University Code of Conduct for Research

Introduction

The University of Central Lancashire requires all its staff, researchers and students engaged in research or peer review of research processes to be aware of and agree to comply with its code of conduct of research. The University is committed to conduct research in accordance with the seven principals identified by the Nolan committee on standards in Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. The University expects these standards to be maintained by all academic, research and relevant support staff, students and their supervisors and other individuals conducting research or involved in the peer review of research process within or on behalf of the University.

Honesty and Integrity

Researchers should be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research, including experimental design, generating and analysing data, applying for funding, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

All researchers should refrain from plagiarism, piracy, the fabrication of results or infringement of intellectual property. Committing any of these actions is regarded as a

serious disciplinary offence. Researchers should also declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest, both financial and professional.

Openness and Accountability

Whilst recognising the need for researchers to protect their academic research interests in the process of planning of research, carrying out and writing up research and, where appropriate, handling of intellectual property rights (IPR), the University encourages all researchers to be open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public. Once results have been published, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, on request, provided that this is consistent with any ethical approvals and consents which cover the data and materials, and any intellectual property rights in them.

Professional Guidance and Legislation

The University expects researchers to observe the standards of practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, academic and scientific societies and also other relevant professional bodies. All researchers should be aware of the legal requirements, which regulate their work noting particularly health and safety legislation and data protection. Ethical approval of all research at the University must be obtained from the relevant departmental, faculty and/or University ethics committees. Researchers must obtain the necessary regulatory approval from the relevant national and European regulatory and/or statutory bodies.

Leadership and Supervision

Heads of departments and their senior colleagues should ensure that a research culture of mutual cooperation is created in which all members of a research team are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of research ideas is fostered. Research group leaders and supervisors must ensure the appropriate direction of research and its financial propriety. Research misconduct is unlikely to arise in an environment where good research practices including documentation of results, peer review of research, regular discussion and seminar, are encouraged and where adequate supervision exists at all relevant levels.

Recording Data/Results/Samples/Equipment

Throughout their work researchers are required to keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and the approval granted during the research process, including records of interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. All primary data as the basis for publications should be securely stored for at least 7 years unless otherwise required by contractual terms (for example 10 years if the project is funded by the European Union or Medical Research Council) or the guidance of relevant professional bodies in a paper and /or electronic form, as appropriate, after the completion of a research project. Proper documentation and storage procedures will minimise cases of allegations of research misconduct where original data cannot be found or allegedly been lost. Researchers should utilise means of data storage appropriate to the task.

Dissemination and Publication Practice

The University encourages the publication of and the dissemination of results of high quality research but believes that researchers must do this responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of any such dissemination in the wider media. The University believes that although researchers must have academic freedom, the funding sponsor should be notified in advance when the research might be published or disseminated. The University also acknowledges the legitimate interest of the sponsor in securing patent protection for inventions in the course of research prior to publication or dissemination of the results. All funding sources must be acknowledged in any publication or publicity. Researchers should make every effort to ensure research is peer reviewed prior to it being published or disseminated.

The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable, i.e. only those who have contributed to the research should be included as authors on the publication. The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assisted or indirectly supported the research should be specified and properly acknowledged.

The University recognises that publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of any intellectual property arising from the research. Any such periods of delay should be kept to a minimum.

Research Misconduct

Any member of the University has a duty to formally report misconduct in research to the head of the appropriate department. For the purpose of this code of conduct, misconduct in research includes any breach of this code of conduct, but is not limited to the following, whether deliberate, reckless or negligent:

- Fabrication, falsification or corruption of research data
- Plagiarism or dishonest use of acknowledged sources
- Unauthorised use of another person's research data, materials or writing
- Unjustified destruction of research materials
- Deception in relation to research proposals
- Fraud and misuse of research funds

Any allegations made against University staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Policy on Misconduct in Research.

Allegations against research students will be dealt with in accordance with the Section L of the University Academic Regulations. The University undertakes to inform the relevant body of any substantiated allegations of research misconduct when appropriate.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence technologies have gained popularity in recent years. With this there is a growing concern in relation to how AI is used within research in terms of research integrity and responsible use of these technologies. The topic is continuing to evolve especially as new tools become available.

It is important before commencing a research project or activity using AI tools that you as a researcher fist determine the appropriateness and associated risks of using the technology. Please consider the following:

- **Data Protection and GDPR**: if research data containing personal data is inputted into an AI tool this is likely to breach data protection legislation.

- **Bias**: Content produced by AI tools are dependent on training material and researchers need to be mindful that the content produced by AI tools may reflect societal biases.

- **Protection of Research**: Researchers should protect their own unpublished work and/or inventions and should not 'input' this information into AI tools as this may become 'training data' and reused in subsequent outputs by other users.

- **Misinformation and Hallucinations:** AI can give way to misinformation, including 'hallucinations' where confident sounding answers are given but are not factual. In addition, the training information the AI tools work from may not always include current information. For example, the data incorporated into ChatGPT 3.5 had a date of September 2021.

- **Honesty and Transparency:** Researchers should maintain records of their work. Keeping details of AI tools used, including the versions of the tools and the prompts that are used and any information that is shared into AI tools. Researchers should declare when and where AI has been used and for what purpose which keeps open channels of honesty and transparency.

- **Citing and Referencing:** A number of referencing systems have guidance on how to cite and reference content produced by AI. Guidance on how to cite and reference uses of AI is available via [Cite them Right](#).

- **Authorship**: There is a consensus amongst journals that AI cannot be given authorship. The position statement from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, 2023) is "AI tools cannot meet the requirements for authorship as they cannot take responsibility for the submitted work."

Given the rapid pace of advancements in AI it is anticipated this guidance will continue to evolve. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk

Further information:

The University's intuitional stance on Artificial Intelligence (AI): [Student Hub - AI - Students Guidance.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)](#)

[UKRIO AI in Research Resources:](#) https://ukrio.org/ukrio-resources/ai-in-research/