

## Procedure for Investigating Breaches of Research Integrity

(April 2026)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University of the West of England (“UWE”, also “University”) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and integrity in relation to research and subscribes to the principles of the [UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).
- 1.2. Breach of research integrity is serious and could lead to disciplinary and legal procedures. This Procedure for Investigating Breaches of Research Integrity (“the Procedure”) details examples of research misconduct and questionable research practices (“QRPs”) and outlines the processes to be followed when UWE is alerted to concerns about the conduct of research. This is whether the conduct is related to potential/suspected research misconduct or QRPs undertaken under the auspices of UWE.
- 1.3. The Procedure assures that the process of dealing with concerns of breaches of research integrity is robust, fair, transparent, consistent, undertaken with sensitivity and in a timely manner.
- 1.4. The University’s procedures are intended to assure both those who raise concerns of breaches of research integrity, and those against whom concerns are raised, that any concerns will be taken seriously and investigated with integrity.
- 1.5. The Procedure has been developed with reference to the UK Research Integrity Office’s ‘[Detailed template procedure for investigating breaches of research integrity](#) (2025)’.
- 1.6. This Procedure will be reviewed every 3 years.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. This Procedure applies to all current and former employees of UWE, research students registered for an MPhil, a DPhil, PhD, or a Professional Doctorate, emeritus staff, visiting academics, staff with honorary UWE positions or joint clinical staff, contractors and consultants and former students and staff not now at UWE but who were conducting research under the auspices of UWE at the time the alleged breach of research integrity occurred. This Procedure does not cover research undertaken by undergraduate or postgraduate taught students.
- 2.2. Concerns about a breach of research integrity relating specifically to the assessed element of a research degree, i.e. to a thesis which has been submitted for examination, will be investigated under the [Academic Conduct Policy and Academic Misconduct Procedures](#). However, if the alleged conduct affects a published piece of research work or the supervisor is implicated in the complaint, or the student is also an employee of the University, then this Procedure will apply. In cases involving current and former students, a finding of research misconduct could lead to formal disciplinary sanctions,

up to and including removal of University membership, removal of academic awards and permanent exclusion.

- 2.3. The person raising concerns about a potential breach of research integrity is referred to in this Procedure as the Initiator. They do not need to be a member of UWE.
- 2.4. The person against whom concerns have been raised is referred to as the Respondent.
- 2.5. If the Respondent is not currently at UWE, the investigation will follow this Procedure as far as possible. In such cases UWE will determine what actions to take in relation to the investigation and the outcome on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.6. This Procedure is not part of the University's formal disciplinary procedures, nor does it override such procedures. However, the outcome of an investigation under this Procedure may be to initiate other University procedures, including the [Procedure for dealing with Matters of Conduct](#) ("Conduct Procedure"). Concerns about the conduct of research will normally be considered first under this Procedure, prior to any referral to a disciplinary procedure. Any evidence identified or produced through this Procedure and the report of the Full Investigation may be considered as part of any subsequent University processes, including a disciplinary process.
- 2.7. When concerns of breaches of research integrity are raised that relate to allegations of bullying or harassment, the University will determine whether they will be investigated under this Procedure or under the [Dignity and Respect Policy](#). Similarly, if the concerns relate to financial fraud or misuse of research funds, the investigation may be addressed under the procedures set out in the [University's Anti-Bribery Policy](#). If there is concern of malpractice related to financial, procedural or governance issues, and which does not constitute a breach of research integrity, the allegation may be reviewed under the [Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure](#).

### 3. Definition of breach of research integrity

- 3.1. This Procedure investigates concerns about the conduct of research, where the conduct is inconsistent with the standards of research integrity identified in UWE's [Code of Practice for Research](#). Breach of Research Integrity refers to instances when conduct of research falls short of standards of research integrity, whether due to:
  - a) research misconduct;
  - b) QRPs; or
  - c) error.
- 3.2. Research misconduct constitutes the behaviours and actions that fall short of the principles in Commitment 1 of the [Concordat](#) 'Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity', occurring at any point in the research lifecycle. This includes behaviours associated with the ideation of research proposals, partnering with other individuals and institutions, reviewing the work of others, and the reporting of research findings. Research has integrity when it is carried out according to the principles of the Concordat, and in a way that is trustworthy, ethical and responsible, this includes instances when GenAI is used as part of the research process.
- 3.3. Research misconduct can take many forms, including but not limited to:
  - a. **fabrication**: making up results, other outputs (for example, artefacts) or

aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, and presenting and/or recording them as if they were real

