Research Integrity Policy

Policy for ensuring integrity in research carried out at TU Dublin and/or by TU Dublin staff and students

Dr Steve Meaney

10th January 2024 - Approved by Governing Body

T U DUBLIN

OLLSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA
BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

Table of Contents

1. Document Control Summary

Area	Document Information
Author	Steve Meaney
Owner	Head Research Ethics and Integrity
Reference number	REP04
Version	0.5
Status	Draft for UET
Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	10th January 2024
Document Classification	TU Dublin Public

2. Introduction / Context

The staff and students of TU Dublin engage in a wide variety of different research and innovation endeavours, both internally and in collaboration with external academic, community, society and industrial partners. Ensuring that all such activities are carried out in line with good research practice is critical to support continued trust in the University's research capabilities and outputs, including commercial outputs which are based on research. It is established that the research environment, training and robust research integrity policies are the most critical factors in supporting good research practice.

Good research practice encompasses many activities and behaviours carried out by researchers, but is underpinned by the four principles specified in the '*European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*', i.e. reliability, honesty, respect and accountability. These principles have historically formed the basis of National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland and TU Dublin's '*Code of Conduct for Ensuring Excellence in Research Integrity*'.

The University is obliged to make an annual report of Research misconduct incidents to the National Research Integrity Forum who publish a consolidated report containing aggregated, high-level information related for all research performing organisations (RPO) in Ireland. Research misconduct can have a significant impact on the University with consequences for reputation, research funding, citation of university publications and the attraction of research talent to the university. As there is an increasing attention by the public on research integrity (e.g. via Retraction Watch, PubPeer, Scientific Integrity Digest), it is important to have a robust policy which supports good practice and which defines the approach to investigating allegations of research misconduct.

3. Purpose

This policy, and any codes or guidelines which are established or derived from this policy, aims to minimize the likelihood of research misconduct taking place at the University. It sets out a framework for ensuring excellence in the practice of research and innovation activities at TU Dublin and the general approach to the investigation of allegations of research misconduct.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students of TU Dublin – including those with positions as emeritus/emerita staff, visiting scholars and those with adjunct status – who are engaged in research, in any domain of inquiry, and at all levels of the national framework for qualifications,

and the research support unit staff who support them. Given the highly collaborative nature of modern research, this policy will apply to TU Dublin researchers wherever research takes place.

This policy does not apply to data collection and analysis activities that lack an explicit research intent (e.g. internal service evaluation, audit, employee surveys) which are covered by other existing policies.

It does not apply to colleagues who undertake research work in their own right in a private capacity without recourse to any form of TU Dublin Resources, facilities or insurance indemnification. However, if a colleague engages in research and innovation activities, including dissemination of outputs of these activities, in a manner facilitated by or conditional on the use of their TU Dublin affiliation, they shall be considered subject to this policy, even if the research is carried out in a private capacity as noted above.

5. Definitions

The following are some identified core definitions used in this document. These include:

o   Conflict of Interest - refers to a conflict between the duties of an individual as an employee of TU Dublin on the one hand and their personal interests on the other.

o   Good research practice – refers to the constellation of practices that together support trustworthy research and includes all aspects that enable researchers to work according to the highest standards, from the research environment to training, supervision and mentoring.

o   Research and innovation - Research and innovation activities are creative and systematic efforts carried out with the intention to expand the boundaries of human knowledge and/or to create novel applications of knowledge.

o   Research integrity – the performance of research to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour, to support the patency and reliability of the research record (i.e. as published in peer-reviewed publications or otherwise disseminated)

o   Research ethics – the process which ensures that, when engaging in research with human participants or using experimental animal models, all researchers engage in good practices that protects all such participants/subjects.

o   Research integrity officer (RIO) – the individual who has the responsibility for support of good research and innovation practice at the university and who assists the university with the investigation of allegations of research misconduct.

