

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Ethical Code

Introduction

1. The University of Stirling is committed to the highest ethical standards across all of its activities and at all levels. Our Strategic Plan (2011 – 2016) sets out the shared values by which we operate. Of fundamental importance to the University's conduct are the principles of integrity, respect and quality. We value ethical behaviour, we believe everyone should be treated with respect, we will deal with people as equals and we strive to maintain the highest quality in all that we do.

Purpose

2. The University of Stirling has in place an ethical framework composed of principles, detailed policies and procedures covering all aspects of the University's activities. The Ethical Code provides the overarching ethical principles which the University adheres to and it acts as an index to the policies and assurances that are in place. These policies and procedures are detailed below under the headings of research and knowledge exchange, student experience, teaching and learning, corporate activities, governance and leadership. Taken together, the Ethical Code and the framework of policies to which it refers, ensures that the University behaves ethically in all of its actions and provides a culture which supports and promotes ethical integrity.

Definition

3. This code is concerned with ethics in its broadest sense. 'Ethics' are defined by the Woolf Report as covering 'the ethical identity of the institution – including how it understands and articulates its values – as well as how those values are embodied in policy and practice'.¹

Principles

4. The University is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, accountability and respect. We seek to conduct our affairs in a responsible and ethical manner. It is enshrined in the University's Financial Regulations that we will conduct our business in accordance with the principles established by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. These principles are:
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness

¹ The Woolf Inquiry, 'An inquiry into the LSE's links with Libya and lessons to be learned', October 2011
<http://www.woolfse.com/dl/woolf-lse-report.pdf>

- Honesty
- Leadership

Research and Knowledge Exchange

5. The Code of Good Research Practice provides a comprehensive guide to the University's ethical research review process and structure. The ethical review process is designed to ensure research activities are carried out in accordance with high standards of ethics, safety and integrity in addition to legal requirements. Our research is guided by the principles established by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and is conducted objectively, openly and in accordance with public interest (selflessness).
6. Processes for ethical review are overseen by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) which is Chaired by a lay member of Court. The remit of the group includes developing, implementing and keeping under review arrangements to quality assure the ethical review process. The committee reports to University Court.
7. Schools and Divisions operate their own ethics committees which report to, and are scrutinised by the UREC.
8. The University upholds the standards set out by the Concordat on Research Integrity which has been established by the sector.² Any research conducted which involves animals strictly observes the letter and spirit of all relevant legislation. We meet rigorous ethical requirements set by research funders and observe the practices recommended by learned societies and discipline bodies, such as:
 - Economic and Social Research Council Framework for Research Ethics <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research-ethics.aspx>
 - Research Councils UK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct; <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf>
 - NHS National Research Ethics Service <http://www.nres.nhs.uk/> and relevant Research Governance Frameworks; <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/resources/research-legislation-and-governance/research-governance-frameworks/>
 - British Psychological Society Code of Ethics; <http://www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/ethics-standards/ethics-standards>
 - Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986; <https://www.gov.uk/research-and-testing-using-animals>
 - British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines; <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines>
 - UK Research Integrity Office guidelines; <http://www.ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Code-of-Practice-for-Research.pdf>

²<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf>

9. The University has in place Guidelines for Allegations of Research Misconduct and a procedure to guide the investigation of any such allegations in an objective and fair manner.
10. Stirling is committed to openness in its research activities and supports the principle that the outcomes of research should be made freely and publically available. We are committed to disseminating the new knowledge and outputs from our research. Our policies on open access publishing and research data management reflect this commitment.

