



University of Hull

Annual statement on research integrity 2024

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Hull
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher education institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/governance
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Fiona Matthews, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
	Email address: pvc-re@hull.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Katie Skilton, Head of Research Excellence, Governance and Impact
	Email address: researchgovernance@hull.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Context

The University of Hull is committed to ensuring the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research undertaken by the institution. This includes, research conducted in the name of the University, or using University resources or facilities. The University recognises its obligation to research participants, funders, partners and the wider community; and in order to maintain high standards of integrity in research, the University pledges to uphold the commitments outlined within the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity. All members of the University community (students, staff (including those visiting or emeritus), contract holders, consultants, and associates) are expected to uphold the principles of honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability, as detailed within the Concordat.

In addition to these core principles, researchers must also act in accordance with appropriate ethical and compliance frameworks and abide by requirements set out by the University to ensure appropriate review and approval of research.

This report provides an overview of activities and practices undertaken during academic year 2023/24 to support and enhance integrity in research and looks forward to the year ahead, in accordance with the requirements of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Policies and systems

The University's Research Governance Framework comprises various policies, procedural documents and codes outlining the standards, expectations and requirements of staff, students, and the University as a whole. These include, the Statement on Research Integrity, Code of Good Research Practice, Code of Practice for Dealing with Research Misconduct, Research Ethics Policy, and the Whistleblowing Policy. These documents are easily accessible on the [University website](#) and via internal SharePoint pages.

These policies, procedures, codes, and general guidance were drafted in, and are

continually reviewed to remain in, accordance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the previous UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) self-assessment toolkit. The University recognises the importance of having clear and accessible policies and procedures in embedding a culture of integrity and ethics within research.

Training

The University of Hull implements a multifaceted approach to training for research integrity, ensuring provision for all researchers, staff and students, is accessible and appropriate.

For research staff, training on research integrity is delivered online, as part of an e-learning package developed by the University's Learning and Development team. All research staff are mandated to complete this training before conducting University research and this must be refreshed periodically, in accordance with the learning and development mandatory training map. The training covers the fundamental principles of research ethics and integrity, forming the foundation for more discipline specific training delivered in face-to-face sessions. This training has recently been reviewed and updated to ensure this remains fit for purpose and to also include references to open research and trusted research specifically.

Training on research ethics and integrity for PGR supervisors is delivered through the training course that is mandatory for all postgraduate supervisors at the University. This training has also recently been reviewed and revised, being changed to an eight-part online course, and provides a more comprehensive cover of topics relevant for supervisors.

For undergraduate and post-graduate taught students, basic research ethics and integrity training is built into their programme of study. For post-graduate research students, research integrity has been incorporated within the compulsory 'Modern Researcher' module of the PGTS (post-graduate training scheme) programme. This module is delivered by the Doctoral College in association with the faculties and institutes. The programme is offered to students in two formats: 12 sessions dispersed throughout the year or as a block within the spring post-graduate programme. The training is mandatory for PGR students, so this flexibility ensures that all students have access to training, including those students engaged in fieldwork. This module is continually reviewed to ensure it contains and covers to a high standard all aspects of ethics and integrity that the institution would expect.

Monitoring and Reporting

Committee reporting remains of a high standard, with reports on sponsored studies, export controls, trusted research and research ethics all being delivered at the University Research Committee this year.

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity continues to be reported into the Concordat Steering Group (CSG). This committee underwent a revision to its Terms of Reference in 2022-23 in line with the appointment of the Associate PVC (Research Culture) as the Chair. This continues to be a success.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Policies and Systems

The University's commitment to integrity in research is underpinned by its Research Strategy. A new Research and Enterprise Strategy has been produced throughout the current period, with consultation and feedback received from across the research community. It has now been approved through the relevant University governance structure and will be formally introduced at the start of the 2024-25 academic year. Work has been carried out and continues around the practical implementation of the new strategy.

At the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year, the University went through a period of restructure, centralising a large proportion of professional service staff, including the faculty research offices who now sit within the wider central Research and Innovation Team. As part of this, the Research Administration Support Team (RAST) was established to include those staff moving from the individual faculties. RAST look after the ethics committees, REF administration, events, newsletters etc. As a result of this centralisation, work has been happening to standardise these processes, particularly ethics administration, across the faculties. Huge progress has been made in this area, but work remains ongoing currently.