o   Research misconduct – any activity that compromises the outputs of a research work, including (but not limited to) data fabrication and/or falsification, plagiarism, poor publication practice, poor data stewardship, financial malpractice and unethical research methods.

o   Researcher – staff and registered students of TU Dublin – including those with positions as emeritus/emerita staff, visiting scholars and those with adjunct status – who are engaged in activities with a clear and explicit research intent.

o   Responsible conduct of research – the constellation of research behaviours, supports and practices that enables research and innovation activities to be conducted with integrity, being mindful of the ethical, legal and social dimensions of the activity.

o   Student – an individual who is registered within TU Dublin for a defined award at any level of the national framework for qualifications.

6. Policy Details:

6.1 Policy Overview

This document describes the core framework to ensure excellence in the practice of research and innovation activities at TU Dublin, as well as the approach to the investigation of allegations of research and innovation misconduct. This framework includes infrastructural, cultural and behavioural aspects, and sets out the minimum standards expected of researchers and the University.

6.2 Good research and innovation practices

All those engaged in research and innovation activities, including visiting scholars and consultants or contractors employed to support these activities, are required to practice according to the principles of responsible research practice (RCR). At a high level, RCR requires all those engage in research and innovation activities to ensure:

o   Compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, internal policies and procedures, and standards (e.g. scientific or professional),
o   Competence to carry out the planned research or innovation activity, including the analysis of the results of that activity,
o   Contribution to a culture and environment which supports research and innovation,
o   Dissemination of research outputs, including intellectual property, authorship considerations and academic freedom,
o   Honesty and truthfulness of all aspects of research and innovation practice,
o   Management of research and innovation projects,
o   Respect for rights and dignity of participants,
o   Stewardship and management of data and materials accumulated in connection with the research and innovation activity,
o   Supervision and mentorship of students and other staff.

Note that this is not to be considered to be an exhaustive list and that lack of mention of particular acts or omissions in this overview should not be taken as conclusive in any use of this policy to support investigations related to research or innovation misconduct. Additional details are available in RISOP-00X – Principles of Responsible Conduct of Research and Innovation.

6.3 Responsibilities of those engaged in research and innovation

All those involved in research and innovation activities, including research support staff and University leadership, must:

o   Familiarise themselves with the University's Principles of Responsible Conduct of Research and Innovation (RISOP-00X),
o   Complete a baseline training in research integrity and any required refresher training,

- o Sign up to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Research and Innovation Practice,
- o Carry out research and innovation according to the standards of Responsible Conduct of Research.

Graduate student and postdoctoral researcher supervisors, and line managers of contract research staff, must ensure that those reporting to them are facilitated to complete required training and to dedicate sufficient time to enable good research and innovation practice.

Individuals with higher-level responsibility for a research activity within the University, e.g. research hub lead, centre manager and heads of School/Discipline, must ensure that all researchers within their remit are facilitated to complete required training and engage in the responsible conduct of research and innovation.

6.4 Responsibilities of the University

It is the responsibility of the President and all leaders and senior managers, both academic and professional services, to ensure the creation, promotion and maintenance of a supportive research environment and culture at the University that enables good research and innovation practice, and ensures the wellbeing of all individuals involved in these practices.

TU Dublin will ensure that individuals involved in research and innovation activities:

- o Receive rigorous training in areas related to good practice including, but not limited to, research design, methodology, record keeping, data analysis and academic writing appropriate to the discipline;
- o Have access to the necessary tools, physical and/or digital, to ensure that the completion and dissemination of the outputs of their endeavours do not place the university at risk and that data is available to defend against allegations of research misconduct (e.g. domain appropriate statistical software, research-appropriate text similarity search tools, image integrity analysis, electronic research notebook);
- o Are supported by an inclusive, equitable and supportive research environment and culture which protects their wellbeing.

TU Dublin will ensure that

- o Relevant research funder requirements in relation to research integrity are met by its researchers;
- o A central record of research integrity training is maintained.