- b. **falsification:** inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery and/or consents
- c. **plagiarism:** using other people's ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without acknowledgement or permission
- d. **failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations**, for example:
  - not observing legal, ethical and other requirements for human research participants, animal subjects, or human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment
  - breach of duty of care for humans involved in research whether deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence, including failure to obtain appropriate informed consent
  - misuse of personal data, including inappropriate disclosures of the identity of research participants and other breaches of confidentiality
  - improper conduct in peer review of research proposals, results, or manuscripts submitted for publication. This includes: failure to disclose conflicts of interest; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence; misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for the purposes of peer review
- e. **misrepresentation** of:
  - data, including suppression of relevant results/data or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence presenting a flawed interpretation of data
  - involvement, including inappropriate claims to authorship or attribution of work and denial of authorship/attribution to persons who have made an appropriate contribution
  - interests, including failure to declare competing interests of researchers or funders of a study
  - qualifications, experience and/or credentials
  - publication history, through undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication
- f. **improper dealing with allegations of misconduct:** failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers, or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding. Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties through the use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements.

3.4. The basis for reaching a conclusion that an individual is responsible for a breach of research integrity relies on a judgement that, on a balance of probabilities, there was

either an intention to commit the breach and/or recklessness/negligence in the conduct of any aspect of the research project.

- 3.5. For the avoidance of doubt, misconduct in research includes acts of omission as well as acts of commission.
- 3.6. **Questionable research practice** refers to minor infractions of research practices, including avoidable errors, which fall short of the definition of research misconduct. They may arise due to a lack of knowledge or attention to detail, negligence, or deliberate action, and may occur where there is no evident intention to deceive. See Annex 1 for examples of what may amount to questionable research practices.
- 3.7. Researchers must comply with any legislation or governance requirements that apply to the conduct of their research.

#### **4. Key features and raising concerns of breaching research integrity**

- 4.1. The Chair of the University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC) is the designated Named Person with regards to the Procedure and shall have overall responsibility for any proceedings under this Procedure and shall determine the procedure to be followed and/or any actions to be taken in cases of doubt. The Named Person has a nominated alternate, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange (“Alternative Named Person”), who will carry out the role in their absence or in the case of any potential or actual conflict of interest.
- 4.2. The Named Person will be supported throughout the Procedure by the Research Integrity Governance and Ethics (RIGE) Office, who will normally provide confidential secretariat support at all stages of the proceedings save where otherwise stated. If deemed necessary the Named Person may ask for support from Human Resources, Student Services or any other organisation and/or individual at any point of the process.
- 4.3. Those selected to assist the Named Person, and those involved in the investigation at any stage of this Procedure will confirm to the Named Person in writing that:
  - their participation involves no conflict of interest, seeking advice from the Named Person if unsure;
  - they will abide by the Procedure; and
  - they will respect the confidentiality of the proceedings.
- 4.4. The Procedure should be conducted as confidentially as is reasonably practicable. The confidential nature of the proceedings should be maintained provided this does not compromise either the investigation of the breach of research integrity, any requirements of health and safety, any issue related to the safety of participants in research, or the ability to implement outcomes. There can be no release of confidentiality without the prior consent of the Named Person.
- 4.5. If required to facilitate a full and fair investigation and/or the operation of any aspect of this Procedure, the Named Person, those persons and panels conducting and supporting Initial Investigations and Full Investigations shall be free to seek confidential advice from persons with relevant expertise, both within UWE and outside it. To address technical aspects raised by a matter, they may also employ relevant expertise and use of tools or computer software.

- 4.6. Confidential records will be maintained on all aspects, and during all stages of the Procedure. Notes will be made of all meetings convened under the Procedure and a written record of all decisions taken. The RIGE Office will retain all reports, correspondence, transcripts of meetings and other documentation relating to the operation of this Procedure.
- 4.7. The Initiator and the Respondent may be accompanied at any meeting convened under this Procedure by a colleague or recognised union or professional association representative and will be informed of that right in any correspondence with them.
- 4.8. The Initiator may be asked to make a statement or attend an investigatory meeting at any point of the Procedure.
- 4.9. The University may choose to investigate matters of concern under this Procedure at its own instigation and consider matters that are not raised by an Initiator. Such matters may come to the attention of the University by other means. For example, via the RIGE Office if it comes to their knowledge that research was conducted without ethical approval.
- 4.10. UWE will follow this Procedure through to its natural end point as far as possible even if:
  - any individual(s) concerned leaves or has left the jurisdiction of the University, either before the operation of this Procedure is concluded or before the concern(s) regarding the breach of research integrity was raised; or
  - the Initiator(s) withdraws the concern raised at any stage; or
  - the Respondent(s) admits the alleged breach in full or in part; or
  - the Respondent(s) admits a breach of research integrity, whether research misconduct or otherwise; and/or
  - the Initiator(s) and/or the Respondent(s) withdraws from the Procedure.
- 4.11. This Procedure is divided into the following stages, which are described in more detail below:
  - Reviewing a concern;
  - Initial Investigation;
  - Full Investigation;
  - Outcomes, follow-up actions and reporting; and
  - Appeal.