As part of the continuous monitoring of all research policies and procedures, the Nagoya Protocol Guidance Note was reviewed. Benchmarking showed that the majority of universities do not have a specific guidance note about the Nagoya Protocol. This is primarily because the protocol is an existing external document, and publishing internal documents amounts to duplication. The University of Hull opted to follow best practice in the sector and a page on the University website was created directing to the external protocol and providing easy to digest information and practical guidance. The new webpage was launched in September 2023 and consequently the University Research committee approved the discontinuation of the Guidance Note in October 2023. It is anticipated that the new webpage, along

with the continued promotion and awareness of the Nagoya Protocol through communications will increase compliance across the University.

The Code of Practice for Research Misconduct was reviewed and updated, with the new version coming into implementation from the 1 April 2024. The update incorporated the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) definition of 'research misconduct', and aligned much closer to the UKRIO guidance, most notably by separating the procedure for handling allegations into three stages (instead of the previous two stages). These three stages are:

- A. Receipt of Allegation
- B. Preliminary Investigation
- C. Formal Investigation

A new section entitled 'Roles and Responsibilities' was also added, including a definition for the Named Person, Deputy Named Person, Complainant and Respondent. The responsibility for receiving allegations of misconduct in research will now reside with the Named Person, who is appointed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, instead of the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

A working group was established to review the Academic Misconduct Policy for the University, and a representative for the Doctoral College worked closely with the Research Governance and Quality Officer to ensure that student research misconduct was dealt with correctly and accordingly.

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity Implementation Log was reported to CSG in October 2023 and actions were agreed within the group to increase compliance with the concordat. A small Research Integrity Working Group has been established and includes the Chair of CSG, the Research Governance and Quality Officer and the chairs of the faculty ethics committees. The intention of the working group is to enact actions from the implementation log and identify changes which need to be made to practice and process. This group has so far only met once but plans to meet again in the new academic year.

The new post of Trusted Research Manager (TRM) was introduced during this academic year and has been in post since January 2024. During that time, institution wide definitions for high-risk research and high-risk jurisdictions have been agreed by the University Leadership Team as a starting point for shaping the institutions future proportionate approach to Trusted Research. The TRM has attended national training events and the Higher Education Export Control Association (HEECA) national conference, expanding the Universities networks and contacts in this space. We also hosted a visit from the Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT) regional representatives and continue to build that relationship. RCAT are helping to support our developing understanding of the institutions relative risk position and interpretation of the legislation.

The TRM has reviewed and updated the due diligence process for the University making it more robust and in alignment with national guidelines. Consultation with the academic community on the inclusion of a risk matrix into the due diligence process is ongoing.

Infrastructure around Open Research within the institution became more formalised in the 2023-24 academic year, building on our membership of the UK Reproducibility Network, led by our institutional lead for open research (with a 0.2 FTE workload allocation). Activity ranged from the inclusion of open research as an element of our internal assessment for REF framework to the extension of our 'Introduction to Open Research' training.

We established the Open Research Working Group, reporting into our Concordat Steering Group, which has representation from researchers, library staff, research development, business development, IT and university leadership. The working group's activities are underpinned by an annual open research action plan and theory of change. To support the action plan and to accommodate the varying standards of open research in different academic fields, we established a network of open research champions from across the different schools and created open research webpages. We also started an open research social media account which has been advertised in university bulletins and at research culture events. We delivered a copy of 'Science Fictions', an accessible introduction to the replication crisis and open research, to 30 school directors of research, faculty associate deans for research and members of the university leadership team, and then held follow-up meetings to discuss open research with 80% of those in receipt of the text.

Culture Development

The Researcher Development and Culture Team (RCRD) has now been embedded into the research structure of the University after its establishment in the 2022-23 academic year. The team launched their [Research Culture Action Plan \(RCAP\)](#) during Research Culture Week in June 2024 following months of internal consultation. The RCAP acts as an institutional roadmap for enhancing culture and improving the research environment. It has 4 main strategic objectives: to support research and career development, to facilitate time for research, to enable collaboration and new ways of working, and to enhance and recognise inclusive and responsible research practices. A workplan has been created around these 4 objectives.

The RCRD have also produced a resource to support researchers and academics with equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the institution: IDEA-R (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equality and Accessibility in Research). IDEA-R is a tailored University of

Hull resource, produced through a scoping review of existing EDI activity and information in the research and innovation landscape. It is designed to build awareness and understanding of EDI in research among the Universities research community and to enable better alignment between Hull researchers and best practice across the sector. IDEA-R is divided into three sections:

1. General – resources to learn about the principles of inclusion, diversity, equality and accessibility in research
2. IDEA-R toolkit – support to embed IDEA into research activity
3. IDEA in the research environment – guidance to support IDEA in the research environment.

