ARU'S ANNUAL STATEMENT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2022/23

(available at: [Research Integrity - ARU](#))

Named senior staff members to oversee research integrity
Professor Yvonne Barnett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation.
Email address: yvonne.barnett@aru.ac.uk
Professor Peter Bright, Chair, Ethics and Research Integrity Committee.
Email address: peter.bright@aru.ac.uk

Named member of staff who will act as first contact for anyone wanting information on research integrity
Julie Scott, Research Ethics and Integrity Manager.
Email address: julie.scott@aru.ac.uk

Type of organisation: Higher Education Institution

During 2022 to 2023, we have continued our engagement with the expectations of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* ([The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (universitiesuk.ac.uk)](#). We have undertaken the following activities in support of continued compliance with the *Concordat,* and to further embed the principles of research integrity in our institution.

- We have combined our Research Ethics Committee and Research Integrity Working Group to form the Ethics and Research Integrity Committee (ERIC). It was felt that, given the overlap between the remit of the 2 groups, this would lend itself to further improving the cohesive and integrated approach regarding research ethics and integrity. Our gap analysis and action plan, which forms our annual monitoring exercise under the *Concordat*, is considered at each meeting.

- Research integrity training remains mandatory for all academic staff undertaking research. We have replaced the training from the previous company with an enhanced course provided by a different provider, and within which ARU-specific guidance and content is incorporated. Training completions are monitored and reported at each ERIC.

- New academic staff undertaking research receive a specialised induction in research and innovation.

- Other training relating to research integrity we have held this academic year are as follows.

   - *Anonymisation and research,* facilitated by our Data Protection Officer and one of our ethics committee chairs.
   - *Risk Assessment (Health and Safety) and insurance for research*, led by our Head of Health and Safety and Head of Insurance.
   - *Good experimental design and power analysis*, run by the Director of our Medical Technology Research Centre.

   Sessions were well attended and generated useful discussions.

- Given the growing emphasis on AI e.g. the UK Committee on Research Integrity (UKCORI's) First Annual Statement at: [Research Integrity in the UK: Annual Statement 2023 - UKCORI](#), one of our Deputy Deans (Research and Innovation) ran a session on AI and considerations relating to research. Arising from this, we have convened a working group to explore this area further, for example to consider privacy issues that may arise with AI, any technology that relies on machine learning (e.g. robot carers, AI based health systems), and the implications for ethics and healthcare, and who would be accountable for decisions.

- Our online research ethics system ensures a consistent and robust process is in place for submission, review, approval and monitoring of ARU staff and student research ethics applications. We are now in the process of incorporating a block ethics approval process within the online system, which we envisage will be more broadly adopted than the current paper-based system, which we intend to phase out.

- We have revised our *Guidance for the Allegations of Misconduct in Research,* an exercise which included consultations with colleagues, in order to add further clarity to the process. The updated *Guidance* has received approval from Senate. Investigations and their outcomes continue to be reported in anonymised format at ERIC.

- In addition, we have also produced *Guidelines on Authorship,* which we are planning to incorporate into our library's *Good Publication Guide*.

- Our institutional research data management policy has been refreshed and, together with an implementation plan, will be submitted to Senate for final approval.

- In this last year we have appointed a Public Involvement and Engagement Manager, who has developed a robust process for patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in research. The process has included a model of co-production and co-design of research of ARU academics with members of the public. It has been developed with significant input from professional members of staff, academics, and external experts, who participated in a number of consultations, including a steering group and advisory board. Formal launch events took place in June 2023, in order to introduce the new process to ARU academics and create a platform for exchanging best practices. In September 2023, recruitment and induction of members of the public commenced for the ARU Panel of Public Collaborators. We hope that an increase in public involvement will help to enhance the relevance, inclusivity and authenticity of our research.

- A wellbeing group has been established to provide support for researchers working in sensitive or challenging areas. This is now covered in the research ethics process and related activities, such as staff and student wellbeing awareness training and support for researchers, are under development.

During the 2022/23 academic year, research misconduct by a PhD student was formally investigated. The investigation found that research ethics approval had not been obtained, and that data had been fabricated. The outcome for the student was

expulsion from the university with no academic credit attained, in accordance with *ARU Research Degrees Regulations*. The ARU Ethics and Research Integrity Committee (ERIC) has considered lessons learned from this case, including implications for supervisor training with respect to monitoring and verifying data collection activities.

Our Faculty of Business and Law had an action plan in place, as detailed in last year's Statement, to address issues with their DBA programme. This plan has now been fully implemented.

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