## **5. Reviewing a concern**

The purpose of this stage is to receive concerns about possible breaches of research integrity. The primary aim is to determine whether the matter falls to be investigated under this Procedure. Its aim is not to investigate the substance of the matter raised.

- 5.1. Any concern(s) regarding a breach of research integrity should be submitted in writing to the RIGE Manager (researchgovernance@uwe.ac.uk). Initiators should provide a summary of the concern(s) along with any other information relied upon and enclose any evidence to support their concern(s). They should also provide their contact details or those of a nominated representative. The concern(s) raised will be passed on, in confidence, to the Named Person.

- 5.2. Those raising a concern should normally put their name to the concerns they raise. Matters raised which are anonymous, or where there is no specific Initiator, will be considered at the discretion of the Named Person.
- 5.3. The RIGE Manager shall acknowledge the receipt of the concern by the Initiator in writing within 3 working days, informing them that the concern will be considered initially under the 'Reviewing a concern' stage of the Procedure. A copy of the Procedure will be provided to the Initiator.
- 5.4. The Named Person will check the status of the Respondent to ascertain whether they fall under the definition of those individuals covered by the Procedure, as stated in paragraph 2.1 above.
- 5.5. Should the initial assessment show that the concerns raised do not meet the requirements set out in 2.1. and/or section 3, the Named Person can dismiss the concerns or refer them to an alternative internal or external procedure or authority, as appropriate.
- 5.6. The Named Person may decide that it is necessary to contact the Initiator and/or the Respondent to seek information or ask questions to carry out the assessment. They will do so in writing. The Initiator and Respondent would not normally be interviewed at this stage. If it is necessary to contact the Respondent, they will first be informed that a concern(s) has been raised relating to them and that it is being assessed to determine what, if any, action should be taken.
- 5.7. The Initiator and Respondent shall each provide as early as possible following a request all relevant information to the RIGE Office and/or the Named Person.
- 5.8. The Named Person will determine whether the matter raised and/or the research project(s) in question concerns situations that require immediate interim measures to prevent further risk or harm to staff, research participants or other persons, suffering of animals or negative environmental consequences (where this might contravene the law or fall below good practice). If so, then the Named Person will take immediate appropriate interim measures to ensure that any such potential or actual harm/illegal activity/risk is prevented, eliminated, or mitigated. It may be necessary to notify legal or regulatory authorities or relevant professional bodies, and/or relevant partner organisations, publishers and funders. The Respondent may also need to be informed when carrying out any such measures whether because they will be involved in some or all the actions and/or because they will become aware of them.
- 5.9. The Named Person will determine whether the research project(s) to which the concern relates includes legal or contractual obligations that require the University to undertake prescribed steps in the event of concerns being raised, such as making reports to a regulatory or a funding body and take any actions necessary. Such obligations might be in:
  - a contract/agreement or guidance on research conduct from a regulator or a funding body; or
  - a partnership contract/ agreement/ Memorandum of Understanding; or
  - an agreement to sponsor the research.