A framework for support and development for early career researchers, THRIVE, (**The Hull early-career Researcher Integrated development programme**) has also been established by the RCRD team. Participants in THRIVE develop in small cohorts from across the university and are provided with a dedicated suite of training, development, workshops and engagement to help navigate the research landscape. The network has been extremely successful and has an ever-growing waitlist for the next cohort. As a result of the success, there are plans to introduce similar programmes for other groups of staff in the near future.

As part of the Research Culture Week, a session was held around research ethics which drew together academics from across the university to bring their own perspectives on the role of ethics in the research process. Within the session, a discussion around the wider philosophical context which shapes our institutional ethical processes was undertaken, in which many academics from different disciplines across the university put forward their suggestions for an improved approach to ethical review. This provided a variety of conversations balancing necessary bureaucracy with academic responsibility and freedom.

The University's Research Culture survey provided a benchmark for awareness of open research which was used to target the delivery of guest talks on open research at two different research culture workshops, four research centre/school away days and a meeting of the research support team and to inform delivery of our third year of open research training.

Training

Completion of the mandatory Research Integrity training module is monitored by Learning and Development who submit quarterly reviews to the Head of Research Excellence, Governance and Impact (and the Research Governance and Quality

Officer, whilst the Head of REGI is on maternity leave). This is then in turn presented to the Concordat Steering Group (CSG). This year, CSG instigated an institution wide push for completion of the research integrity training, including reminders in research newsletters and the learning and development newsletters, requests for line managers to encourage staff, and direct requests sent to those who had not completed the training in February 2024. This resulted in a notable increase in compliance.

The Trusted Research Manager has delivered multiple information sessions across the institution to raise awareness of trusted research and associated legislation with both academics, research support staff and senior leadership. These information sessions will continue throughout the next 12 months and will be tailored to certain disciplines where needed.

In the hope of embedding openness in postgraduate research, which is fundamental to improving research rigour, we published an 'Introduction to open research for postgraduates' handbook and launched an open research section of the postgraduate sharepoint pages. We have integrated open research workshops into postgraduate training at years 1 and 3 and have launched a pilot of open research thesis statements which will continue into 2024/25.

Staffing updates within the Team

As part of the previously mentioned restructure across the University, the role of Executive Director of Research, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation was introduced to sit above the Director of Research and Innovation, and report directly into the Chief Operating Officer. This role was appointed to in October 2023, and a great deal of work was undertaken including a new pricing policy, IP policy and consultancy policy and an internal restructure. The Exec Director departed the University in April 2024, and the position was appointed to again beginning in June 2024.

In addition to the new Executive Director, a new Director of Research and Innovation Services began in September 2023. Similarly, the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) began in October 2023.

The Head of the Research Excellence Governance and Impact (REGI) team has been on maternity for much of this academic year but is due to return in time for the start of the new 2024-25 year. The Research Excellence Manager departed the University in July 2024. Recruitment for a replacement started in September 2024.

In January 2024, the new Trusted Research Manager (TRM) joined the Research

Excellence, Governance and Impact team within the University, as previously mentioned. The TRM has already made huge progress around the trusted research agenda specifically around institutional risk definition and due diligence, engaging with Higher Education Export Controls Association (HEECA) and Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT). The TRM has worked with leadership across the University, including with the Associate Deans for Research and the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research to establish how the University will approach the trusted research agenda moving forward.

Between December 2023 and March 2024, a transformational project was undertaken to review support for Knowledge Exchange, leading to a new structural and operational model for the KE team at the University of Hull. This newly established team will work closely with the Research and Innovation Services team in the generation of impact from our research.

Other updates to the wider staffing include the formation of the afore-mentioned RAST team following the centralisation of academic support services.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

The most prominent plan for the upcoming academic year is the introduction and implementation of the new Research and Enterprise Strategy which is being launched at the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year. The new strategy details the University's commitment to investing in and enhancing our research community and encouraging collaborative working. The strategy also recognises that an interdisciplinary approach and investment in talent is key to the university's success. The new strategy sets out a path for the university to situate itself as an outstanding research-led university, securely placed in the top 50 UK universities, with a focus on achieving significant increases in research quality, income and impact. The strategy includes the underpinning principles of excellence, integrity, professionalism and leadership.

