

Code on Good Research Practice

PREAMBLE

The University of Surrey aims to be an honest and ethical institution in the way in which it conducts its business and discharges its responsibilities. To that end, the University seeks to promote an organisational culture in which high standards of personal conduct are encouraged and expected; an organisation which is opposed to academic misconduct or fraud; and an organisation which will take appropriate steps to deal fairly but firmly in instances where misconduct or fraud is discovered.

PRINCIPLES

1.1 Statement of Principles

The Code of Practice ("the Code") sets out the standards of performance and conduct expected of all those engaged in research ("the researcher") in the University of Surrey ("the University") based on the following principles:

1.1.1 Research is defined as the pursuit and advancement of knowledge.

1.1.2 Researchers should adopt the following principles in all aspects of their research:

- i. demonstrate integrity, professionalism and self-regulation;
- ii. inform themselves of developments in relevant subjects and disciplines, including their methodologies;
- iii. observe fairness and equity;
- iv. avoid, or declare, conflicts of interest;
- v. ensure the health and safety of those associated with research;
- vi. observe all legal and ethical requirements laid down by the University and other relevant bodies properly laying down such requirements.

1.1.3 It is the expectation that research methods and results should, subject to appropriate confidentiality in relation to personal or commercially protected information, be open to scrutiny and debate.

1.2 Observance of the Code

All staff and students engaged in research must familiarise themselves with the Code and ensure that its provisions are observed. Heads of School and other senior staff have a duty to seek to ensure compliance with the Code within their areas of responsibility. The University will draw attention to the Code in its induction processes for newly appointed staff and students. Supervisors of students engaged in research will seek to ensure compliance with the Code on the part of such students.

1.3 Breach of the Code

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Code may be grounds for action to be taken by the University, including its disciplinary procedures.

1.4 Advice

Where a researcher is in doubt about the applicability of the provisions of the Code, or about the appropriate course of action to be adopted in relation to it, advice should be sought from the appropriate Head of School in the first instance. Ultimate responsibility for interpretation of the Code resides with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise).

2. GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

2.1 Good research practice includes the following:

- fundamentals of research work such as: maintaining professional standards; documenting results; questioning one's own findings; attributing and acknowledging appropriately and honestly the work of others;
- leadership and co-operation in research groups;
- taking into account the needs of new researchers;
- securing and storing primary data.

2.2 These elements to ensure good research practice are expanded on in this Code and attention is drawn to the related University documents:

- *Ethical Guidelines for Teaching and Research, Advisory Committee on Ethics*
- *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*
- *School Handbooks on Research*
- *Code of Practice in Relation to the Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property Rights*
- *Consultancy and Other Services Rendered – a Guide for Staff*
- *University Health and Safety Policy*

2.3 Health and Safety

All research must be carried out in a manner that complies with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Safety Regulations approved under this Act. School and/or Departmental Safety policies and handbooks will detail local safety rules which must be obeyed. Advice on health and safety issues can be obtained from either the School/Departmental Safety Advisers or the University Safety Office.

2.4 Purchasing and Expenditure for Research

Purchasing and expenditure of funds should take place in accordance with the terms and conditions of any grant or contract held for the research and the University's Financial Regulations. Advice on compliance with the Financial Regulations should be sought from the Director of Finance or the Head of Procurement and Contracts as appropriate.

2.5 Professional Standards

It is important that a culture of professionalism towards research is fostered and maintained in the University. At the heart of all research, regardless of discipline, is the need for researchers to adopt and promote in others high standards of personal conduct, and to be honest and ethical with regard to their own actions, and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. The adoption of a professional approach applies to the whole range of research work, including methodological and experimental design, the generation and analysis of data, the publication of results, and the appropriate acknowledgement of the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

2.6 Leadership

The creation of a sound research climate is essential to good research practice. Within a research group, responsibility for creating such a climate lies with the group leader. Group leaders and other senior researchers should create a research environment of mutual co-operation, in which all researchers 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 are provided.

2.7 Data Collection and Retention

- i. Researchers must abide by the University's *Code of Practice in Relation to the Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property Rights*.
- ii. Research data must be recorded accurately (where appropriate, signed and dated by the Investigator) and in a durable and auditable form, with appropriate references so that it can be readily recovered.
- iii. Research data must normally be retained intact for a period of at least five years from the date of any publication which is based upon it. Researchers should be aware that specific professional bodies and research councils may require a longer period of data retention.
- iv. It is the duty of the principal investigator in any research project to comply with the regulations of the current Data Protection Act in force from time to time and to ensure that copyright, a third party's intellectual property rights and confidentiality are not breached. Advice on compliance with the Data Protection Act should be sought from the University's Data Protection Officer, Business Support Services.
- v. Specific arrangements should be made to protect the security of research data where there is a contractual or ethical requirement to do so.
- vi. In general, academic enquiry and debate require openness but confidentiality provisions relating to publication may apply in circumstances where the University or the researcher has made or given confidentiality undertakings to third parties or confidentiality is required to protect intellectual property rights. It is the obligation of the researcher to ascertain whether confidentiality provisions apply and of the Head of School to inform researchers of their obligations with respect to these provisions.