- 5.10. The Named Person will determine whether the concern(s) raised falls under one or more of the following outcomes:
- it potentially falls under the definition of breaches of research integrity and should advance under this Procedure; or
  - it relates to an error or a QRP of a non-serious and/or non-complex nature and therefore the initial approach to addressing the matter will be via informal measures; or
  - it falls within the scope of another formal procedure of the University and should be referred directly to it; or
  - it will be referred directly to an external organisation, for example the research organisation(s) under whose auspices the research in question took place; statutory regulators; or professional bodies; or
  - it should be dismissed.
- 5.11. The Named Person will determine, at their discretion, whether the concern(s) raised should proceed to an Initial Investigation or a Full Investigation.
- 5.12. Where the outcome determined is that it should proceed to either an Initial Investigation or Full Investigation, the Named Person will inform the Respondent of the following: that a concern relating to the conduct of research has been made that involves them; they will summarise the concern and provide a copy of the Procedure; and that the Named Person has determined that the matter falls under this Procedure and therefore will proceed to either the Initial or Full Investigation stage.
- 5.13. For all other outcomes, the Procedure moves to the Outcomes, Follow-up Actions and Reporting stage and/or Resolution using informal measures (Annex 2), as appropriate to the outcome reached above.
- 5.14. This stage, to include all appropriate checks and notifications to the Initiator(s) and/or Respondent(s), should aim to be completed within 15 working days after the acknowledgment of the concern(s) being sent. In cases where completion of this stage may extend beyond the 15 working days, the RIGE Office and/or Named Person will communicate this to interested parties.
- 5.15. The Named Person shall inform the Initiator and the RIGE Office of the conclusions of the review of the concerns they have raised and outline the next steps.

## **6. Initial Investigation**

Where initiated, the purpose of this stage is to determine whether the concern(s) raised meets the criteria for a Full Investigation under this Procedure or whether alternative action(s) should be taken.

- 6.1. The Named Person or their alternate will nominate at least one individual ('the Investigator') to undertake an initial investigation (the 'Initial Investigation'). The Investigator(s) will normally be senior members of academic staff and may be from within or outside the School/College or Professional service concerned depending on the circumstances of the case and at the discretion of the Named Person.

- 6.2. The notification of the nominated Investigator(s) will ordinarily be made to the Initiator and Respondent within 10 working days of the conclusion of the Reviewing a concern stage.
- 6.3. The Named Person will provide the Investigator with all relevant information including any correspondence and information already provided in support of the allegation(s). The Investigator will keep a full record of the evidence received and of the investigation and should be supported in this by the administrative and other support identified.
- 6.4. The Investigator will then contact the Initiator and the Respondent to gather information in support of the Initial Investigation.
- 6.5. The Investigator(s) may seek additional evidence and information from the Initiator to support the allegation, such as research data and proposals, publications, correspondence, emails and memoranda of telephone calls. If required, this information can be obtained by the Investigator(s) from another source, from within or outside UWE. All relevant information and evidence provided will be shared with the Respondent (unless there is a lawful or commercial basis on which to withhold the information), and may be used if any further formal procedures are to be taken following the Initial Investigation Stage.
- 6.6. The Named Person will give the Respondent an opportunity to respond to the concern(s) at an appropriate time at this Stage. Should it not prove possible, after a reasonable number of attempts, to contact the Respondent, or should the Respondent refuse to participate in the investigation, the investigation may continue without the Respondent's participation.
- 6.7. The Investigator may also contact relevant witnesses suggested by the Initiator or Respondent or on their own initiative.
- 6.8. Where the allegation(s) relates to a large body of work, or work carried out over a significant period, the Investigator(s) will need to carry out a sufficient investigation to reach a robust conclusion on the allegation(s). This can take time and resources, and advice should be sought from the Named Person on how to best approach this.
- 6.9. After the Initial Investigation, the Investigator will determine whether the concern(s) raised:
  - is sufficiently serious and has sufficient substance to warrant a Full Investigation; or
  - has some substance but due to its relatively minor nature or because it relates to an error or QRP will be addressed via informal measures; or
  - warrants referral directly to another formal process of the University; or
  - warrants referral directly to an external organisation;
  - is unfounded, because it is frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious, and will be dismissed; or
  - is unfounded for any other reason, and will be dismissed.
- 6.10. The Investigator(s) will prepare a written report of the outcome, setting out the evidence which has been evaluated.
- 6.11. A summary of the findings will be sent to the Initiator and the Respondent for comment on matters of factual accuracy. The Initiator and Respondent will have 5 working days to

comment. The Investigator will consider the responses received and if they consider that the report includes errors of fact, will modify the report as necessary.