6.5 Misconduct in research and innovation activities

Misconduct in research and innovation activities encompasses a broad range of actions which compromise the integrity and patency of the research and innovation record. Such behaviour is not acceptable at TU Dublin and allegations of potential misconduct will be robustly investigated. The principles of any such investigations are as follows:

- o Those who are the subject of a misconduct investigation will be presumed innocent, with no application of penalty in advance of the outcome of the investigation.
- o In line with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland a formal investigation will be carried out into the allegation once it is established that sufficient evidence is present to warrant a formal investigation.
- o All misconduct investigations will be carried out as promptly as is practicable, noting the complexities of collaborative work across research performing organisations and jurisdictions.
- o During an investigation confidentiality will be maintained by all parties involved.

- No single individual will determine the outcome of any step of a misconduct investigation – all decisions will be made by an investigative panel.
- The RIO will initiate and coordinate the process but shall not personally participate in any investigation panels or process, or seek to influence the work, findings or deliberations of said panels/process.
- Any sanctions which may be applied as a result of the outcome of a misconduct investigation will be proportional to the degree of misconduct undertaken and may require implementation of specific disciplinary procedures relevant to the status or position of the individual against whom the sanction is made (i.e. by reference to existing staff disciplinary processes or the Graduate Research Student regulations).

The full procedure is described in RISOP-00X – TU Dublin Investigation of Suspected Breaches of Responsible Research and Innovation Practice.

6.6 Approval process

Amendments to this policy must be approved by Governing Body.

6.7 Change Process

TU Dublin Research and Innovation provides administrative support, and the Vice President for Research and Innovation has responsibility for this Policy.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years and more often if needed, including within six months of the publication of an update to the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity or the Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, or change in other relevant national policy or guidance.

7. Related Documents

Further procedural details and related guidance are contained in:
- HRP004 – Disciplinary Procedure
- HRP005 – Grievance Procedures
- HRP035 – Conflict of Interest Policy
- HRP038 – Visiting Scholars, Adjunct Staff and Emerita/Emeritus Fellows at TU Dublin Policy
- Graduate Research Regulations (1st unitary TU Dublin edition)
- Code of Conduct for Ensuring Excellence in Research Integrity (1st unitary TU Dublin edition)
- RESOP-00X – TU Dublin Guidelines for Ethics Review Committees (in development)
- RISOP-00X – TU Dublin Investigation of Research Misconduct (in development)
- RESOP-00X – TU Dublin Code of Conduct for Responsible Research and Innovation Practice (in development)
- RISOP-00X – TU Dublin Principles of Responsible Conduct of Research and Innovation (in development)
- RISOP-00X – TU Dublin Designing Inclusive Research (in development)

8. Document Management

8.1 Version Control

VERSION NUMBER	VERSION DESCRIPTION / CHANGES MADE	AUTHOR	DATE
V0.1	Initial draft	Steve Meaney	14th August 2023
V0.2	Revised draft	Steve Meaney	19th September 2023
V0.3	Revised post R&I academy for UET	Steve Meaney	4th October 2023
V0.4	Revised following feedback from UET	Steve Meaney	25th October 2023
V0.8	Revised following GB-ARC feedback	Steve Meaney	14th November 2023

8.2 Document Approval

VERSION NUMBER	APPROVAL DATE	APPROVED BY (NAME AND ROLE)
V0.8	10th January 2024	Governing Body

8.3 Document Ownership

Accountability to defining, developing, monitoring and updating the content of this document rests with the Vice President for Research and Innovation

8.4 Document Review

The Vice President for Research and Innovation is accountable to review this document. This document should be approved by both the University Executive Team and Governing Body.

8.5 Document Storage

This document will be stored on the TU Dublin content management systems under the Policies INTRANET folder.

8.6 Document Classification

As this document is a policy it is classified as TU Dublin Public.