



Writtle
University
College

Annual Statement on Research Integrity

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- 1. A named point of contact** who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity – **Head of Research Roberta Ferro de Godoy**
- 2. A named point of contact** to act as confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspice of WUC - **Vice Chancellor Tim Middleton**
- 3. Summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues**

Research integrity is taught in all HE Schools based on the principles set out in Writtle University College's Research Ethics Policy (<https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Research-Ethics-Policy.pdf>).

All undergraduate, postgraduate and staff research is subject to ethical review overseen by the Research Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee (a sub-committee of the WUC Academic Board) and students interact with an online system that requires acknowledgement of reading the Research Ethics Policy and submission of an individual risk assessment. Additionally, the content of this policy is taught throughout the undergraduate curriculum and in the research methods module in postgraduate courses.

This policy and teaching includes the main principles of good research conduct: honesty, openness, documenting results, questioning one's own findings, acknowledgement of collaborators and other participants, confidentiality and duty of care.

All academic staff involved in research and research supervision are given training in research ethics as part of the dissertation supervision training.

- 4. A high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken**

None

- 5. A statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken**

N/A

- 6. Statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct**

The teaching of research integrity examines the main principles of good research conduct: honesty, openness, documenting results, questioning one's own findings, acknowledgement of collaborators and other participants, confidentiality and duty of care.

Another key aspect of research covered in the delivery of both undergraduate & postgraduate programmes is transparency, a virtue characterised by objectivity, impartiality, openness, honesty, questioning one's own findings, accuracy in the recording, analysis and presentation of data, and acknowledgement of the contribution made by others to the generation of knowledge. Where possible, students are encouraged to carry out a pilot study to test the effectiveness of their research design and plan.

There are several quality assurance measures put in place in the preparation for student research projects at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. School Research leads work with Heads of School & Department to ensure that staff are trained to support and mentor students engaged in research and instruction on ethical guidelines and procedures forms parts of the research methods module that all degree and masters students undertake. Research integrity is embedded through the research methods module and via supervision of dissertation students. School research leads provide support and advice and mentoring of early career researchers.

Students at levels 6 & 7 must access an online system that requires acknowledgement of their reading of the Research Ethics Policy and the submission of an individual risk assessment. Before any project can be started it must have the signed approval of both supervisor and an independent verifier. In addition, Schools and Departments have set up research review panels for levels 6 & 7 students, which are made up of 2 to 3 academic staff. Each student is required to submit to the panel a research proposal form stating objectives and outlined method. The panel sessions are designed to work like interactive vivas and allow staff the opportunity to interrogate and challenge students about their proposed research. At the same time, it gives students the opportunity to garner rich information about research techniques and protocols. At the end of the panel session students are assigned to a member of staff with direct or best-fit expertise in the field of research, and together they will complete the project planning process before starting activities. In some cases, where staff may not have the depth or length of experience in research, a more senior member of staff will join the team as mentor.

Reporting Research Misconduct

Scientific misconduct can be recognised to cover two broad categories. The first involves fabrication or falsification of research results; the second involves plagiarism, misquoting or other misappropriation of the work of other researchers. Colluding in, or concealing the misconduct of others is, in itself, misconduct. Honest mistakes do not, of course, constitute scientific misconduct.

Allegations of research misconduct may come from others in the University College, for example, colleagues, research assistants or students, or they may come from outside the institution from, for example, other researchers who may feel that their work has been plagiarized or from research participants/subjects.

If someone has a concern about any aspect of a research project, he/she should ask to speak to the researcher(s) and the School/ Dept Head of Research in the first instance who should do their best to address any questions. If concerns remain, formal complaints should be made to the **named point of contact** who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity – **Head of Research Roberta Ferro de Godoy**. Allegations of research misconduct by staff will be dealt with according to the procedures set out in the WUC Disciplinary Procedures. Allegations against students will be considered according to the WUC Academic Offences Procedures. **A named point of contact who acts as a confidential liaison for whistle-blowers** or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspice of is **Vice Chancellor Tim Middleton**.

Relevant University College Policies

<https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Research-Ethics-Policy.pdf>

https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Anti-Bribery_Policy.pdf

<https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Records-Retention-Policy.pdf>

<https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Whistleblowing-Policy-&-Procedure.pdf>

https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Data_Protection_Policy.pdf