INTRODUCTION *(*P1718-1380)

1. At Swansea University, we are very proud of our reputation for excellent research, and for the calibre, dedication and professionalism of our research community. We understand that integrity must be an essential characteristic of all aspects of our research, and that as a University entrusted with undertaking research we must clearly and consistently demonstrate that the confidence placed in our research community is rightly deserved. The University therefore expects everyone engaged in research to adhere to the very highest standards of research integrity and to conduct themselves and their research activities accordingly.

2. The University's **Policy Framework on Research Integrity: Ethics and Governance** is fully aligned with the Universities UK's *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* ('the concordat'), whose five key commitments we share and wholly endorse:
   - We are committed to maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
   - We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
   - We are committed to supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers.
   - We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
   - We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

3. In addition, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) confirmed that it expects each university to comply with the Concordat, and to publish an annual assurance statement demonstrating this commitment in order to remain eligible for the receipt of HEFCW research funding.

4. Reports on research integrity has in previous years been presented to University Council as part of an annual reporting mechanism on research activities.

5. This is the first Annual Statement on Research Integrity produced by the University, covering the 2016/17 academic year. Once endorsed by the University Research Ethics and Governance Sub-Committee, it will be made publicly available on the University's website.

6. The report identifies activities undertaken in the 2016/17 academic year by the University that demonstrates its commitment to the Concordat:
   - A summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues.
   - Assurance that the processes, in place for dealing with allegations of research misconduct are transparent, robust and fair and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation and;
   - A high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

7. Future Statements, produced later in the calendar year, will cover the preceding academic year's activities, and will be presented to the University Research Ethics and Governance Sub-Committee before publication on the University Website.

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Leadership and responsibility

8. The Senior Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Innovation and Strategic Development has the overall responsibility for the area.

9. During 2016/17 the University appointed an Academic and a Deputy Academic Lead for Research Integrity. The Academic Lead (s) work with senior leaders across the University to provide strategic direction in developing a research culture of transparency and best practice.

10. In 2016/17, the University also made the following dedicated Professional Services staff appointments to the area.

   - A Research Integrity Compliance Officer to provide advice, support and guidance on research ethics and integrity, policy development and implementation, training, audit and act as the first point of contact for research misconduct cases and

   - the appointment of Research Governance Officer, to ensure that University complies with the responsibilities relating to the Research Governance Framework and the Health Research Authority (HRA) requirements for research ethics, governance and sponsorship of research projects.

11. At present, the University is working towards establishing a dedicated Research Integrity unit within the Research Innovation and Engagement Services (REIS).

12. The University has established effective research governance structures at all levels to ensure that it complies with the Concordat commitments. The University Research Ethics & Governance sub-committee (UREGSC) which meets once per term has the overarching responsibility of ensuring that all research, carried out within the University premises, are undertaken to the highest standards of integrity.

13. Chaired by the Academic Lead for Research Integrity, the membership of UREGSC comprise of Chairs of College Research Ethics & Governance committees and representatives from Professional services departments. The committee receives regular updates and reports from College committees and provides guidance on ethical concerns. The UREGSC reports to the University Committee for Research and Innovations Services (CRIS) and Senate.

14. All Colleges/Schools have functioning Research Ethics and Governance Committees with responsibility for ethical approval of staff and student research. In addition there is an Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) that reviews applications for research involving animals. These committees provide guidance and support to ensure that all research applications receive appropriate levels of scrutiny.

Policies and Processes

15. In 2015-16, the University developed a Policy Framework on Research Integrity: Ethics and Governance in line with the UKRIO self-assessment toolkit. The policy framework was reviewed by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and suggested amendments to the Research Misconduct and Whistleblowing policies were incorporated. The Framework was further reviewed in 2017 to ensure that the policies were relevant and highlighted best practice.

