



**UNIVERSITY  
OF HULL**

## **Annual Statement of Research Integrity 2021**

### **Introduction**

The University of Hull is committed to ensuring the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects research undertaken by the institution. This includes, research undertaken 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 will 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.

The report detailed below provides an overview of activities and practices undertaken during academic year 2020/21 to support and enhance integrity in research, in accordance with the requirements of the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

### **Strategy**

The University's commitment to integrity in research is underpinned by its Research Strategy, which confirms that the community upholds the principles of integrity, diversity, and inclusivity in all of its activities. The 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 investing in talent is key to the university's success.

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the Director of Research and Innovation are responsible for setting the strategic direction with regard to research, including research integrity. The Research Governance and Policy Manager is responsible for ensuring that effective processes are in place to support the integrity of research conducted under the auspices of the University of Hull, in accordance with its strategic aims. All research staff, including research managers and administrators within the faculties, have an operational responsibility for ensuring integrity across all University research activity, supported by the broader Research and Innovation team.

## **Activities to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues**

The Research Governance and Policy Manager commenced the role at the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year. As a result, activities over in 2020/21 have focused on training, information gathering, and reviewing current policies, processes and activities relating to research integrity and broader research governance. A review and refresh of institutional research governance policies and processes, including research integrity, commenced in the 2020/21 academic year; the details of which is included below.

### Research culture

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. Completion of the training is monitored by Learning and Development who submit six-monthly reports to the Research Governance and Policy Manager for oversight and additional reporting, as appropriate. Following recommendation by the Research Governance and Policy Manager, and subsequently the University's Concordat Steering Group, a request has been made to add further context to the data provided. As part of this request, it was clarified that all academic staff on research contracts are required to complete this module.

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 and managed by the faculties and monitored by the Doctoral College. The programme is offered to students in two formats: 12 sessions dispersed throughout the year or as a block within Easter 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.

In addition to these compulsory events, informal awareness programmes are being initiated within faculties, with the Research Governance and Policy Manager being invited to attend staff briefings over lunchtime sessions to raise awareness of research integrity.

A broader proposal to develop an interactive research integrity SharePoint site for both staff and students has also been added to the research governance plan.

## Governance

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, Research Misconduct Policy, Research Ethics Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy. These documents are easily accessible on the [University website](#) and via internal SharePoint pages.

Support and guidance on matters relating to research integrity is normally provided by the Research Governance and Policy Manager, in addition to faculty specific support offered by respective ethics administrative services, ethics committees and Faculty leadership.

These policies, procedures, codes and general guidance have been drafted in accordance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the previous (UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) self-assessment toolkit.

In 2020/21, a project to review and update all policies and associated documents was initiated (with documents prioritised for review) alongside the development of a refreshed Concordat to Support Research Integrity Implementation Log, which replaces the previous Concordat Implementation Plan. The Log reflects that activities to support research integrity within the university are ongoing and that the log is subject to continuous periodic review. The Log is based on the previous self-assessment tool produced by UKRIO. However, following the recent publication of the revised toolkit by UKRIO at the end of this academic year, the log will be revised in 2021/22 to ensure alignment with the updated self-assessment tool. Once the log has been reviewed and fully populated by all faculties, it will be published annually on the University website and a live version will be maintained throughout the year on SharePoint for members of the University's Concordat Steering Group to contribute to and review.

There has also been a focus over the last academic year on developing the University's research sponsorship framework, this includes detailed interactive guidance, a new SharePoint site, development of a new policy, various forms and guidance information. The Framework includes specific guidance, templates and support which will also assist researchers in ensuring the integrity of their health and social care research and is due to go out for consultation shortly, with the expectation that it will be implemented in the 2021/22 academic year.

## External memberships

The University remains up to date with changes in the external research environment via membership of UKRIO and ARMA (Association for Research Administrators).

## **Research 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 Research Misconduct Policy 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 Registrar under the institution's whistleblowing policy.

The University Research Misconduct Policy 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.

#### Statistical information pertaining to misconduct in research during academic year 2020/21:

Number of allegations: 1

Number of initial investigations: 1

Number of formal investigations: 1

Number of allegations which we're upheld following formal investigation: 1

#### Lessons Learned:

The investigation reported above related to an allegation of plagiarism against a PGR student. As part of the investigation, the panel considered the university's own arrangements, training and processes and it was deemed in this particular circumstance, any further activity which might mitigate against such allegations in future would be disproportionate, i.e. the university's processes and training provision were adequate.

Although incidents and allegations of research misconduct thankfully remain relatively rare within the University, in an effort to mitigate against complacency, low returns will be met with scrutiny. As such, and as part of the broader plan to review all university research governance documents, detailed above, consideration of the University's research misconduct and associated reporting and misconduct procedures will be prioritised for review. This review will include a specific focus on classification and recording arrangements for research misconduct.

**Author:** Katie Skilton (Research Governance and Policy Manager)

**Sponsor:** Dr David Richards (PVC-RE)

**Approved by:** University Council, 24//02/22