- 6.12. The Initial Investigation should normally take no more than 35 working days from the date when the Investigator(s) has been appointed until the delivery of the final report to the Named Person. Should the Investigator(s) determine that more time will be needed to complete the Initial Investigation, the Investigator(s) should seek the permission of the Named Person to extend this deadline. The Named Person or RIGE Office will inform the Respondent and the Initiator of any extension to the deadline and the reasons for this.
- 6.13. The Investigator(s) will provide the Named Person with the final version of the report and records/material relating to the investigation. The report will set out the outcome of the Initial Investigation, and any other matters they wish to draw to the attention of the University.
- 6.14. The Named Person will provide a copy of the Investigators' report to the Initiator, the Respondent and such other persons or bodies (unless there is a lawful or commercial basis on which to withhold the information).
- 6.15. If it is found that the allegation is frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious, the Named Person will refer the matter for consideration under the relevant disciplinary procedure in relation to the Initiator if they are a member of the University.
- 6.16. The work of the Investigator(s) is then concluded, and they play no further role in the Procedure or any subsequent disciplinary procedure, apart from clarifying any points in their report. As the matter may then give rise to disciplinary or other action, a former Investigator should not make any comment on the matter in question, unless formally permitted by the University or otherwise required to by law. They should also remember that all information concerning the case was given to them in confidence.
- 6.17. Any queries or requests for comment addressed to the Investigator should be referred to the Named Person.
- 6.18. The Initial Investigation stage now ends.

## **7. Full Investigation Stage**

The purpose of a Full Investigation is to examine and evaluate all the available evidence and findings made so far further to this Procedure and carry out any further investigation in order to recommend what action should ensue.

- 7.1. The Named Person will inform the following that a Full Investigation of the concern(s) raised is to take place:
  - Respondent (and her/his representative by agreement);
  - Initiator (and her/his representative by agreement);
  - Vice Chancellor of the University and the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost;
  - Chief People Officer; and,
  - Pro Vice-Chancellor Head of College or Head of Service.

The Named Person will also consider whether it is appropriate to inform their equivalent at any organisation with which the Respondent has any relevant known employment relationship.

- 7.2. The Named Person shall nominate members of the Full Investigation Panel (“the Panel”) for approval by the Vice Chancellor or a nominated deputy. The Vice Chancellor, or their deputy, may veto nominations for the Panel, recording the reasons for the veto in writing. The Panel shall consist of at least three persons, and always an uneven number, one of whom shall be external to the University. At the discretion of the Named Person, the Panel may include multiple external members. At least one member will be from outside the Respondent’s School/College or Professional service. At least two members of the Panel shall be academic specialists in the general area within which the breach of research integrity is alleged to have taken place. Where allegations concern highly specialised areas of research the Panel should have at least one member with specialised knowledge of the field. Such specialists can be drawn from within the University, or from the Panel's external member(s). For allegations that involve staff on joint clinical/honorary contracts a representation from the other employing organisation(s) may be included. In these circumstances, they are not classified as the external member of the Panel.
- 7.3. The Named Person will select one of the members of the Panel to act as its Chair. In the event of the Chair becoming unable to participate in the Full Investigation stage once it is underway, the Named Person will select a new Chair from the members of the Panel and then consider the overall membership of the Panel. At the discretion of the Named Person, the Chair may be selected from the Panel's external members.
- 7.4. The Named Person will notify the Initiator and Respondent of the members of the Panel as soon as possible.
- 7.5. The Respondent and Initiator may raise with the Named Person concerns that they may have about those chosen as members of the Panel within 3 working days of notification but neither has a right of veto over those nominated. The Named Person will consider any concerns raised and whether or not new persons should be selected to carry out the Full Investigation Stage.
- 7.6. In cases with complex legal or evidential issues, the Named Person may appoint internal and/or external legal counsel to chair the Panel and/or to provide legal assistance to the Panel.
- 7.7. The Named Person or RIGE Office will provide the Chair and each member of the Panel with:
  - a copy of this Procedure;
  - details of the concern(s) raised which will be considered under the Full Investigation stage;
  - a copy of the Named Person's note of the Reviewing a concern(s) stage;
  - a copy of the report of the Initial Investigation stage (if applicable);
  - other records from the Initial Investigation stage (if applicable) as deemed relevant by the Named Person;
  - names and contact details of the Initiator(s) and the Respondent(s);

