



**UNIVERSITY
OF HULL**

University of Hull

Annual statement on research integrity 2023

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)	14/12/2023
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, project 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.

This report provides an overview of activities and practices undertaken during academic year 2022/23 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 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. The University's commitment to integrity in research is underpinned by its Research Strategy, which requires 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.

Towards the beginning of the reporting period, a new post, Research Governance and Quality Officer (RGQO) was appointed which, amongst other things, supports policy creation and oversight. The RGQO has already completed a project to review and update all research policies and associated documents and has prioritised a number of policy documents which require a deeper dive / substantive review. The Code of Practice for Dealing with Research Misconduct is at the top of this list, as discussed later on within this report, this was superseded by a review of the University Nagoya Protocol policy, which has been replaced with a bespoke website for staff as a more practical way of ensuring awareness and compliance.

In addition to the summary review, Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) have been, and continue to be, developed to support approval and monitoring of research and work remains underway to develop policies, processes, guidance and forms to meet the university's export control responsibilities. This project is now progressing slowly due to competing priorities and staffing pressures, but a project plan and various documents has been developed, some training has been delivered, engagement with RCAT (Research Collaboration Advice Team) and HEECA (Higher Education Export Controls Association) is ongoing. Crucially, the University has just approved the recruitment of a Trusted Research Manager, to support the whole trusted research agenda, which includes export controls, but also Nagoya, National Security and Investment Act, due diligence, research data security etc. This post will complement the research integrity work of the wider team significantly and will also free up the time of the Head of Research Excellence, Governance and Impact (REGI) and the RGQO to focus more on governance, ethics and integrity matters, as well as research sponsorship, and broader compliance matters in research and innovation.

Communications and engagement

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

Overarching training information is detailed within the section below, although it should

be noted that training events in areas such as export controls and research sponsorship have previously been delivered but will be developed further.

The university's website and internal SharePoint pages are also being utilised, with new pages being established to host new guidance (in areas such as research security).

In addition, the REGI team has reviewed the way in which some information is presented for staff and has sought to develop more practical, easy to digest and accessible information for areas of compliance such as Nagoya and Export controls, creating bespoke web pages in place of some policies.

Culture Development and Leadership

A Researcher Development and Culture Team (RCRD) has been established to drive both enhancement of Hull's research culture and environment, and enhanced support for researcher development. We want our research culture to nurture people's talents, support diverse career aspirations, stimulate creativity and build success.

To achieve this aim, the RCRD team deliver development opportunities, training and support to our academic community, drive improvement in Hull's research culture and environment, and provide expertise and strategic advice on both Hull's internal research environment and the wider research policy landscape.

Planned activities for the Team include:

- Development of a Research Culture Action Plan
- Launch of THRIVE (The Hull early career researcher Integrated development programme)
- Develop EDI in research
- Deliver the Good Grant Writing Programme
- Host events celebrating research success
- Boost Research Leadership Capacity
- Strengthen mentoring provision

Staffing updates within the Research Excellence, Governance and Impact Team

In addition to the approval for a new Trusted Research Manager (recruitment for which is currently underway), a new Research Excellence Manager has been appointed to the Research Excellence Governance and Impact team, following the post being vacant for around a year and a half. This is a crucial post for the University with a focus on excellence in research in general, as well as leading on the preparations and delivery of the next REF submission in 2028. Approval has also been provided to increase the support of Research

Impact Officers from 1.4 to 2FTE – recruitment for the vacant RIO post is currently underway at the time of writing.

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. Completion of the training is monitored by Learning and Development who submit six-monthly reports to the Head of Research Excellence, Governance and Impact (REGI) for oversight and additional reporting, as appropriate. The reports have recently been updated to present the data in a more usable format and make the data meaningful – the next report will be presented to the first Concordat Steering Group (CSG) meeting of the 2023/24 academic year and will enable the group to determine areas of the University where training completion requires improvement.

