

1. STANDARDS, EXPECTATIONS AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Standards and Expectations

The University aims to achieve the highest standards of research governance, accountability and responsibility. It seeks to conform to all applicable external research governance guidelines and codes of practice, and it expects the highest standards of integrity, quality and transparency to be adhered to by its researchers. It works to ensure full compliance with all external regulatory and legislative requirements, as well as the expectations of all external funding bodies and those of any other key stakeholders. It applies to all areas of research.

The University fully endorses and implements a range of external policies, guidelines and frameworks, including those developed or adopted by major funding bodies (such as Research England, Scottish Funding Council (SFC), UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and the Wellcome Trust) to provide a sector-wide benchmarking standard. This includes:

- [UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(2019\)](#)
- [UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers \(2019\)](#)
- [UKRI Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct \(2022\)](#)
- [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research \(2023\)](#)
- [The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity \(2010\)](#)
- [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(2023\)](#)
- [The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\) \(2012\)](#)

1.2 General Principles

The University of Aberdeen expects the highest standards of rigour and integrity. The University's definition of research integrity is based on the following key components:

- *Excellence*

Researchers should strive for excellence when designing and conducting research and aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality.
- *Honesty*

At the heart of all research, regardless of discipline, is the expectation that all researchers will be honest and will act with integrity with respect to their own actions in carrying out research, and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the full range of research activity and includes the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in experimental design; in generating and analysing data; in publishing results; in making valid interpretations and justifiable claims based on the findings; and in acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

- *Rigour*

All research undertaken at Aberdeen must be done with appropriate rigour. This applies across all areas of research, in line with disciplinary norms and standards. Proposed research must be subject to appropriate rigorous ethical review; rigour must be applied in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to agreed protocols; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from research findings, and in communicating the results.

Fairness and rigour also apply to the assessment of the quality of research outputs. We have committed to the principles of the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) which, when assessing research quality for recruitment, promotions, funding or any other purpose, requires us to consider the value and impact of all research outputs as well as a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact. We have committed to eliminate the use of journal-based metrics such as journal impact factors as a shorthand for research quality in any assessment of research quality carried out by or on behalf of the University of Aberdeen.

- *Openness*

While the University recognises the need for researchers to protect their own research interests in the process of planning their research and obtaining their results, it encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with fellow researchers, and with the public.

It expects its researchers to be transparent in declaring conflicts of interest, and in the reporting of research data collection methods. Once results have been published, the University expects researchers, where appropriate, to make available relevant data and materials to others, on request. This includes sharing negative results.

The University embraces the principles of open access publishing and the rights of staff and students to publish without hindrance, except where there is conflict with any ethical approvals and consents that cover the data and materials and any data protection or intellectual property rights.

Further guidance on Open Research, Open Access and Open Data at the University can be obtained [here](#).

- *Accountability*

While the University seeks to engage with the local, national and global community in its research endeavours, it also recognises the need to remain accountable for the influence and impact of its research practices, findings and applications. It expects all researchers to take cognisance of the potential outcomes of their research activities and to reflect on the ethical consequences of their work before undertaking any study.

- *Care and Respect*

The University will ensure the highest standards of care and respect are given to all research participants and subjects, including human (living and deceased), animals, the environment and cultural objects. Its researchers will also strive to demonstrate care and respect for the stewardship of research and scholarship for future generations.

- *Inclusivity and Equal Opportunities*

The University is committed to supporting research talent wherever it may be found; and in doing so commits itself to fostering [inclusive and diverse research teams](#).

- *Interdisciplinarity*

The University recognises that research questions often cut across disciplinary divisions. As such while it remains committed to fostering strong disciplinary foundations it equally supports the ambition of researchers to deploy a variety of approaches and methods in pursuing their research.

The University will always seek to deliver for its researchers an environment that facilitates implementation of these principles, which allows development of good research practice and which nurtures a culture of integrity. It will ensure that it has in place processes for enabling research to be conducted to these standards.

Researchers at Aberdeen must take responsibility for ensuring personal understanding of the standards and expectations placed upon them by the University and within the context of their area of research.

When collaborating with external partners, either across disciplines, locally or internationally, they must ensure the highest standards are maintained. There must be clear agreement between partners on the standards and frameworks which will apply. Researchers should consult the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) for advice on this, if in doubt.