Further information:

Code of Good Research Practice	http://www.goodresearchpractice.stir.ac.uk/ethics/index.php
Guidelines for Allegations of Research Misconduct	http://www.goodresearchpractice.stir.ac.uk/documents/FINAL_PROCEDUREFORHANDLINGALLEGATIONSOFRESEARCHMISCONDUCT.pdf
Open Access and Article Processing Charge Policy	http://www.stir.ac.uk/is/researchers/writing/publishingimpact/openaccesspublishing/#OA
Research Data Management Policy	PPGcommittees@stir.ac.uk

Student experience

11. The University of Stirling has a duty of care for all students of the University. We promote a culture of inclusive learning and cross-fertilisation of ideas where students are encouraged to challenge, critique and seek out knowledge. We believe that all students, regardless of their background and personal circumstances, should be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. In return, all students and staff have a responsibility to treat colleagues and peers with dignity and respect. Students are expected to maintain high standards of personal and academic behaviour during the course of their studies.
12. We support the right of our students to be involved in student union activities and we encourage students and union representatives to enter into dialogue with us on our policies and procedures, including those related to ethics.
13. As an institution with a special sporting status, 'Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence', we are committed to being a leader in ethical standards in all activities relating to sport and exercise. This extends to fair play in rules, regulations and penalties, health and safety and the recruitment of student athletes. The Sports Union has a Code of Conduct to which all members agree to adhere.

Further information:

Anti-bullying and harassment policy - students	http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/rules-regulations/documents/rules-and-regulations-anti-bullying-and-harassment-policy-students.pdf
Code of Student Discipline	http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/documents/2-ordinances-code-of-student-discipline.pdf
Student Handbook	http://www.student-support.stir.ac.uk/az/
Constitution of the Students' Association	http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/documents/1-ordinances-constitution-of-the-students-association.pdf
Sports Union Code of Conduct	theunion@stir.ac.uk

Teaching and Learning

14. Integrity in the University's teaching and learning activities is assured by a comprehensive range of policies, guidelines and regulations. We support students on their learning journey, maintaining a high quality student experience, providing a curriculum which is relevant, distinctive, inclusive and engaged with the world.

Further information:

Policies and procedures for supervising and examining research students	http://www.ifs.stir.ac.uk/research/research-home.php
Code of Practice for the Support of Postgraduate Research Students:	http://www.research.stir.ac.uk/documents/CodeofPracticefortheSupportofResearchStudents.pdf
Regulations governing research postgraduate study	http://www.research.stir.ac.uk/postgraduate-information/handbook/index.php
Student examination appeals procedures	http://www.quality.stir.ac.uk/ac-policy/stud-ac-appeal.php
Regulations governing access to honours courses and undergraduate progression.	http://www.portal.stir.ac.uk/general/calendar/calendar.pdf http://www.aro.stir.ac.uk/student-programmes/undergraduateprogression.php
Policies and procedures for disciplinary proceedings against students	http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/documents/2-ordinances-code-of-student-discipline.pdf
Procedures for handling complaints	http://www.stir.ac.uk/complaints/

Corporate Activities

15. The University of Stirling receives and seeks charitable donations from a range of sources. This work is conducted in accordance with the University's Ethical Gift Policy. This policy is intended to ensure that the University operates ethically and honestly in relation to the receipt of gifts, and that processes for scrutinising and accepting or refusing gifts are open and transparent. The University follows ethical practices in fundraising as documented by CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education).
16. 'Ethical' donations are defined as those which are considered to meet the standards, values and mission of the University of Stirling. 'Illegal donations' are defined as those which are considered to have arisen from national or international activities which would be considered illegal or meet 'tainted donation' criteria under UK laws. The University will never accept an illegal donation.
17. The University does not intentionally directly invest in, work with or accept gifts from organisations or industries associated with tobacco or substances which are solely injurious to health, undermine community cohesion, threaten international stability, or contribute to the development and maintenance of poverty, the abuse of children and the use of torture. The University's relations with the tobacco industry are guided by the

Codes of Practice issued by Cancer Research UK.³ ⁴ The procedure for considering situations where there is ethical ambiguity or identified risks is outlined in paragraph 25.