- relevant correspondence with the Initiator(s) and the Respondent(s) to date; and
  - any relevant evidence secured by the Named Person during the Receipt of Allegations stage or by the Investigator during the Initial Investigation stage (if applicable).
- 7.8. After the Full Investigation, the Panel will conclude, giving the reasons for its decision, whether the matter raised is:
- a) upheld in full or in part as misconduct in research; or
  - b) it relates to QRPs rather than research misconduct and will be addressed through informal measures; or
  - c) will be referred directly to another formal process of UWE; or
  - d) warrants referral directly to an external organisation; or
  - e) is unfounded, because it is frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious, and will be dismissed; or
  - f) is unfounded for any other reason and will be dismissed.
- 7.9. The Panel may also make recommendations, for consideration by the Named Person and /or appropriate UWE authorities, regarding any further action(s) which should be taken by UWE and/or other bodies to address any misconduct the Full Investigation may have found; correct the record of research, and/or address other matters uncovered.
- 7.10. The Chair of the Panel will be responsible for the conduct of the proceedings during the Full Investigation. The Panel shall decide its way of working based on the information it needs and in what manner it will proceed, for example interview statement or any other appropriate means of investigation. Should the Initiator or the Respondent refuse to participate, the investigation may continue without their participation.
- 7.11. When making any decisions about the conduct or conclusion of the Full Investigation, the Panel may reach the decision by majority consensus.
- 7.12. Following the conclusion of its investigation and inquiry, the Panel will produce a written report within 40 working days of its findings, including whether or not the allegations are upheld. Appropriate extracts of the draft report of the Full Investigation will be provided to the Initiator and the Respondent for comment on matters of factual accuracy. They will have 10 working days to provide their comments from the date such draft is provided to them. The Chair will consider the responses received and if they consider that the report includes errors of fact, will modify the report as necessary.
- 7.13. The Panel will submit their final written report to the Named Person as soon as possible, together with their recommendations regarding further actions to be taken and any other matters they wish to draw to the attention of the University. The Chair and Panel will also hand over to the Named Person or their nominated representative all records/ material relating to the Full Investigation.
- 7.14. The Named Person will provide a copy of the Investigators' report to the Initiator, the Respondent and such other persons or bodies (unless there is a lawful or commercial basis on which to withhold the information).
- 7.15. The work of the Panel is concluded, and the Panel has no further involvement in the Procedure unless formally asked to clarify a point in their written report at the Appeal stage or as part of any subsequent action or process.

## **8. Outcomes, follow-up actions and reporting stage**

The purpose of this stage is to decide the outcome(s) and ensure that all necessary actions are taken at the conclusion of this Procedure. The Named Person is responsible for ensuring that the actions described here are carried out. Some actions may require the involvement of other departments within UWE or external organisations.

- 8.1. The Named Person, working with RIGE Office, and with others as necessary, will take further action(s) as deemed necessary to address any misconduct the investigation may have found; correct the record of research, and/or address other matters uncovered during the course of the investigation.
- 8.2. If the conclusion of the Procedure is that the concern(s) has substance but due to its relatively minor nature or because it relates to QRP rather than to research misconduct, it will be addressed through informal measures (Annex 2).
- 8.3. If all or any part of the concern(s) against the Respondent are upheld, the Named Person, Chief People Officer (or nominee), and at least one other member of senior staff will decide whether the matter should be referred to the University's Conduct Procedure or for other formal action.
- 8.4. Should the concerns proceed to UWE's disciplinary process, the report of the Full Investigation Panel will form the basis of the evidence that the disciplinary panel receives. Relevant information collected and brought to light through the Procedure will be transferred to the disciplinary process.
- 8.5. Following the conclusion of the Procedure, the Named Person may recommend further measures in addition to those that may be taken by way of UWE's disciplinary process.
- 8.6. Examples of potential actions that UWE may consider include such issues as:
  - Recommendation for retraction/correction of published research, via notification of findings to editors/publishers;
  - withdrawal/repayment of funding;
  - notifying research participants and other involved parties;
  - notification of findings to other relevant employers, statutory, regulatory, professional, grant-awarding bodies or other public bodies with a relevant interest;
  - notifying other organisations involved in the research;
  - adding a note of the outcome of the investigation to a researcher's file for any future requests for references; and/or
  - review of internal management and/or training and/or supervisory procedures for research.
- 8.7. Where an investigation has established research misconduct relating to a significant body of work over some time, UWE will consider whether it needs to review other work carried out by the individual(s) concerned, including work not specifically identified as being of concern in the course of the investigation.
- 8.8. The Named Person will inform the Initiator and the Respondent of the following:
  - a) The actions arising from this stage of the Procedure and any relevant actions arising from earlier stages and, where relevant, the contact points of any follow-up communications regarding those actions.

- b) The options of appeal open to them.
  - c) That unless an appeal is raised, the investigation and the use of this Procedure have now concluded.
- 8.9. The Named Person and RIGE Office are involved in follow-up actions, or receive reports on them, as appropriate.
- 8.10. A role as the Named Person or RIGE Office rules out participation in any subsequent disciplinary process.