In order to enable a more coherent approach to the support provided to academics, the Research Culture and Researcher Development (RDRD) Team is now better integrated with the Research and Innovation Services, rather than being a stand along team reporting to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research Culture). The team will still work very closely with the Associate PVC in the strategic direction of all aspects of research culture at Hull.

The RCRD Manager will lead on our new Academy of Research for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE) which is an initiative from the new strategy. The ARKE will be a single point of access for all staff and PGR students which will coordinate

the activities, training and development that are utilised by all the research and knowledge exchange staff and students, increase engagement of staff and research active students across the University and share and disseminate best practice. It will work alongside the University's existing Teaching Excellence Academy. Information and opportunities provided by the ARKE will include: training opportunities and support, mentoring systems, peer-to-peer and other networks, tailored training and development assistance, KE fellowship opportunities, a coordinated approach to policy, and an interdisciplinary nexus to support the university to become a more influential policy player at local, regional and national level. The ARKE is due to launch in the 2024-25 academic year.

The University Research Committee (URC) will be dissolved at the end of the 2023-24 academic year, as will the University Knowledge Exchange Committee (UKEC). At the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year, the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (URKEC) will be established, bringing together both areas of activity. This is in response to the review of university governance and in line with the new Research and Enterprise strategy.

Following the centralisation of staff and the establishment of the RAST team, the issues and variation in ethical administration across the university has become apparent. Therefore, one of the priorities for the 2024-25 academic year will be to review the University Ethics Policy and to implement a more standardised review of ethical applications.

A recommendation went to the University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer to change the Research Integrity Mandatory training completion time from every 5 years to every 3 years to bring in line with the other mandatory training required across the institution. It was also recommended that the training be mandated for 'all academic members of staff who are responsible for research activity and/or training, supervising or supporting student research', rather than just for 'research facing staff'. This was approved in June 2024 and will apply from the start of the 2023-2025 academic year. We foresee that as the training will be mandated for a wider proportion of academic staff more work will need to be done around completion rates in the coming academic year.

Work continues around the Trusted Research Agenda, with the main priorities being around implementation and understanding across the university. We hope for approval and implementation of an export control policy, process and compliance monitoring. As stated previously, training and information sessions will continue, with the addition of Trusted Research workshops targeted at specific teams, schools and faculties with tailored content depending on the audience featuring case studies to support greater understanding. There is also work underway for Trusted

Research guidance and advice to be published for academics and students who are travelling abroad with their research, which will include processes for reporting any issues or concerns and also proportionate monitoring.

We will be launching a formal university open research strategy in 2024-2025 and plan to embed open research principles into staff recruitment and our academic careers framework. Work will be carried out to revise our annual open research plan as scheduled. There are also plans to specialise the 'Introduction to open research' training for specific disciplines. As mentioned previously, the pilot of open research thesis statements will continue into 2024-2025 and a review of the pilot's success will need to take place.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

The University creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable reporting instances of misconduct. The University's Code of Practice for Dealing with Research Misconduct accepts reports of suspected research misconduct raised internally or externally. Within the research integrity training, researchers are advised that they may raise concerns via a number of routes, including, but not limited to supervisors, peers, or formally to the chief Operating Officer under the institution's whistleblowing policy.

The University Code of Practice for Dealing with Research Misconduct also outlines the manner in which a research misconduct investigation should be conducted and how appropriate investigation panels should be organised. The objectives of the policy are to:

- ensure that an investigation is thorough and fair;
- ensure that, by using an agreed standard process, errors in the conduct of an investigation should be minimised; and
- reassure those who are under investigation that the process of investigation will follow a standard procedure consistent with national best practice.

As mentioned previously in this statement, the University updated their Code of Practice for Dealing with Research Misconduct ([version 3](#)) which was implemented on the 1st April 2024. No allegations have been investigated under this version to date.

Prior to the implementation of the new Code of Practice for Dealing with Research Misconduct, the institution received 3 allegations of research misconduct which were investigated under the previous version ([version 2.9](#)). One allegation has now been closed after going through a full investigation, whilst the other 2 have now been closed with no further action

The allegation that proceeded through the stages of the Code of Practice to a full investigation panel, concluded that the allegation was substantiated in whole but the nature of the misconduct is such that the matter should be disposed of informally.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken				
Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism	1	1	-	-
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1			
Misrepresentation (e.g., data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	1	1		1
<i>Other*</i>				
Total:	3	2	0	1
*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.				
N/A				