

**Academic Year 2019/20****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. The Sub-Committee has continued to meet since the COVID-19 pandemic started but is in a period of transition, both in terms of the annual reporting cycle for the areas of research governance that report to the Sub-Committee (from calendar years to academic years) and in terms of the academic leadership of the Sub-Committee; Professor Alan Fairlamb, who has chaired the Sub-Committee since it was established in 2010, stepped down from the Sub-Committee in late 2020. Furthermore, support for the Sub-Committee is provided by professional services staff who are providing the core central support for the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021) which will take place in March 2021. In view of this, and consistent with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, a short interim report is provided focusing on research integrity, including the investigation of research misconduct. A full report of the activities of the Sub-Committee, covering academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21, will be provided later in the year.

**Concordat to Support Research Integrity**

2. The University has taken a number of actions in recent years to strengthen understanding and application of research integrity, including the investigation of research misconduct. Online research integrity training was introduced in August 2016 and has recently been updated; it has also been licensed to a number of other HEIs. All postgraduate research students are required to complete the training prior to their upgrade review and mandatory supervisor training is being introduced.
3. Research Integrity Leads (RILs) and Advisors<sup>1</sup>, introduced in the 2017/18 academic session, are now well established, with most Schools having formal deputies and two of the larger Schools having Research Integrity Groups (RIGs). They play a key role in promoting a culture of research integrity and providing independent impartial advice to staff and students, including those who may be considering making an allegation of research misconduct.
4. The University was also one of the first to take out an institutional subscription to PubPeer<sup>2</sup>, an online platform for post-publication peer review where scientists often comment on the quality and integrity of published papers, including potential research misconduct. Managed by the School of Life Sciences RIG (alerting RILs in other Schools or external authors as necessary), this enables the University to be proactive in maintaining the integrity of the scientific record (including following up honest errors and initiating investigations of research misconduct where there is evidence of intent).
5. Non-clinical research ethics procedures<sup>3</sup>, which were refreshed in 2016 with the introduction of six School/joint School Research Ethics Committees (SRECs) under the umbrella of a University Research

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/leads/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pubpeer.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/ethicsprocedures/>

Ethics Committee (UREC), are regularly reviewed and updated, the most recent updates being in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tayside Medical Science Centre (TASC) manages the governance of clinical and clinically related research with both the Director of Research and Development, NHS Tayside, and Convener of the TASC Research Governance Committee serving as members of the Sub-Committee.

6. Information on research governance and policy, including the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, is brought together in one place via the online Research Governance and Policy Handbook.<sup>4</sup>

### **Research Misconduct**

7. One formal investigation of potential research misconduct by a member of staff was completed in academic year 2019/20; a member of staff was found to have committed research misconduct. Following a disciplinary hearing the member of staff received a formal written warning. They were also required to complete research integrity training, undergo mentoring and close supervision of their research activities and have the results of their research verified by senior management in their School.
8. To date, no formal investigations of research misconduct have been initiated in academic year 2020/21.

### **Business Continuity**

9. Dr Beth Hannah (Convener of UREC and a member of the Sub-Committee) is acting as Interim Convener of the Sub-Committee until summer 2021 and chaired her first meeting in January. A permanent Convener will be appointed for the 2021/22 academic year.

### **Note of Thanks**

10. The Sub-Committee would like to formally thank Professor Fairlamb for his excellent leadership over the past ten years and his strong commitment to research governance, policy and integrity at both a School and University level.

**Dr Clive Randall**  
**Research Policy Manager**  
**Dr Beth Hannah**  
**Interim Convener**  
**15 February 2021**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/>