## **9. Appeal Stage**

The purpose of an Appeal stage is to permit the Initiator and/or the Respondent to appeal in certain circumstances against the findings made under this Procedure.

- 9.1. The Initiator and/or the Respondent may appeal against the findings made under this Procedure, including the decisions and/or recommendations associated with them.
- 9.2. Should either the Respondent or Initiator wish to appeal the findings of this Procedure, they can do so by making written representations to the Alternative Named Person within 10 working days of receipt of the decision that concludes this Procedure.
- 9.3. The Respondent or Initiator will set out the grounds of appeal and state whether the appeal is in respect of the whole or any specified part of any finding of fact or decision. The written notice of appeal should be accompanied by supporting documentation.
- 9.4. An appeal will only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:
- Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation up to and before the Appeal Panel that could have had a material impact on the outcome; or
  - fresh evidence becoming available which was not, and could not, have been made available to the Investigator(s) and/or the Full Investigation Panel; or
  - the recommendations made as part of an outcome of the Procedure/subsequent actions taken are either excessive or inadequate concerning the breach of research integrity found by the investigation.
- 9.5. Upon receipt of the written appeal, the Alternative Named Person shall assess the validity of the appeal on the grounds set out in 9.4. and notify the relevant party of their decision within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. The Alternative Named Person may, to assist with that assessment, seek information from any relevant party, to include the RIGE Office, the Respondent(s), the Initiator(s), or any of the Initial or Final Investigation Panel members.
- 9.6. If the appeal is to be heard, an Appeal Panel will be appointed. If the appeal is to be rejected, reasons will be given. The decision of the Alternative Named Person at this stage is final.
- 9.7. The Appeal Panel will consist of at least three senior (normally Pro-Vice Chancellor Head of College, or Professorial level) members of staff selected by the Alternative Named Person from those with relevant skills and experience to serve on such a Panel. No individual involved in the Appeal Panel will have been involved at any stage previously as an Investigator or as a member of a Full Investigation Panel or as the Named Person. The Named Person will not seek to influence the work of the Appeal Panel. At least one member of the Panel will have experience in the relevant area of research. Where allegations concern highly specialised areas of research the Appeal

- Panel will have at least one member with specialised knowledge of the field or will seek specialist advice where necessary for the consideration of the Appeal.
- 9.8. The Alternative Named Person will select one of the members of the Appeal Panel to act as its Chair. In the event of the Chair becoming unable to participate in the Appeal Stage once it is underway, the Alternative Named Person will select a new Chair from the members of the Appeal Panel and then consider the overall membership of the Appeal Panel.
  - 9.9. The Chair is responsible for keeping a full record of the work of the Appeal Panel and should be supported in this by the administrative and other support identified by the Alternative Named Person to assist the Panel.
  - 9.10. Both the Respondent and the Initiator will be informed of the membership of the Appeal Panel, and may raise with the Alternative Named Person any concerns that they may have about those chosen to serve on the Appeal Panel within 3 working days of being so informed, but do not have a right of veto over those selected. The Alternative Named Person will consider any concerns raised and whether or not new persons should be selected to serve on the Appeal Panel.
  - 9.11. The Appeal Panel shall be provided with all papers from the investigation, the Panel's proceedings, and the notice of appeal and supporting documentation.
  - 9.12. Any appeal should normally be heard within two months of the outcome of the investigation. Any delays to this timescale will be explained to the Initiator and the Respondent in writing, presenting an estimated revised date of completion. The Appeal Panel shall determine its own procedure and timetable and shall have the power to convene to allow any parties to make representations. When making any decisions about the conduct or conclusion of the Appeal Stage, the Appeal Panel will do so by reaching a majority consensus.
  - 9.13. The Appeal Panel shall have the power to uphold, reverse or modify the decision(s) or recommendation(s) of the Inquiry Panel based on the grounds listed in clause 9.4.
  - 9.14. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final.
  - 9.15. The Appeal Panel shall write a report setting out its conclusions, giving the reasons for its decision and recording any differing views.
  - 9.16. A summary of the conclusions will be sent to the Initiator and the Respondent for comment on matters of factual accuracy. The Appeal Panel will consider the responses received and if they consider that the report includes errors of fact, will modify the report as necessary.
  - 9.17. The Appeal Panel will then submit their final report to the Alternative Named Person. The Chair and Appeal Panel will also hand over to the Alternative Named Person or their nominated representative all records/ material relating to the Full Investigation.
  - 9.18. The Alternative Named Person shall convey the substance of the Appeal Panel's findings and recommendations to the Initiator, the Respondent and such other persons or bodies as they deem appropriate.
  - 9.19. The Alternative Named Person or the Named Person will then undertake the actions necessary to implement the conclusions of the Appeal Panel, following relevant provisions of the Outcomes, follow-up actions and reporting stage and liaising with the RIGE Office and others, within and/or external to UWE, as necessary.