16. The Policy framework contains information on the University's research governance structures as well as the following policies:
    - *Policy on ethical approval*
    - *Policy on health care research*
    - *Policy on health and social care research*
    - *Policy on research involving the use of animals*
    - *Policy on allegations of research misconduct*
    - *Policy on whistleblowing*
    - *Policy on research data protection*
    - *Policy on research data management*
    - *Policy for IP and procedures for implementation of IP*
    - *Policy on conflict of interest in research, consultancy IP commercial*
    - *Policy on student research*
    - *Training on research integrity*
    - *Policy on undertaking research with children and young people*
    - *Policy for clinical research*

17. The policies summarised above are publicly available on the University's website at http://www.swansea.ac.uk/research/researchintegrity/research-integrity-policies/ and are subject to periodic review to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory requirements and research practice.

18. New policies on 'Working with Children & Vulnerable Groups' and a 'Policy for Clinical Research' have been implemented to the framework in 2017 to reflect current best practice.

19. A new policy on 'risk assessment of research projects' has been drafted to ensure that research projects receive a review that is proportional to the risks presented in the research proposal. This policy, once accepted by UREGSC, will also be incorporated into the framework.

Training

20. In order to promote a culture of research integrity, the University purchased an online training package on research integrity (Epigeum) in 2016/17. The training package was tailored to Swansea University requirements and was rolled out for staff training in August 2017. This online training, is mandatory, and has to be undertaken by all staff involved in research. The training is available in five subject specific areas and culminates in a test at the end of the course.

21. To date, 503 members of staff have enrolled on the course, and 341 have passed (up to 7th June 2018). Further promotion of the course is planned for 2017/18 to reach more participants.

22. In addition to the online training, an additional in-house, training package on research integrity for staff and student training is planned for delivery through the University staff development and training services. These face to face, lunch and learn sessions, will focus on research integrity polices, ethical review of research, sponsorship of research, working with human tissue.

23. The University has also subscribed to an online training package on '*Safeguarding in Higher Education*'. Researchers working with children and vulnerable adults are encouraged to undertake this training.

Website

24. A dedicated research integrity website has been developed with policies, procedures and information for staff, students and external visitors. Each College/School also has developed, specific webpages on research ethics, with additional signposted links from the main Research Integrity pages to raise awareness.

25. A research integrity leaflet has been produced and disseminated, and is available on the website in both English and Welsh. The aim of this leaflet is to further promote the commitment and research integrity support available at the University.

Independent Review

26. The University provided support to the College of Human and Health Sciences for the purchase and piloting of an online system for ethical approval of applications. Support was made available to the College of Science with their development of an in-house online system for ethical approval of applications. These systems are being tested at present, and if proven effective, will, in future, be rolled out to the rest of the University thus aiming to streamline the process of reviewing ethics applications.

27. In 2016, an internal audit was conducted to provide assurance on the University's observance of the five commitments outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The report, received in September 2016, graded 'Substantial Assurance', with only one recommendation: to provide introductory training on research integrity with specific reference to the Concordat. This recommendation has been actioned by implementing the training outlined above.

28. The University is a subscriber of the UK Research Integrity Office, providing advice and guidance that runs across all research disciplines and regulatory remits. The University has sought the advice from UKRIO on matters relating to policy development; and representatives of the university attend the UKRIO annual conference using this as an opportunity to learn from and share best practice.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

29. The University has well established confidential reporting mechanisms for reporting allegations of research misconduct via restricted access to a research misconduct email inbox.

30. The University consulted RCUK guidelines and sought expert guidance from UKRIO in the development of the policy and processes for dealing with allegations of research misconduct.

31. The Registrar is the senior 'named' official within the University with the responsibility of receiving and responding to allegations of research misconduct.

32. Details of the misconduct reporting process are publicly available on the website at http://www.swansea.ac.uk/research/researchintegrity/researchmisconduct/

33. During the 2016/17 academic year, the University received three allegations of Research Misconduct Two investigations were concluded within the year, and one carried forward into 2017/18. A summary is provided in the table below:

Allegation	Nature of alleged misconduct	Outcome
1	Conduct of research (informed consent)	Carried forward into 2017/18 academic year.
2	Plagiarism/Denial of authorship	Not Upheld Dismissed due to lack of evidence at preliminary stage.
3	Conduct of research (informed consent)	Not Upheld Did not fall under the definition of research misconduct. Dealt with at college level as an example of poor research practice.

34. This statement was prepared by Research, Engagement & Innovation Services and approved by the Research Ethics and Governance Sub-Committee.