

Annual Report on Research Integrity 23/24

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of East Anglia (UEA)
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	25 th November 2024
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	https://www.uea.ac.uk/research/about-uea-research-and-impact/integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Julian Blow
	Email address: j.blow@uea.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: Dr Helen Brownlee
	Email address: h.brownlee@uea.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

Summary

This Report is produced annually for the University Research Executive to consider and is presented thereafter to the University's Senate and Council to approve. To meet the requirements of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)*, the report provides:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues in the period 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024;
- a statement on the processes the University has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research;
- a high-level statement on any allegations of research misconduct in the reporting period; and,
- will be made available to the public on the University's Research Integrity webpage once approved.

As this Summary has been written as a stand-alone document, it contains text which is repeated from the previous year where it covers the University's Research Integrity Statement, governance structure and procedures.

The University is fully committed to ensuring that all research undertaken by staff and students is carried out to the highest professional standards of research integrity, and that all researchers uphold the principles set out in the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)*. The term 'Research Integrity' has been adopted internationally to describe "the core principles and responsibilities that should be common to all good research".¹

Maintaining and developing the University's commitment to high standards of research integrity and ethics are a key component of the University's Research and Innovation Strategy 2024-30. They are also embedded in the University's core values: Ambition, Collaboration, Empowerment, and Respect; and in the University Strategy 2030.

Responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of research integrity at the University rests with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation (PVC R&I). The PVC R&I may be contacted using the email address j.blow@uea.ac.uk. The University's Research and Innovation Services (RIN) support the PVC R&I and have a Research Integrity Manager who manages RIN's responsibilities in this area including promoting the culture of research integrity within the University. RIN is also the first point of contact for any queries on the relevant policies or processes to follow and can be contacted using the email address researchintegrity@uea.ac.uk;

¹ 'The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)'. Available at:
<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/topics/research-and-innovation/concordat-research-integrity>

the Associate Director (Postgraduate Research) would be the first point of contact for Postgraduate Research students and their supervisors. RIN also has formal nominated representatives who act as legal representatives (under the Health Research Authority's (HRA) Sponsor requirements) for all NHS-related studies in accordance with the HRA's *UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research* (HRA Framework) and can be contacted using the email address researchsponsor@uea.ac.uk. RIN further advises on ethical, legal and regulatory requirements, and on behalf of the University submits annually an Insurance Assurance and Annual Report to the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) to renew UEA's research misconduct assurance. In doing so, the University remains eligible to apply for or receive US Public Health Service research funds.

The University has an overarching committee, the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), to define the University's *Research Ethics Policy* and operational principles. It also has oversight of the University's 10 Research Ethics Committees (S-RECs). UREC is led by a Chair appointed by the PVC R&I, and is constituted from the S-REC Chairs, the Associate Deans for Research (ADR), the Data Protection Officer, the Research Integrity Manager, a Lay Member, and co-opted experts when required. UREC is a Committee of the University's Senate.

To promote best practice in the University, there is a standing agenda item for each UREC meeting under which UREC members can raise issues/queries to air and share with their colleagues and seek comments pertaining to best practice which is cascaded down to researchers in their Faculties/Schools.

The S-RECs provide ethics reviews of UEA student and staff (including honorary positions) projects and teaching modules. They also undertake ethics reviews of internally-funded impact activities in support of the University's stance that ethics issues should be considered throughout the complete lifecycle of a project. Ethics reviews are also undertaken for academics in the Norwich Biosciences Institutes as agreed under Home Office regulations.

UEA's ethics review processes support best practices in research ethics, and they are consistent, coherent and well-informed. The contribution of the Ethics Review Chairs to University work is recognised through a workload allocation. Ethically sound research is promoted as a priority by the University's ethics review bodies, and their starting position is an intention to provide ethics approval. Following the full consideration of an ethics application submission, the S-RECs will issue a formal notice of the outcome of the review to the researcher, indicating whether or not ethics approval has been given. The S-REC will deal with any appeals against its decision in accordance with the University's *Ethics Review Appeal Procedures*. The S-REC may withdraw or suspend ethics approval of an ongoing research project as a result of serious concerns regarding its conduct or ethics issues. This may be as a result of receiving a report of an Adverse Event.

During the reporting period, a total of 2093 ethics applications were reviewed by the University's S-RECs of which 2005 were given ethics approval during the reporting year. In addition, UREC reviewed 109 ethics applications for market research/research for internal evaluations mainly submitted by the University's Central Professional Services and the Students' Union; 108 of these applications were approved during the reporting year.

