

SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)



Annual Statement on Research Integrity

August 2024- July 2025

Research Integrity & Research Culture at SRUC

SRUC is committed to the highest standard of research practice and scientific publishing, and upholds all commitments made under the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. In upholding this, SRUC expects all staff and students engaged in research activities to observe the highest standards of good research conduct, in accordance with internal, national, international and funder standards, guidelines, legislations, policies, and practices.

Summary of Actions and Activities Undertaken in 2024-2025

The Good Research Practice Manual:

[The Good Research Practice Manual \(GRPM\)](#), an institution-wide policy that defines the expectations regarding research conduct across SRUC for individuals engaging in research, was launched in summer 2023. The GRPM continues to be circulated institutionally and has been made available on SRUC's Research Integrity SharePoint site. The GRPM is shared with all new starts who join SRUC. Since the policy was launched, it has been updated annually, most recently in September 2025. It will be reviewed and updated annually where necessary, to remain aligned to good research practice standards for higher education institutions.

Research Integrity Training Course:

SRUC introduced a Research Integrity Training Course in 2022-2023, to further promote good research practice and integrity institutionally. To date, approximately 70% of research active academic staff have completed the training. Research Integrity training will continue to be offered to incoming PhD students and early career researchers joining SRUC as part of their training.

The Research Operations and Strategy department at SRUC continues to support activities for the Research Integrity Training Course and activities that promote good research practice institutionally. To support these activities, several members of the Research Operations and Strategy team are members of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), through which they frequently attend research integrity webinars and participate in forum discussions on good research practice and research integrity. Webinars and training sessions relating to research integrity and good research practice that are offered by the UK Research Integrity Office are also shared institutionally on SRUC's Research Integrity SharePoint site.

SRUC's Research Ethics Committees:

SRUC requires the ethical pre-approval and post-award approval of research proposals. The Animal Experiments Committee (AEC) and the Social Science Ethics Committee (SSEC) continue to operate and oversee ethics relating to research involving human participants and research that involves animal experiments. The AEC can be contacted directly by staff or students to voice any concerns about the care or wellbeing of any animals at SRUC, whether or not they are involved in experimental studies. SRUC also has a whistleblowing email address (animals@sruc.ac.uk) through which reports of concerns relating to any animals at SRUC can be made if preferred.

Between August 2024 and July 2025:

- The AEC engaged in both pre-submission ethics checks and post-award ethical reviews. During this year, the AEC reviewed 53 pre-submission ethics checks and approved 51 of these. 27 post-award ethical reviews were circulated and approved by the committee. The AEC also circulated 23 borderline animal experiment proposals for review (research proposals that do not involve experimental procedures on live animals but do involve some engagement with animals or animal tissue). All 23 of the borderline animal experiment proposals were approved.
- The SSEC also engaged in both pre-submission ethics checks and post-award ethical reviews. The SSEC reviewed and approved 50 pre-submission ethics checks. 51 post-award ethical reviews were circulated and approved by the SSEC.

Summary of Planned Developments

SRUC will continue to promote the Good Research Practice Manual across the institution. SRUC is also committed to promoting and encouraging engagement in activities that enhance good research practice institutionally, like engagement in Research Integrity training, and encouraging staff attendance on relevant webinars (e.g., by UKRIO).

Statement on Procedures and Processes Relating to Research Misconduct

Misconduct in research can have serious consequences for individual researchers, employers, funders, research participants, and the wider public, and can damage public trust in research, as well as harming the reputation of individual researchers and/or their research institute. Research misconduct is a spectrum rather than a hard and fast line. SRUC's Disciplinary Procedures further detail the behaviour that is not accepted by the institution, typically referred to as questionable research practice, and provides guidance on investigation and disciplinary procedures to be followed in such instances.

All stakeholders involved in research, including all academic staff, technical support staff, administrative support staff and students, have responsibility for reporting any suspicions of research misconduct. Allegations of research misconduct should be made, as the person making the allegation deems appropriate, to the Provost and Deputy Principal, the Head of Research, or the Chair of the SRUC Board. Details of the allegation and investigation procedure are outlined in SRUC's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing): Code of Practice and Procedure, and include information on protection, confidentiality, malicious allegations, anonymous allegations, and retraction of allegations.

SRUC also has internal policies and guidelines pertaining to the internal Complaint's Handling Procedures, SRUC's Intellectual Property Policy, and the handling of Conflict-of-Interest situations.

Summary of Formal Investigations Relating to Research Misconduct During 2024-2025

During the 2024-2025, there were no formal investigations relating to research misconduct in the academic departments.

Contact Information

To report possible instances of research misconduct by a member or affiliate of SRUC, please email the Named Person responsible for receiving any allegations of misconduct in research, Provost and Deputy Principal, Professor Jamie Newbold, at Jamie.Newbold@sruc.ac.uk.

If the Named Person is deemed to be unsuitable or is absent, please contact the Nominated Alternate Named Person, Professor Eileen Wall (Head of Research), Eileen.Wall@sruc.ac.uk.

If for any reason either of these is deemed to be inappropriate, the allegation should be made to the [Chair of the SRUC Board](#).

The Executive Member with responsibility for Research Integrity is Professor Jamie Newbold (Provost and Deputy Principal), Jamie.Newbold@sruc.ac.uk.

The Institute's Information Governance Officer can be contacted via Devon Taylor (Company Secretary), Devon.Taylor@sruc.ac.uk