

Research Integrity Policy

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1. Introduction

Arden University's Applied Research Strategy commits to producing high-quality, practice-focused research that delivers real-world impact for learners, industry and society. Achieving this ambition depends on a culture of research integrity underpinning all research and innovation activities.

For the purposes of this policy, 'Integrity' refers to the values of honesty, rigour, transparency, open communication, care, respect and accountability, as defined in the *Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)*.

The University expects the highest standards of research integrity from all individuals undertaking or supporting research in its name. This includes staff, students, and external partners, regardless of discipline, funding source, experience level, or location where the research is carried out.

The University will:

- demonstrate a visible institutional commitment to research integrity through its governance structures
- set clear expectations and standards for responsible research conduct
- provide training, guidance and developmental support appropriate to the needs of applied and practice focused researchers
- ensure transparent, proportionate and fair processes for investigating concerns or allegations of research misconduct
- promote a positive, inclusive, and ethical research environment

In line with its responsibilities as a higher education provider, Arden University conducts research governance and oversight in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles). These principles also inform the University's expectations of integrity, transparency, accountability and leadership across all research activity undertaken in its name.

This policy outlines the expected behaviours, responsibilities, and governance mechanisms that support research integrity across Arden University.

2. About this policy

This policy establishes the behavioural and professional standards that underpin all other research governance policies at Arden University, and should be read in conjunction with the Research Ethics Policy and Research Publications Policy.

Together, these policies provide a coherent framework governing the conduct, approval, safeguarding and dissemination of research undertaken in the University's name.

3. Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to:

- All research and innovation activity undertaken under the University's name or affiliation
- All individuals acting as researchers, meaning Arden University staff, students, honorary appointees, affiliated researchers, visiting researchers and others conducting research in the University's name
- All research collaborations, including externals with honorary, visiting, or joint appointments
- All research involving AI systems, secondary data, open data, practice-based methods, evaluation, consultancy-style research or knowledge exchange

Where research is conducted in collaboration with external individuals or organisations, Arden University requires that all parties adhere to the principles of this policy, with compliance reinforced through appropriate contractual, partnership, or institutional agreements.

4. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Set out the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of all researchers
- Provide clarity on accountability and governance, especially within applied research contexts
- Ensure that the University meets the expectations of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- Support an environment where responsible research and innovation can thrive
- Protect participants, researchers, partners, and the reputation of Arden University

5. Breach of this Policy

Any suspected breach of this Policy should be reported to the RKE Hub and confirmed as such by the RKE Sub-Committee. The relevant escalations and disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Research Ethics Policy and Academic Misconduct Policy.

6. Principles

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that the University maintains the highest standards of research integrity and is based on the following guiding principles, in line with Arden University's Research Governance Framework. The principles below set out the standards expected of those conducting research and are intended to guide professional judgement, not to prescribe every aspect of research practice.

Honesty: researchers must be honest in respect of their own actions and in their responses to the actions of others. This applies to all aspects of research activity including:

- applying for funding;
- experimental and protocol design;
- generating, recording, analysing and interpreting data;
- publishing and exploiting results;
- declaring Artificial Intelligence use in analysis, writing, data processing or creative work;
- acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others; and
- reporting cases of suspected misconduct in a responsible and appropriate manner.

Ethical Responsibility: all individuals should have respect for all participants in, and subjects of, research including humans, animals, the environment, and cultural objects. The University expects all researchers to consider the ethical implications of their research and to be aware of their responsibilities to society, the environment, their profession, the University, research participants, and the organisation(s) funding the research in accordance with the University Research Ethics Policy.

All individuals undertaking research in the University's name or on its behalf should take responsibility for actively considering whether their activities fall within the scope of the University's Research Ethics Policy. Research must not commence until ethical approval has been granted, and retrospective ethical approval is not supported. If required, ethics applications will be escalated to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee (REC).

Safety and Safeguarding: the safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of all those involved in research activity, including participants, researchers, students,

collaborators and the wider community, is a paramount consideration in any research undertaken in the University's name. Work must always be undertaken within the law and the University in its Health and Safety Policy and Procedures. This includes ensuring that appropriate insurances and statutory obligations e.g. data protection are considered, managed and implemented.

Excellence: researchers are expected to strive for excellence when conducting their research, aiming to design, conduct, produce and disseminate work of the highest quality and ethical standards.

Rigour: researchers must be thorough and meticulous in performing their research. Care must be taken:

- to use the appropriate methods;
- to adhere to an agreed protocol (where appropriate);
- when drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and when communicating the results

Accountability and Responsible Management: experienced researchers are responsible for nurturing researchers of the future, fostering a constructive and supportive environment without undue pressure and ensuring that appropriate supervision, mentoring and training are provided.

