



Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2023/2024

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of York
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)	University Research Committee: 21 November 2024 Senate: 28 January 2025 Council: 26 February 2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	Research Integrity and Ethics
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Matthias Ruth
	Email address: matthias.ruth@york.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for	Name: Zoe Deacy-Clarke



anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Email address: zoe.deacy-clarke@york.ac.uk
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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

York has worked to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Concordat to Support RI, as well as building further where possible. Our core policies - the [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#), the [Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance](#), and the [Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#) - lay out the core values and expectations of the University and the consequences of breaching these. They are supplemented by further policies and guidance documents concerning more specialised areas, for example the use of [social media data in research](#) or the [payment of individuals involved with or participating in research](#). The latter of these is used regularly as a reference point across the sector as an example of a thorough and clear policy on the topic. Our policies and procedures are available here: <https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/research-policies/>.

Policies relating to research are owned by the University Research Committee (URC), which is empowered by University Senate to oversee research activity at the University, including advising on research strategy ,approving internal policy and monitoring research performance. Policy development is led by the Policy, Integrity and Performance (PIP) Office, which sits within the Directorate of



Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE). A consultative approach is taken to the process of developing policy; this involves taking input from a range of colleagues, both in academic and professional services roles, and collaborating with other teams across the institution. Frequent partners are the York Graduate Research School, the Library and pre- and post-award teams across Faculties.

Improving our communication and engagement strategies is a priority for the PIP Office and will continue to be over 2024/25. Part of this focus has involved redesigning our [policies webpage](#) to aid functionality and ease of navigation, grouping policies together in a more intuitive and efficient manner. As discussed below (2B(c)), over 2023/24 we developed internal guidance for the development of policy, which includes discussion of communication and engagement routes. The aim of the guidance is to set out clear routes to engagement which can be consistently used across a range of policy roll-outs. This is further supported by the development of both the Research Reputation and Social Responsibility framework and the Principles for Sustainable Research Conduct, which set out the underlying values of the University as an institution for Public Good.

The above is supported further by our training and development work. The University offers a range of training options on topics concerning research integrity, including our integrity and ethics training (online and in-person), as well as specific training for supervisors and workshops for both Trusted Research and export control. The University remains involved with sector-wide groups, such as the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum and the HEECA, to ensure awareness of and alignment with norms and expectations within the sector. Research integrity is also a key feature of the Research Culture Action plan, as discussed under 2B(m), below.

Effective monitoring of research activity is a necessary aspect of supporting research integrity. To this end, our Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (AECC) runs an annual audit process in line with ESRC requirements, as well as coordinating a regular review cycle for Local Research Ethics Committees (LRECs). Although our Annual Research Review (ARR) process does not ask specifically about research integrity, we ask about the research environment and areas of development, providing an opportunity for departments to comment on research integrity matters if they wish. As part of the work on our University Research Strategy, work has taken place to develop an implementation plan which outlines reporting routes for areas of activity (including that relating to research integrity and responsible research and innovation), ensuring appropriate oversight of activity and monitoring of any such work.



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.

During 2023/24, the University has undertaken the following actions and activities to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues:

- (a) The implementation of the [Research Strategy](#) has continued over 2023/24, with a core component of this being the embedding of the principles and culture of responsible research and innovation. Our Research Strategy emphasises at all stages the importance of acting in the interest of public good. Work has taken place over the year to develop a full implementation plan, and this has included mapping out reporting routes to ensure appropriate oversight from URC as to the activities taking place.
- (b) The research policy webpages were undergoing a redesign and would be updated shortly. The intent of the redesign was to streamline the pages and make clearer the purpose and topic of each policy, to enable researchers to more effectively find the support they need.
- (c) In December 2023 the PIP Office launched an internal Guidance on Policy Development; this document outlines the key principles and steps for developing and reviewing policy, and was prepared in the interest of encouraging consistency and clarity across activity areas. The Guidance includes information on the communication and dissemination of policies, which is a priority area for the team (see 2(C), below). The Guidance sits underneath the Institutional Policy Framework developed by the Governance and Assurance Office, providing further context and specific guidance for the development of research policy.
- (d) Progress continued regarding institutional responses to Generative AI, with the first meeting of a Generative AI Working Group scheduled for September 2024. The York Graduate Research School had worked to develop [Guidance on the Use of Generative AI in PGR Programmes](#). The Guidance was in alignment with other policies across the institution, including those covering undergraduate students, and had been produced in collaboration with colleagues both internal and external to the University. The Guidance would be updated as technology continued to evolve.