- 9.20. The work of the Appeal Panel is then concluded, and the Appeal Panel should be disbanded. As the matter may then give rise to disciplinary or other action, the Chair and members of the disbanded Appeal Panel should not make any comment on the matter in question, unless formally permitted by UWE or otherwise required to by law. They should also remember that all information concerning the case was given to them in confidence.
- 9.21. Any queries or requests for comment addressed to the Chair or members of the Appeal Panel should be referred to the Alternative Named Person.
- 9.22. Those who have contributed to the disbanded Appeal Panel should have no further involvement in the Procedure unless formally asked to clarify a point in their written report at a subsequent stage or as part of any subsequent action or process.
- 9.23. A role as Chair or member of the Appeal Panel rules out participation in any subsequent disciplinary or other processes.
- 9.24. The Appeal stage now ends

## **ANNEX 1**

### **THE DEFINITION OF RESEARCH**

UWE has adopted the Research Excellence Framework (Research Excellence Framework 2021, Assessment framework and guidance on submissions, Annex C) definition of research, which is used in this Procedure. “(R)esearch is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research. It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.”

### **QUESTIONABLE RESEARCH PRACTICES**

#### **Accepted procedures (for research)**

Accepted research procedures include but are not limited to compliance with the following:

- gaining informed consent where required;
- gaining formal approval from relevant organisations where required;
- any protocols for research contained in any formal approval that has been given for the research;

- any protocols for research as defined in contracts or agreements with funding bodies and sponsors;
- any protocols approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) for a trial of medicinal products;
- any protocols for research set out in the guidelines of the employing institution and other relevant partner organisations;
- any protocols for research set out in the guidelines of appropriate recognised professional, academic, scientific, governmental, national and international bodies
- any procedures that are aimed at avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to humans, animals or the environment;
- good practice for the proper preservation and management of primary data, artefacts and materials.
- any existing guidance on good practice on research.

Accepted procedures do not include:

- un-consented to/unapproved variations of the above;
- failure to comply with the protocols and practices referred to above;
- any procedures that would encourage, or would lead to, breaches in the law.

## **ANNEX 2 Resolution using informal measures**

The decision that the matter can be addressed by informal measures can be made at any stage of the Procedure, including by an Appeal Panel.

- 1.1. The Named Person and/or RIGE Office may seek advice from colleagues to determine which informal measure they apply to the situation in question. Informal measures can take many forms, and some examples are given below.
  - a. Education, training and other development activities;
  - b. Enhanced supervision/ oversight of research activities;
  - c. Restriction of research activities;
  - d. Mentoring;
  - e. Mediation between involved parties;
  - f. Awareness-raising of relevant issues of good research practice;
  - g. Pastoral care and support; and/or
  - h. Revision of relevant research practices, systems and/or policies relating to the concern(s) in question.
- 1.2. The target audience of the informal measures can vary; these may include Respondents, Initiators, other involved parties, other researchers and/or professional services staff within the University or even the University as a whole.
- 1.3. The Named Person or the RIGE Office will document:
  - those persons the subject of the informal measures;
  - the nature and scope of the informal measures;
  - the person(s) responsible, and process, for monitoring them; and
  - the duration of the informal measures, including a proposed start and end date.

The necessary details will be communicated to those persons involved.

- 1.4. When informal measures are concluded, involved parties will be informed in writing.
- 1.5. At any point during the implementation of the informal measures the Named Person can determine that they should be paused or ceased if:
  - a. the Named Person determines that the informal measures are not working; are not sufficient to address the concern(s); not being complied with; and/or
  - b. The Named Person determines, following concerns raised by the Initiator, Respondent or other involved person(s), that the informal measures are not working/ not sufficient; not being complied with;

Such determination will be made by the Named Person working with the RIGE Office and relevant colleagues at the University. In those circumstances the Named Person may decide that the matter should be addressed by re-instigating the Procedure, or through other form(s) of informal measures, or through another organisational process.