Researchers should be able to robustly justify their research practices and should not undertake activities which they are not comfortable with. If there is a significant difference of understanding concerning what constitutes acceptable practice which could affect the project's integrity, collaborators should reasonably and dispassionately attempt, as professionals, to seek a mutually acceptable solution.

Transparency and Open Communication: researchers must be open when conducting and communicating their research (subject to the terms and conditions of any research contracts and the University's Intellectual Property Policies). This includes:

- the disclosure of any conflicts of interest;
- the reporting of research data collection methods;
- the analysis and interpretation of data;
- making all research findings widely available (including sharing negative results as appropriate);
- disseminating research in a way that will have the widest impact; and

- promoting public engagement/involvement in research.

Freedom of speech and academic freedom: Arden University supports the freedom, within the law, to question, test received wisdom, and put forward new ideas, including controversial or unpopular opinions, without risk of institutional disadvantage, in accordance with Arden University's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: researchers should ensure that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are considered throughout the research process. Research design and governance should ensure equitable selection of researchers and subjects and provide equal access to training and supervision. Leadership and supervision of research should monitor all research output so that it meets with the University's values and provides equitable support and opportunities for all researchers.

Conflict of Interest: an undeclared or unmanaged conflict of interest can affect the delivery of the activity and the outcome. It is important to note that a conflict of interest will not necessarily preclude any work from taking place if it has been recognised and managed appropriately.

Regulatory Compliance: researchers are expected to make themselves aware of, and comply with, any legislation or regulations that govern their research. This may include, but is not limited to:

- General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018;
- University Data Protection Policies and Procedures and Records Management Policy and Procedures;
- The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004;
- UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research;
- Human Tissue Act 2004 and the University's Quality Manual for the Acquisition, Storage, Use and Disposal of Human Tissue;
- Health and Safety Policy; and
- IT Security Framework

Professional Standards: researchers should observe the standards of practice set out in guidelines published by the relevant professional societies, funding agencies and other regulatory bodies, where appropriate and available. They must ensure that they have the necessary skills and training to conduct the research.

Report Research Misconduct: research misconduct can cause harm, waste resources, undermines the research record and damages the credibility of the research. Staff and students at the University have an obligation to report suspected research misconduct in accordance with the University's Academic Misconduct Policy.

Research misconduct can take many forms, including:

- Fabrication: making up results, other outputs (for example, artefacts) or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, and presenting and/or recording them as if they were real.
- Falsification: inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery and/or consents.
- Plagiarism: using other people's ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without acknowledgement or permission
- Failure to meet: legal, ethical and professional obligations,
- Misrepresentation of:
 - Data, including suppression of relevant results/data or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence presenting a flawed interpretation of data
 - Use of Artificial Intelligence throughout the research process
 - Involvement, including inappropriate claims to authorship or attribution of work and denial of authorship/attribution to persons who have made an appropriate contribution
 - Interests, including failure to declare competing interests of researchers or funders of a study
 - Qualifications, experience and/or credentials
 - Publication history, through undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication
- Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct: failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding. Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties using legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements.

7. Policy Responsibilities and Governance

- **Academic Board** has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with internal and external regulatory requirements. **The Academic Framework,**

Regulation and Policy Committee have delegated authority from the Academic Board for the approval and ongoing review of this policy.

- **The Research Committee** provides institutional oversight of research integrity, ensuring that the University maintains high standards of responsible research conduct.
- **The RKE Sub-Committee** oversees operational research governance, monitoring compliance, processes and quality assurance across research activity.
- **The Research Ethics Sub-Committee** is responsible for ensuring that all research meets ethical standards through proportionate review and escalation of complex or high-risk ethics applications.
- **The Researcher Development Sub-Committee** leads on building research capability by embedding research integrity and responsible research practice within researcher development pathways. The Sub-Committee is responsible for overseeing the development, coordination and promotion of research integrity training, guidance and researcher development activities across the University.
- **The Acentas-AI Sub-Committee** oversees the ethical, transparent and responsible use of AI within research, ensuring compliance with institutional standards and emerging regulatory expectations.
- **The RKE Manager** and **RKE Hub** have primary and day-to-day responsibility for developing and implementing this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, and the ongoing review of procedures to ensure they are effective.
- Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand this policy and how it applies to them and students.
- All colleagues are responsible for ensuring they understand this policy and how it applies to them and students.
- All students are required to understand and comply with this policy

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