- (e) The review of the Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure continued; delays to this work are discussed in 2C, below.
- (f) The PIP Office continued to work with the Involvement@York Team to further refine the [Policy on the Payment of Individuals for Involvement with or Contribution to Research](#). The Policy, which was recognised across the sector as an example of a clear and effective document outlining processes in the area, would be clarified in places, alongside the development of a public-facing version designed for the lay reader.
- (g) Work had taken place over 2023/24 to develop a [Research Reputation and Social Responsibility Framework](#) for the University; the Framework was in effect as of August 2024 and would be reviewed after a year. The Framework covers research, collaborative research, contract research and consultancy. Approval of proposed research activity would continue to take place at the level of individual projects, however the Framework laid out an escalation process for exceptional circumstances.
- (h) Fair Attribution Guidance was under development, recognising the contributions that research-enabling, technical and specialist skills staff make to research, innovation and knowledge exchange. In June 2024, URC approved an amendment to the [Research Publications and Open Access Policy](#) to include a reference to the Fair Attribution Guidance for technical and support staff.
- (i) The review of the [Research Data Management Policy](#) had been completed, and revisions made as appropriate. This process also included development of updated guidance in the form of a [Research Data Management: Practical Guide](#); the guidance covered software and computer code as this was specifically identified as an area of need when the revised Policy was considered by University Research Committee.
- (j) Work was underway to identify gaps in the University Research Data Management infrastructure and support through a series of online interviews held with 25 key stakeholders December 2023 and May 2024, as well as through an online survey with members of the University. Recommendations would be presented to University Research Committee in the autumn.
- (k) The 12-month review of the [Research Publications and Open Access Policy](#) took place as planned and University Research Committee approved an amendment to the policy for the inclusion of an explicit reference to fair attribution for technical and specialist support staff.



(l) The Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (AECC) had undertaken a range of activities to share expertise and support the wider community, feeding into the development of relevant guidance and policy. Of particular note were conversations ongoing with Involvement@York to consider ethics in the context of Patient and Participant Involvement (PPI) in research and the provision of support and oversight of a new process covering ethical assessment of research in scope of the Prevent Duty.

(m) The [Research Culture Action Plan](#) (RCAP) had officially launched and was now available on the University [webpages](#). The RCAP set out the ambitions and plans of the institution for the creation of a thriving research community (a Strategic Objective under the University Research Strategy, noted in 2B(a), above). Research Integrity is a core component of the RCAP which underpins many of the Focus Areas identified in the document, and is specifically discussed under 'Focus Area 5: Embed the principles and culture of open research and responsible research and innovation'.

(n) Further to the above, the [Valuing Voices project](#) is now underway, having officially started 1 March 2024. The aim of the project is to support best practice in research and to embed responsible and equitable research practices in all our research activity. Of particular note is the emphasis on anticipating and mitigating risk in research, which encourages and supports researchers to assess their project in relation to due diligence, ethics and information and knowledge sharing.

(o) The 'Being an Effective Research Supervisor Tutorial' (BERST), a mandatory tutorial for supervisors, is continually updated to ensure relevance and effectiveness. This tutorial was developed by the University of York and is now part of the broader [Research SuperVision Project \(RSVP\)](#) which is co-led by York, and which aims to expand and diversify the pool of confident, well-trained supervisors who can foster an inclusive culture and support the next generation of researchers. The RSVP project includes a new support programme featuring specialised workshops on various topics, such as the lifecycle of Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs), health and wellbeing, and enhancing supervisory practices. Additionally, a series of webpages has been developed to provide supervisors with resources and guidance.

(p) The Research Integrity & Ethics workshop, available to both Postgraduate Researchers and Staff and run in collaboration between the Building Research and Innovation Capacity (BRIC), Policy, Integrity and Performance (PIP) and the Information Governance Teams, has been renamed to Responsible Research &



Ethics to reflect its emphasis on the current developments in the area of trusted research, ethics, information security and GDPR. The workshop content is updated twice a year and is offered in two formats: in person and online, to ensure that distance learners and off-campus participants are able to access the training.

(q) The PIP Officer for Integrity acted as an expert reviewer for Epigeum and SAGE Publishing on their Research Integrity training module, speaking to the position of York within the sector and allowing greater insight into the development of high-quality training materials.

(r) In order to further embed knowledge and understanding of the government's Trusted Research Initiative at the University, the Policy Integrity and Performance team has:

- i. delivered workshops to research support colleagues generally and those in the Science faculty specifically,
- ii. organised a Trusted Research Community of Practice, bringing together colleagues from broader professional support services (IT, HR, insurance, etc), and
- iii. launched a Trusted Research webpage and dedicated email address (trusted-research@york.ac.uk) to improve access to guidance.

(s) The Due Diligence Escalation Approval Panel was established to review, monitor and authorise University partnerships which owing to their value or associated risks, require a higher level of approval than provided by standard procedures. Pre-award due diligence activities concerning research collaborators were reviewed, with new procedures and related resources due for deployment early in the new academic year along with appropriate training for research support teams.

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.

Activity over 2023/24 has been impacted significantly by developments across the sector, including financial challenges, which have subsequently affected work within the institution.