2.8 Publications

- i. Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University.
- ii. A publication must report research and research findings accurately.
- iii. A publication must contain acknowledgement to all who have made a significant contribution to the relevant research, who are not authors.
- iv. Any person who has participated in a substantial way in conceiving, executing or interpreting a significant part of the relevant research should be given the opportunity to be included as an author of a publication derived from that research.
- v. Any person who has not participated in a substantial way in conceiving, executing or interpreting a significant part of the relevant research should not be included as an author of a publication derived from that research.

2.9 Conflicts of Interest

- i. A researcher must make full disclosure of any potential or actual conflict of interest in research. Conflict of interest includes but is not restricted to personal or close family affiliation to or financial involvement with any organisation sponsoring or providing financial support for a project undertaken by a researcher.
- ii. Disclosure of a personal conflict of interest in research must be made to the Head of School as soon as reasonably possible, and also via the annual completion of the *Declaration of Interest Form*.

2.10 Submitting Proposals

In applications for funding, Principal Investigators should take all reasonable measures to ensure accuracy of information and compliance with the University's required procedures.

3. ETHICAL AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Any special standards of work performance and ethical conduct imposed by law, Research Councils, other funders of research, professional or statutory bodies or by the University in relation to particular categories of research are deemed to be included in this Code in its application to staff and students engaged in that research in the University. In

addition, compliance with the University's Advisory Committee on Ethics' Ethical Guidelines for Teaching and Research and the guidelines of other appropriate external Ethical Committees is also essential.

3.2 Experimentation on animals is strictly controlled by the Home Office and can only be conducted by licensees in accordance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act of 1986. Applicants for Personal Licenses must be approved by the University's Ethical Review Process Committee.

4. MISCONDUCT AND ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS OF MISCONDUCT

4.1 The University defines academic misconduct or academic fraud as committing an act whereby the researcher knowingly and deliberately seeks to corrupt, misrepresent or to falsify the outcomes of academic and/or professional study, scholarship and/or research. The University reserves the right to identify and define different forms of academic misconduct or fraud from time to time: however, as they relate to research, they are generally taken by the University to include:

(i) misrepresentation of the work or expressed thoughts of others as one's own without permission or acknowledgement (plagiarism);

(ii) fabrication of:

- the results of work which he/she falsely claims to have undertaken (for example, experiments, interviews, observations or other forms of research and investigation);
- results which he or she has not obtained;
- results by omission from analysis and publication of selected components of a data set;
- research dissemination (for example: false claims of publication of work).

(iii) deliberate exploitation of ideas and concepts of others without acknowledgement;

(iv) cheating or otherwise disclosing information with the intent of gaining for oneself or for another an unfair advantage;

(v) intentional damage to, or removal of, the research-related property of another;

(vi) intentional non-compliance with the terms and conditions governing the award of external funding for research or with the University's policies and procedures relating to research, including accounting requirements, ethics, and health and safety regulations.

4.2 Staff and students have a duty to report misconduct in the prosecution of research, where they have good reason to believe it is occurring. Persons should feel able to report misconduct in good faith without fear of victimisation or reprisal.

4.3 Ordinarily reports of suspected misconduct should be reported to the Head of School in the first instance. Alternatively reports may be made initially to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) or, in accordance with the University's *Public Disclosure Policy and Framework*, to an "authorised recipient"; namely, one of the following:

- Vice-Chancellor
- University Secretary and Registrar
- Chairman of Council.

In cases where misconduct relates to students' work this may be brought in the first instance to the Board of Examiners by, for example, the external examiner.

4.4 Any allegation or complaint of academic misconduct or fraud in research will be investigated and dealt with under the appropriate section of the University's *Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct or Fraud*.

4.5 Evidence of victimisation or reprisal against a person making in good faith an allegation of misconduct will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and handled in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure. Similarly, vexatious, malicious or frivolous allegations of misconduct made by members of staff or students will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and handled accordingly.

5. EXTERNAL CODES

In addition to its own Code, the University of Surrey requires those engaged in research in an area to be fully aware of and in compliance with the appropriate external protocols and statements governing research activity. The following list is indicative, but is not intended to be exhaustive:

1. Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life;
2. Research Councils - Joint Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice;
3. Medical Research Council - Principles of Good Research Practice;
4. Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council - Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice;
5. Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council – Integrity and Self Regulation in Science;
6. (Economic & Social Research Council - Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice (Research Funding document, section 23)
7. Particle Physics & Astronomy Research Council – Good Scientific Practice (Fellowship Handbook, section 1.14)

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The Codes and Statements referred to in Section 5

University of Sussex: Code of Practice for Research

University of Kent at Canterbury: Good Practice and Misconduct in Academic Research: A Policy Document

Sheffield Hallam University: Research Ethics and Procedures

University of Glasgow: Code of Good Practice in Research

Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine

The British Psychological Society: Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines