TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

ANNUAL STATEMENT ON ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-22

Approved Academic Board 10-May-2023

Institutional context of this statement

Research integrity activity is co-ordinated by the Research and Enterprise Office Services (REO) and the University Research Ethics and Integrity sub-Committee (UREISC). Research Governance functions within REO are overseen by the Secretary to UREISC and, who in tandem with Chair of UREISC, is responsible for leading the University's work in research integrity assurance.

The terms of reference of UREISC are:

    (a)   To oversee the research ethics and research integrity training provided by the University.

    (b)   To consider issues relating to research ethics and integrity, including the ethical propriety and legal compliance of research projects, as referred to it by RIC, PRAB, RESCs of Schools, or individual staff or students.

    (c)   To review, on a regular basis, the University's policies, procedures and guidelines relating to research ethics, research conduct and research integrity.

    (d)   To report annually to the Research and Innovation Committee

    (e)   To provide information and advice to researchers in the University on issues relating to research ethics.

    (f)   To consult internally/externally as necessary.

UREISC met four times using during the 2021-22 academic year. The Committee's agenda covered all aspects of research ethics review done by School RESCs; and a specific section of each meeting agenda devoted specifically to strategy and policy on research integrity in all its aspects.

Supporting and strengthening research integrity: strategy and implications of changes to institutional context

A list of the relevant documents applicable to research ethics and integrity is given at the back of this statement

The revisions to the *Framework and Code of Practice for Ensuring Research Integrity* agreed in principle during academic year 2020-21 were approved in 2021-22 and the new version, bringing all relevant policies and procedures –including those for research degrees – into one document was brought into force.

The roles of *Research Integrity Liaison Officer* (RILO) as ex-officio members of UREIC, attending UREIC meetings alongside School REC Chairs and other University staff with duties associated with ethics, integrity, and compliance, was monitored carefully and new appointees to these roles made as required.

Supporting and strengthening research integrity: guidance, support, training

Formal training is led by the Secretary of UREISC. All materials used are bespoke and based on international standards and principles. Advice and guidance is also provided frequently to individual members of staff and students by appointment. All new PGR students attend a mandatory 'Research Values and Standards' session, which is also open to other students and staff. Bespoke training is also provided for research ethics committee members.

During 2021-22, UREISC continued to review current training arrangements at each meeting and, as part of a substantial revision of research training undertaken by RIS each year.

The standard training offer covers research ethics, research integrity, data compliance, conflicts of interest, publication ethics, and general regulatory issues for research. In addition, training is provided in open science and open data.
A new package of e-learning resources were designed in 2021-22 for a new mandatory research ethics and integrity training course for all staff and monitoring built into online ethics systems.

New policy and procedure

Significant new **policy and procedural developments during 2021-22** were:

- Revision of the *Framework and Code of Practice for Ensuring Research Integrity* was approved and came into force;

- Annual audit was conducted in October 2021;

- Quarterly audits for all research ethics activity, reporting to each meeting of UREIC were conducted;

- A new 'Adverse Event' report was added to the online ethics system to more easily facilitate reporting

- Amendments were made to risk assessment in research ethics policy;

- A new Research Culture and People sub-Committee was established with cross-membership with UREISC with a wide remit that also includes research integrity issues where these are cultural factors.

- Major changes were made to public webpages with information about research ethics and integrity:

  https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/research/support_ethics.cfm

Addressing research misconduct

The investigatory procedure which applied specifically to research degree students and included stages of reporting by supervisors, examiners, or other parties, is now incorporated into the revised Framework and the remaining definitions and supporting text discontinued. All relevant policy and procedures now sit in the same document with the same supporting text and definitions rather than across two documents to ensure clarity and consistency.

Instances, allegations and investigations of research misconduct

The responsibility for receiving of research misconduct allegations and for convening screening processes or formal investigations under the *Framework* lies with the Director of the Research and Enterprise Office (REO) with monitoring responsibilities by UREISC. Reporting of misconduct on research components of professional doctorates and taught postgraduate courses is collated retrospectively annually by OSCAR (Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulations).

- An Adverse Event report was received by UREISC relating to irregularities with postgraduate student work that involved the processing of personal data that did not comply with research ethics clearance processes. This was investigated under the University's Data Breach Management Policy with the support of the Information Governance Team, including consideration of lessons learned to prevent recurrence

Summary of publicly available research integrity documentation

Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Research Ethics
https://connect.tees.ac.uk/docs/publicdocumentslibraries/default-document-library/legal-and-governance-services/Policy-Procedures-and-Guidelines-for-Research-Ethics.pdf

Framework and Code of Practice for Ensuring Research Integrity
https://connect.tees.ac.uk/docs/publicdocumentslibraries/default-document-library/legal-and-governance-services/Framework-and-CoP-for-ensuring-Research-Integrity.pdf

Research and personal data
http://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/research/personal_data.cfm