Much of the activity highlighted in the 2022/23 Annual Statement on Research Integrity has been completed or remains ongoing. The most prominent example of a delay in completion is the review of the Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure (discussed in 1(f) of the 2022/23 Statement); this has been impacted by the high workload faced by staff involved. This work is a priority going forwards and is now projected to be completed in the final quarter of 2024, following consultation with researchers (including at postgraduate level) and representatives from campus Trade Unions.

Looking to the future, the University remains committed to research integrity, and as such this is reflected in our Research Strategy. At a Research Strategy Away Day in May 2024, University Research Committee (URC) identified a number of goals for the next academic year, with several of these relating to promoting and strengthening research integrity. For example, the oversight and monitoring of the [Research Culture Action Plan](#), which works to enable a supportive and collegiate environment in which researchers operate with integrity, as well as a commitment to continue the review of policies relating to research (including the implementation of the Research Reputation and Social Responsibility (RR&SR) framework and the review of research ethics processes and structures, amongst others).

Key action points for 2024/25 are:

- Communication of policy launches and reviews, taking a more structured approach to communication and dissemination as laid out in our Guidance on Policy Development (see 2B(c), above)
- Review of training offer once the UKRIO training programme is made available, in order to ensure alignment with the best practice in the sector
- Completion of the review of the Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure, as discussed above



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.

The University is committed to investigating all allegations of misconduct in a robust, fair and timely manner. Our Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure (RMP&P), available on the [University webpages](#), outlines how any investigations will be carried out with consideration for the well-being of all parties. The current RMP&P is currently under review, with an expected completion date in the last quarter of 2024. The review of the RMP&P is informed by the [UKRIO template procedure](#), and we will draw from the language and structure used in the template to ensure alignment across the sector as far as possible. It will also take into account concerns around the usability and clarity of the process described, with emphasis placed on ensuring the procedure is simple to follow and clear about each stage and the potential outcomes.

The RMP&P is supported and contextualised by our wider [policy framework](#), and our webpage for research policies has been redesigned over 2023/24 to further



demonstrate and clarify the policies and guidance available at the University. Our [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#) specifies that “each member of the University community has a responsibility to foster an environment which promotes intellectual honesty and integrity”, and that to support this, the University will “protect the interests of those who draw attention to possible misconduct in good faith” (7.2). The Code of Practice also refers to the UKRIO [Guidance for Researchers on Retractions in Academic Journals](#) (2010), which states that ‘an admission of honest errors in research should in no way be construed as misconduct; on the contrary, the reporting of genuine mistakes is in accordance with good practice in research’. This no-detriment approach is key to the stance of York and is seen in other policies governing research, including our [Statement on Safeguarding in Research](#), and our [Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#). The latter also makes specific provision for the consideration of equality and diversity, to ensure such allegations are handled in a sensitive and fair manner, as well as specifying that no individual involved in the investigation will be sanctioned without an allegation being upheld. Our [Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance](#) clearly sets out the ethical framework through which researchers must operate, emphasising the responsibility of researchers to identify and mitigate (as far as possible) ethical considerations arising from their work. This provides researchers with the requisite information to understand their responsibilities and potential pitfalls, strengthening their approach to their work and the available resources. Some examples of key supplementary policies are the [Speak Up \(Public Interest Disclosure\)](#) and the Dignity and Work and Study Policy; respectively, these provide a framework for the raising of concerns (addressing concerns around backlash for speaking up), and procedures and mechanisms to report and address incidents of harassment, bullying and hate incidents. Information on all our policies is available on our research policy webpages, as noted above(2B(b)).

Alongside putting in place formal policies and procedures, the University of York is committed to fostering a supportive research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. We are driven by a recognition that a culture of integrity is supported and maintained by a transparent environment in which mistakes can be addressed openly. With respect to this, our Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure includes provision for informal discussion and referral to alternate institutional procedures (for example, where the issue is judged to relate to a training need the Capability Procedure may be invoked).

We are dedicated to supporting a research culture which encourages and enables these honest, in-depth discussions on research integrity; this is supported by the Research Culture Working Group, noted above (2B(m)). The work of the RCWG



serves to broaden discussions around research culture, embedding a deeper understanding of the issues and risk factors surrounding research misconduct.

The University is keen to optimise the effectiveness of ethical oversight at York, in the interest of fostering an open environment in which ethics and integrity are embedded in conversations and planning, and discussed within a supportive culture where advice can be sought rather than via formal recourse to misconduct investigations. To this end, our Local Research Ethics Committees are encouraged to share good practice and discuss issues openly.

We use our training resources to reinforce and communicate the values of research integrity with respect to research misconduct, and the content of these resources is responsive to the lessons learnt in research misconduct cases. For example, a case in the 2022/23 academic year resulted in the strengthening of guidance around interviews with public figures.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken				
There were no formal investigations completed during the period under review.				
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				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (eg 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:	0	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				