As a supporter of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)*, the University is committed to upholding the Concordat's core values of honesty, rigour, transparency, care and respect, and accountability. UEA's focus remains on promoting good research practice, fostering a culture of research integrity and providing support for researchers to meet the requirements of the updated and strengthened Concordat, details of which are provided below:

Policies and Systems

The University has an established set of research integrity policies, procedures and guidelines, which provide a framework for the highest standards of personal conduct in research for all UEA staff and students. These are available on RIN's Research Integrity and Ethics portal pages:

- *Guidelines on Good Practice in Research*
- *Research Ethics Policy* (supplemented with *Ethics Guidance Notes* covering a range of topics)
- *Ethics Review Appeal Procedures*
- *Policy for Approving the Integrity of UEA Research and Innovation Related Activities and Funding*
- *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research*
- *Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct Made Against Students*
- *Joint NNUH/UEA Standard Operating Procedures* (for healthcare research)
- *Open Access Policy*
- *Research Data Management Policy*
- *Research Data Management Procedures and Guidance*

The University has a rolling programme of reviews for its research integrity policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. UREC has been given responsibility to comment on and ratify those under review before being considered by the University Research Executive and Senate. As part of each review, there will be engagement with relevant internal stakeholders. RIN will notify staff and students of the reviews using the Staff and Student e-Bulletins, and will also work with the Heads of Schools to ensure that academics and researchers are aware of the revisions. Training and/or guidance will be provided as required.

When confirming an offer of employment, appointees are advised of a range of University policies, both general and specific, that they will be required to comply with and where these can be found. At induction, line managers ensure that new team members undertake any relevant available training and/or are provided with time to familiarise themselves with relevant policies and procedures that are applicable to their role.

The University is also required to comply with UK legislation relating to research, as well as Concordats and codes of practice issued by funding bodies and collaborating organisations. The University has a longstanding subscription to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and UEA researchers can access a wealth of research integrity resources free of charge from UKRIO's webpages. Since May 2020, UKRIO has been holding regular webinars on research integrity and related issues, which are free for UEA researchers to attend. These have been promoted to

UEA's researchers via RIN's Research Integrity and Ethics portal pages, who actively take part and engage with these across the University.

To ensure that the University maintains its high ethical standards, the University has an online system, Ethics Monitor, to support the University's ethics review of projects (including research, UEA-funded impact activities, and market research/research for internal evaluations), which is used by staff and students across the relevant disciplines and funding schemes. Ethics Monitor is an invaluable tool to:

- Relieve the demands on staff time from operating a paper-based system, releasing time to enable a greater proactive approach to research ethics management.
- Streamline processes ensuring consistency across the organisation, adding to funder confidence in the University's delivery of ethical research and enhancing research integrity.
- Provide a single source of information for reference, case tracking, audit and reporting. Much of which was being carried out manually from diverse data sources.
- Assure transparency and assist with monitoring, comprehensive reporting and compliance for data protection, Office for Students institutional funding, FOIA, and research funding organisations.
- Support the training of researchers and staff involved with the review of ethics and ensuring research integrity.

The response from users has been incredibly positive, and the University is continuously developing the system in line with feedback from users.

Ethics Monitor has also been developed to record NHS ethics reviews and/or HRA governance reviews for studies sponsored by the UEA that fall under the *UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care* sought via the external Integrated Research Application System (IRAS system).

The consideration of ethical issues during the complete lifecycle of a project (including impact activities) is part of good research practice within the University. The University requires mandatory ethics review of impact projects funded from its AHRC, ESRC, and MRC Impact Accelerator Award (IAA) funding streams. Ethics reviews are also mandatory for relevant activities funded from the University's internal funding schemes: UEA PVC Impact Fund; UEA App Development Competition, before the funding for these two schemes is released to successful applicants. The forms and processes for these ethics reviews have been subsumed within the University's online ethics review system. It is also mandatory for a proportion of the University's research grant applications to the Research Councils and the NIHR to undergo internal peer review prior to submission. These reviews are undertaken by designated panels that reflect the corresponding funder, including the AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, NERC and the NIHR. Furthermore, research grant applications to the MRC, certain NIHR streams, as well as other non-Research Council funders are internally peer reviewed by the Biomedical and Clinical (B&C) Committee. UEA's training grant applications are also peer reviewed. Designed to help improve the quality of funding applications, these reviews provide opportunities to raise questions and advise on research integrity.

UEA's online learning platform, Blackboard, is used by several Schools to create dedicated Research Ethics pages. These not only provide information on research ethics and use of Ethics Monitor, but also provide links to RIN's portal pages to help staff and students navigate to the University's Research Integrity policies, procedures and guidelines.

All S-RECs have their own pages on the University's portal. These portal pages provide information on the ethics review process for each S-REC as well as guidance and contact information. They link to RIN's Research Integrity and Ethics portal pages and *vice versa*, as well as to the webpages and resources of professional bodies, including the BMC, NMC, Allied Health Professionals, Royal College of Nursing.