Training on research ethics and integrity for PGR supervisors is also delivered through the training course that is mandatory for all postgraduate supervisors at the University.

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 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.

Monitoring and Reporting

Committee reporting has also been improved, a new template for URC to appropriately report on areas of its responsibility with regard to sponsorship of health and social care

research, and research involving the prison service and MoD was developed in the previous academic year and is now considered standard practice. This template is based on a new monitoring tool that has also been developed to measure various KPIs in relation to sponsor approval of research. The tool has now been in place for just over a year and has enabled the university to be proactive, rather than reactive with respect to research sponsorship reporting.

A new chair of the Concordat Steering Group (CSG) has been in place for two meetings in the 2022/23 academic year. This role was revised within the terms of reference to be an ex officio position aligned to the new Associate PVC (Research Culture) post, and now sits on the University Research Committee, also as an ex officio member, to ensure any concordat issues can be reported centrally in a timely and more formal capacity.

One focus this year has been to ensure the current activity in support of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity within the faculties is recorded and reported on the new Concordat to Support Research Integrity implementation log template. This populated log will now be taken to the first CSG meeting of the 2023/24 academic year for scrutiny and steer, before replacing the old action log which is currently published on the university website. From this point onwards, the new log will be used to monitor activities in support of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity across the institution.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

There continues to be a number of staffing developments following on from the previous academic year:

- A new Director of Research and Innovation is due to take up post in September 2023 – there have been two interim directors in post during the 2022/23 academic year, following the departure of the previous director at the start of this reporting period.
- A new Executive Director of Research, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation post has been created and is due to start in October 2023
- A new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) is due to start in October 2023. An interim PVC has been in post since the previous PVC departed in March 2023.
- The new Research Excellence Manager started in July 2023 – this post had previously been vacant since February 2022.
- A new Trusted Research Manager post has been approved and will be recruited to asap.
- The FTE for the vacant Research Impact Officer post has been increased from 0.4

FTE to 1FTE – this will be recruited to asap.

The following developments have been detailed within the report above:

The new Researcher Development and Culture Team has been embedded and completed a number of priorities detailed within the previous report to improve the support available for researchers, particularly ECRs and improve the wider research culture.

Integrity training has been reviewed and updated; reporting on training completion has been improved; information dissemination in key areas of compliance has been improved utilising the university website; the concordat implementation log has been overhauled and populated; work to ensure compliance with the trusted research agenda has continued throughout the year and will now be bolstered following the approval of the business case to appoint a bespoke Trusted Research Manager.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

During the 2022 report, it was noted that over the past few years there have been some significant staffing issues, which have affected the central research integrity function. These issues continued into the previous academic year and were further hampered by some significant periods of absence of some team members. Although progress has been slower in some areas that hoped, and the review of the misconduct policy did not take place, section 2B above indicates that, despite these challenges, the team still managed to achieve a lot.

There are a number of priorities for the team and compliance remains at the top of this list in all areas such as due diligence, export controls, National Security and Investment Act, Data security etc. – this is largely dependent on the appointment of the new Trusted Research Manager Post. Policy overhaul is also a key area, and the development of additional support and information for wider ethics and integrity matters is also key.

One issue which will affect delivery during the next reporting period is that the Head of Research Excellence, Governance and Impact (REGI) will go on maternity leave in October 2023 for a period of 8 months. Contingencies and options to backfill some of the work undertaken by the Head of REGI are still under review as a like for like replacement will be difficult to source.

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.

There were 3 allegations of research misconduct submitted via this Code of Practice during the 2022/23 reporting period, although incidents and allegations of research misconduct thankfully remain relatively rare within the University (with only one reported in the preceding year). Of the 3 allegations reported this year, one proceeded to initial assessment stage, one was not deemed to be misconduct, but action was taken via lessons learned; and one was investigated under another more appropriate University procedure.

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			
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	2			
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)				
<i>Other*</i>				
Total:	3	1	0	0
*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				