

University of Salford: annual statement on research integrity

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Salford
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)	03/05/23
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	www.salford.ac.uk/research/research-integrity/research-governance
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Karl Dayson
	Email address: k.t.dayson@salford.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: Rachael McKittrick
	Email address: researchgovernance@salford.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

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- Policies and systems
- Communications and engagement
- Culture, development, and leadership
- Monitoring and reporting

The University of Salford is committed to excellent research with integrity. We promote individual researcher accountability for good research practice, supporting this through our policies and processes and by fostering culture of transparency, respect, honesty and rigour.

This statement outlines the University's commitment to promote and fulfil the requirements of the Universities UK *Concordat to support research integrity*. The University's Academic Ethics & Research Integrity Committee (a committee of Senate) reviews and approves the content of this statement for publication and it is shared with the Research, Enterprise & Innovation Committee for information.

Culture and Development

The University's research governance framework has been designed to facilitate academic freedom whilst encouraging researcher accountability supported by a culture of honesty, respect and equity. These values are embedded in our guidance and training on research integrity.

The cohort training programme developed by the Quality, Impact and Skills team in the Research & Enterprise Directorate has run with success since 2021-22 and continues to develop its trimesterly programme of training and skills development to researchers from postgraduate researcher level upwards. The University was one of the first UK universities to participate in the HR Excellence in Research Award, and we completed our 12-year review in 2023. Through the University's

People Plan 2020+ we have made significant changes to ensure development, performance, reward and recognition for all. The 12-year review took into consideration our research strategy and support in alignment with the launch of the *University of Salford Innovation Strategy 2021-26*.

The institution continues to subscribe to UKRIO, recognising the value of committing and contributing to this community. Our researchers and professional service colleagues have reported on the benefits of attending the UKRIO webinars and its annual conference. We are still exploring the potential to create institutional Integrity Champions using the UKRIO framework and incorporating this opportunity into our researcher development toolkit.

Pivotal to embedding a culture of research integrity is the provision of easy access to policies, procedures and contacts. The Research & Enterprise Directorate (R&E) intranet site continues to provide detailed information on the department's policies, procedures, guidance and support provision (including training and events). The site is a hub of communication, news-sharing and a resource for guidance on all matters of research governance and integrity in the work facilitated and led by R&E. During the year, several new newsletters have been launched (PGR, Public & Community Engagement, Research Governance & Policy) and back copies to all new and existing newsletters are made available on this site.

The commitment to living up to the expectations of the Concordat in difficult circumstances is supported by a dedicated email address for the confidential reporting of allegations of, or concerns about, misconduct in research. This means support and guidance is further enhanced by the presence of an accessible Research Governance Manager with whom colleagues may always discuss concerns confidentially. The number of colleagues reaching out for confidential guidance or advice has more than doubled since 2021-22 reporting. Recording and reviewing the nature of these enquiries, we view this as a testament to encouragement of open communication and the value added by the existence of a dedicated research governance team.

We actively promote a culture and environment of academic freedom without discrimination and harassment. The **outward messaging** on our websites, our modelled behaviours, and the content of our policies and procedures all state the responsibilities of individual researchers to self-educate and comply with requirements. We take care to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into the working of our committees and into the framing of our policies and procedures. We have revisited the terms of reference of our Academic Ethics & Research Integrity Committee and Research, Enterprise & Innovation Committee with this in mind. Our policies, procedures and codes of practice include an Equality Impact Assessment which goes beyond form filling and enables a conversation between the document author and the Equity, Inclusion & Diversity team, challenging statements or practices that don't live up to expected standards and determining actions to realise change, committing specified resource and timescales to those

actions.

Policies and Systems

The University has three primary policies to support research to be conducted to a high standard with integrity: the Research Code of Practice, the Academic Ethics Policy, and the Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure. These policies are available on both the internal and external University websites, and they are embedded in the induction programmes for all staff, PGRs and supervisors. They are additionally supported by other University policies, including the Academic Misconduct, Student Misconduct, Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and University Whistleblowing policies, the University Ethics Framework, and now also the National Security in Research Policy. Together, these policies define the University's commitment to ensuring its researchers are acting under best practice of ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards. The policies, complemented by guidance on the internal webpages, outline where and how our researchers can seek advice at every stage of their research journey.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

Over this academic year, the University launched a University Fellows scheme to appoint 20 emerging research leaders across a range of diverse areas over a five-year programme. The Fellows will work in one of our four Schools, based in growth areas within established research groups to address current challenges in the thematic areas of productivity, healthy living, sustainable environments, and creative and resilient communities. Fellows will receive dedicated mentoring, a peer network and a bespoke development programme in skills for research and teaching leadership excellence.

This year our Research Code of Practice underwent a further review by the Research Governance Working Group. At the recommendation of the Academic Ethics & Research Integrity Committee, the University's Research Code of Practice now aligns to the *UKRIO Code of Practice for Research*, as sector good practice.

The University published its National Security in Research Policy, which addresses the University's expectations for compliance with export controls, the National Security & Investment Act, and the broader principles of trusted research. We have

fully engaged with our Research Collaboration Advice Team, the Higher Education Export Control Association and with colleagues in the sector to ensure our due diligence and procedures are clear, comprehensive and accessible. Over 2022-23 we have expanded our work on trusted research, revisiting existing procedures and tools to guide our researchers through its complex landscape.

