permission of the author(s) and should not allow others to do so.

## **15) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

The University, which has charitable status, carries out research and the research councils and charities fund research for public benefit and not for direct commercial or private gain. Public benefit may arise from education, i.e. the gain of knowledge that is placed in the public domain, or in the case of biomedical research improvement in the treatment or care of patients or in the prevention or cure of diseases.

Although the University cannot carry out research solely for the purpose of commercial gain, commercial benefit from the exploitation of the results of research may, subject to expectations of funders, accrue to their inventor(s), the University and, by agreement, to the funder of the research. Commercialisation may also be the most effective means of disseminating research results and accruing public benefit.

Researchers must be mindful that the public disclosure of inventions or potentially patentable ideas before registration may prejudice the opportunity to exploit fully the fruits of such research.

Additionally, where the research is funded or part-funded by a third party, in particular for industrially sponsored research, the contractual agreement associated with the funding must be adhered to.

Once any IP arising from their research programme has been protected, and the results have been published, the University expects researchers to be able to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, on request. However, such release of data and materials should be consistent with ethical principles governing consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and should respect any intellectual property rights that arise either as a matter of general legal principles or specifically as a result of a research contract.

Researchers should familiarise themselves with the University's [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

## **16) COLLABORATION**

Research is increasingly collaborative, involving individuals from different disciplines and from institutions within and beyond the UK. In establishing research collaborations researchers should be mindful of the University's policies and guidelines, as well as funder, legal and regulatory requirements, and ensure that research partners and their employing institutions are able to meet the required standards of research conduct. There needs to be clear agreement on and articulation of the standards and frameworks that will apply to collaborative work.

This is particularly important in relation to the provenance of intellectual ideas and ownership of research outcomes as well as the specific conditions under which these may be shared. All parties should be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities within the collaboration, which should be set out in any formal collaboration agreement.

Guidance on research integrity in collaborative research is provided by the [Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations](#).

## **17) ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), Guidelines on Good Research Practice
- AHRC, Research Funding Guide
- BBSRC, Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice EPSRC, Funding Guide
- ESRC, Framework for Research Ethics ESRC, Research Funding Guide
- MRC, Good Research Practice: Principles and Guidelines
- NERC, Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook
- UKRI, Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct
- Universities UK, The Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- Wellcome Trust, Guidelines on good research practice

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