18. The University has in place a Socially Responsible Investment Policy which aims to ensure the University's funds are invested in such a way that the impact of social and environmental factors is considered. The Policy is intended to cover the investment of endowments, gifts and the procurement of goods and services.
19. The Director of Finance is responsible for Procurement Services and for ensuring that purchasing throughout the University conforms to European Union, national, legal, ethical and institutional requirements.

Further information

Purchasing and procurement policies	http://www.procurement.stir.ac.uk/policy/index.php
Fraud Policy	http://www.finance.stir.ac.uk/documents/FinRegs-Final.pdf
Share Investment Policy	http://www.finance.stir.ac.uk/documents/FinRegs-Final.pdf
Ethical Gift Policy	Planning@stir.ac.uk
Socially Responsible Investment Policy	Planning@stir.ac.uk

Governance and Leadership

20. The University has in place a range of policies to ensure high standards of integrity and ethics in governance. Our governance structures and arrangements adhere to the standards set by the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.⁵
21. In addition to University policies and standards, staff and students subscribe to relevant professional codes of conducts as required, such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council Code of Conduct. If an incompatibility between the University's principles and those of the relevant professional bodies is observed, this will be reviewed using the procedure set out under paragraph 25.
22. The environment promoted at the University is one of mutual respect, integrity and openness. The University's leaders take responsibility for promoting an ethical culture which supports integrity and which is underpinned by the Ethical Code.
23. Our Human Resources policies uphold the principle that we will deal with people as individuals. We have a comprehensive set of Equality Outcomes in place and have achieved the Athena SWAN Bronze award recognising support for female academics in science, technology, engineering, maths and medical disciplines.
24. University Court is accountable for matters relating to ethics and integrity. University Court oversees a committee structure designed to ensure effective, rigorous governance and which monitors and promotes ethical behaviour in accordance with the Standards in

³ The Tobacco Industry includes companies directly involved in the manufacture and sale of tobacco products and those companies who derive more than 15% of their revenues or income from the manufacture of products & supply of services necessary for the production &/or primary sale of tobacco products.

⁴ <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/science/funding/terms-conditions/funding-policies/policy-tobacco/>

⁵ <http://www.scottishuniversitygovernance.ac.uk/>

Public Life. The Research Ethics Committee considers, and has oversight of all research related ethical matters whereas the Education and Student Experience Committee considers ethical issues relating to students. Both groups work alongside the University's Equality Steering Group which has a cross-cutting remit.

Further information:

Whistleblowing/Public Interest Disclosure policy	http://www.personnel.stir.ac.uk/documents/PublicinterestdisclosureapproveJun2012.pdf
Financial Regulations	http://www.finance.stir.ac.uk/documents/FinRegs-Final.pdf
Human Resource and Organisational Development Policies	http://www.hr-services.stir.ac.uk/policies-procedures/index.php
Equality policy and commitments	http://www.diversityandequality.stir.ac.uk/index.php
Data protection policy	http://www.guides.stir.ac.uk/dataprotectionguide.htm
Register of Lay Member Interests	http://www.strategicplanning.stir.ac.uk/documents/CURRENTRegisterofInterests.pdf
Health and Safety Policies	http://www.foi.stir.ac.uk/health-safe/index.php
Statement of Primary Responsibilities of Court	http://www.strategicplanning.stir.ac.uk/documents/Primaryresponsibilities2012.pdf

Managing ethical issues

25. The University Secretary has ultimate responsibility for the Ethical Code. The process for considering any ethical issues which may fall outwith existing established procedures is as follows:
- Approach is made to a member of University staff regarding an ethical consideration which falls outwith existing policies and procedures
 - Staff member advises the Head of Policy and Planning
 - The Policy and Planning Team will investigate the matter and refer to the University Secretary for comment and decision on any action to be taken
 - Where necessary, the University Secretary will consult the Chair of Court regarding the decision or action to be taken.

Review

26. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary as a result of changes to legislation or related internal or external policy.

Policy and Planning

May 2014

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