The University has drafted a Volunteering Reimbursement and Recognition Policy, through which procedural changes will make it easier for researchers to undertake PPI with underrepresented communities, thereby also broadening the impact of our research, particularly in health and social care. Our PPI work will be further enhanced by the development of a toolkit for use by anyone engaging with PPI.

The University has procured new ethics management software, and project implementation commenced in May 2023. The new platform will enable better monitoring and processing of taught programme ethics applications. Furthermore, it will allow for more accessible and responsive application forms and reviewing processes to meet the varying needs of all University staff and student researchers. In preparation for the new platform, workstreams of research and taught programme ethics panels and professional services staff have come together to consult on changes needed to governance and processes. Where these conversations might have been previously held in relative isolation, they have expanded into a significantly broader arena with contributions and engagement sought from all key stakeholders. Ideas on sector best practice (through external engagement, training, workshops) have been shared and discussed, and a top-to-bottom review of “everything ethics” has been launched: appraisal is being undertaken across the board, from application form questions to research data management practices, seeking experiences and ideas from administrators and managers, PGRs and the professoriate, and the HE sector.

In 2023-24 the Quality, Impact and Skills researcher development programme will be enhanced further to include a detailed introduction to our research governance and integrity policies and procedures from PGR level upwards. The University’s new Researcher Development Manager has been exploring innovative ways of engaging with researchers at all levels to support their ability to deliver excellent research with integrity.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year’s activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year’s statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

2021-22 Objective	2022-23 Action Taken
<p>We are committed to an inclusive, supportive research environment free from discrimination and harassment. This will be ensured by addressing measures identified as part of our equity, inclusion and diversity commitments in research. We will highlight our position and key commitments in our research integrity policies.</p>	<p>With each updated policy we have revisited the Equality Impact Assessment to identify the areas in which we can make progress. This has included ensuring inclusion of colleagues at all levels in consultation, and actively reaching out to seek engagement from harder-to-access groups, such as early career researchers. Our Quality, Impact and Skills Team will continue to work with the Equity, Inclusion & Diversity team and researchers across the institution to reduce and remove barriers to returning or moving into research.</p>
<p>We will work to integrate our misconduct policies more effectively. Whilst the policies operate capably on their own, we believe we can improve processes to increase the rigour of investigation into allegations.</p>	<p>In the instances where we haven't fully integrated these changes, we have discussed and agreed procedural changes for the 2023-24 academic year which will see increased rigour of investigation. We have tested changed procedures with case studies and removed gaps that were creating barriers in otherwise transparent and efficient investigations.</p>
<p>We will revisit our interest in expanding how we communicate research integrity matters to our community. We have explored options for different and more accessible platforms and technologies with the intention of engaging harder-to-reach and time-poor audiences.</p>	<p>Our Research Governance team will have a presence at the University postgraduate researcher conference. The same team has developed a series of introductory videos summarising the research governance policies, diluting the key elements into a 30-second video that is quickly accessible to staff and students. We continue to look at developing podcasts in the model of other institutions to discuss research integrity matters. Our Academic Ethics newsletter continues to receive positive feedback and engagement, communicating not only on procedural and policy matters but also sharing</p>

	ethics and integrity news from inside the sector and more widely.
To develop an environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity, we will pursue the potential to create Integrity Champions within our different research areas. We hope this will further conversation, heighten awareness of issues and developments, and encourage sharing of collective expertise.	This is an area in which we have struggled to make progress due to already heavy workloads and gaps in resourcing. Instead, we have worked hard to maintain a culture of integrity, openness and communication through existing workstreams, training and support mechanisms. We will not abandon the intention of creating Integrity Champions, but recognise that there are more pressing priorities at this time.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

Please provide:

- a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).
- information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).
- anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

Overall responsibility for research integrity, governance and academic ethics sits with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research & Enterprise. The Research Governance & Policy Manager (R&E) may be addressed as the first point of contact on research integrity matters. The Research Governance & Policy Manager is also the Named Person for reports of allegations of misconduct in research, with contact details available on the University's [public](#) and intranet websites.

The Research Misconduct Policy highlights the University's expected standards for good research conduct and informs members of the University about the types of activity or behaviour that constitute research misconduct. The Research Misconduct Procedure outlines the process for making and managing allegations of research misconduct, and details how such matters will be addressed by the University when research conduct falls short of the expected standard.

When handling an allegation of research misconduct this reporting year, there was

clear adherence to recommended timescales and practice by all stakeholders. Where cross-referral was needed to another department, this was managed swiftly and with respect to confidentiality and process, even where the process was unknown by the other department. Therefore, we have confidence that our procedures are appropriate and proportionate for the needs of the University. As standard practice we review all our policies every 2-3 years (with new policies or procedures reviewed within the first 12 months of publication). As a minimum, we undertake a light-touch, annual review of the whole framework to ensure ongoing fitness for purpose, as well as in response to any feedback or lessons learned.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

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	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	1	0	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