TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

ANNUAL STATEMENT ON ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18

Approved by Academic Board 9 January 2019

Institutional context of this statement

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

The terms of reference of UREIC 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.

UREIC met four times over the 2017-18 academic year. The Committee's agenda covered all aspects of research ethics review done by School RECs; 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

The *Framework and Code of Practice for Ensuring Research Integrity* in its current form has been in place since academic year 2012-13. A list of the relevant documents applicable to research ethics and integrity is given at the back of this statement.

A key element of the approach has been the creation of the role 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. During 2017-18, the Chair and Secretary of UREIC – in tandem with RIS- established the new liaison function with the appropriate senior management in each of the Schools. As of the end of 2017-18, Associate Deans (Research & Innovation) have been provided with the requirements of the RILO role and asked to nominate sufficiently senior staff to act in this capacity for 2018-19 under the new structures operating in Schools.

Supporting and strengthening research integrity: guidance, support, training

Formal training is led by the Head of Research Governance in RIS. 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 2017-18, UREIC reviewed current training arrangements and, as part of a substantial revision of research training undertaken by RIS, for 2018-19 an 'Ethics and Legal' strand will be incorporated into an extensive 'Researcher Development Programme' available across the institution. This strand includes six specific topics covering research ethics, research integrity, data compliance, conflicts of interest, publication ethics, and general regulatory issues for research.

<u>New policy</u>

Significant new **policy and procedural developments during 2017-18** were:

- the agreement and development of REC Chair's guidance on definitions and referral mechanisms for security-sensitive research;

- information-provision and consent for personal data-related research, including revision of existing REC review procedures and development of research-specific privacy notices;

- addition of Nagoya Protocol policy for research.

<u>Addressing research misconduct</u>

The University has two documents relating specifically to reporting and investigation of allegations of research misconduct. The *Framework and Code of Practice for Ensuring Research Integrity* is an institution-wide document setting out principles, standards, and responsibilities for research integrity, as well as definitions of research misconduct and procedures for allegations and investigations. In addition, the *Regulations Relating to Research Misconduct on Research Degrees* sets out definitions and procedures applied specifically to research degree programmes, including stages of reporting by supervisors, examiners, or other parties. The definitions of misconduct are the same in both documents, with extended definitions where misconduct applies in examination situations that do not apply to other students or to staff.

<u>Instances, allegations and investigations of research misconduct</u>

The responsibility for receiving of research misconduct allegations and for convening screening processes or formal investigations lies with the Director of Research and Innovation Services with monitoring responsibilities by UREIC. 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 allegation of Stage Two (serious offence) research misconduct against a research student was made during 2017-18 and a panel hearing is pending as of end of 2017-18.

An **allegation** by an external complainant against a research student's misuse of social media was investigated using an Initial Screening Procedure and was found to not be a category of research misconduct, thereby being referred for action under Student Discipline.

<u>Summary of relevant research integrity documentation</u>

Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Research Ethics
http://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Research/ethics.pdf

Framework and Code of Practice for Ensuring Research Integrity
http://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/docrepo/research/code%20of%20practice1.pdf

Regulations Relating to Research Misconduct on Research Degrees
http://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/index.cfm?folder=Student%20Regulations&name=Research%20
Regulations

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