Course handbooks are produced by multiple Schools, providing course information, including UEA research ethics processes. Specific ethics handbooks have also been designed by some Schools, providing examples of best practice. Some S-RECs also produce FAQs and guidance regarding ethics review to assist with common queries and issues relating to the process at UEA. Some Schools also use a collaborative approach to producing and sharing participant information and recruitment documents as part of their research and research integrity activity. Online handbooks and documents for staff are also used as signposting tools to UEA's Research Integrity policies, procedures and guidelines. Resources are continuously being developed to assist with the UEA ethics review process, including guided walkthrough documents for dissertation projects and flow diagrams advising on ethics approval requirements for projects.

The S-RECs continue to review and update their teaching of research integrity and ethics. Depending on the Faculty, some S-REC Chairs provide training sessions across all the Schools overseen by their S-REC, in order to standardise the training offered and to avoid conflicting advice between Schools. Most S-RECs recruit at least one external Lay Member to their Committee membership to provide independent advice. Membership is continually reviewed with some S-RECs increasing their numbers of members and the staff supporting the Committee. The S-RECs also continually review and work towards improving their visibility, and the awareness of research integrity and ethics within the University. They raise these topics at School meetings to ensure increased exposure to the wider staff and student bodies at UEA. The S-REC Chairs maintain regular contact with the other S-REC members to discuss developments and information relating to research integrity and ethics.

The UREC Chair is easily accessible to provide guidance and advice to S-REC Chairs/Members, researchers and others within the University about issues relating to research ethics and integrity.

Communications and Engagement

The revised *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* was published in October 2019 and is an updated version of the first *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* issued in 2012. It was revised in relation to recommendations of the Science and Technology Committee's Report on Research Integrity, published in July 2018, including:

- strengthening and updating the Concordat in relation to training;

- improving processes for responding to allegations of misconduct; and,
- identification of non-compliance by clarifying the requirements and expectations of higher education institutions.

Since its publication, the University has been addressing the requirements of the updated and strengthened Concordat.

Raising awareness of research ethics issues has been identified as a priority by the PVC R&I, the UREC Chair, the Head of Research Services, and the Research Integrity Manager. It is essential that the information reaches all staff and students to raise awareness of the University's requirements for ethics review. The S-REC Chairs take responsibility to cascade information to their relevant Schools.

To assist this, UREC has a MS Teams Group to enable communication between the UREC Chair, the UREC Secretary, the S-REC Chairs and the S-REC Deputy Chairs on best practice, challenges, FAQs etc outside of the three formal UREC meetings per year.

To raise the profile of S-RECs in the Schools, the UREC Chair has explored with the ADRs, the consistent inclusion of S-REC Chairs in School/Faculty research meetings. The current involvement of S-REC Chairs in UEA bodies varies across the Schools. This can range from sitting on School Boards to acting as a Deputy Chair on a Research Executive. Depending on the School, S-REC Chairs and other S-REC members may lead and contribute to research integrity and ethics discussions at School meetings, whilst others are afforded regular agenda items at School/Faculty Research Executive meetings. Information discussed at these meetings is usually cascaded throughout the Schools to ensure that important developments are regularly communicated to staff and students. The School's Research Director may also take the role of Deputy Chair on the S-REC.

The University's digital signage and e-bulletins are also used by RIN to remind staff and students to seek ethics review of their relevant work/study at the start of each academic year. This approach is repeated in the early part of the spring semester particularly to provide a reminder for students doing their projects over the summer.

Regular email reminders at the start of the academic year and each semester are sent out by Schools to reiterate the importance and necessity of ethics review for studies. These emails also provide information on UEA's ethics review processes and links to relevant information. Staff, including supervisors, are also encouraged to remind students about UEA's ethics research processes, especially in relation to their dissertation projects.

The various teams of People and Culture Division (PCD) will engage with stakeholders when messaging and providing updates, guidance and training about a range of people policies and activities, such as policy updates, wellbeing, appraisal, performance management, etc. This may take the form of emails, presentations at meetings, workshops and training.

UEA is a member of the Eastern Academic Research Consortium (Eastern Arc), alongside the University of Essex and the University of Kent. The Research Integrity Managers at UEA, the University of Essex and the University of Kent have bi-monthly research integrity network

meetings to share best practices and experiences. The topics discussed have included: generative AI and research; assent/consent options for participation in research; research integrity indicators; Compliance with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*; and Research Integrity and Ethics training. The University of Sussex has joined the Universities of East Anglia, Essex and Kent to become the fourth member of the Eastern Arc.

The University encourages all researchers to make research data available to use by others, and particularly supports open research data wherever this is possible to do so in an ethical and responsible manner. The University supports the *Concordat on Open Research Data*, and its policy on Research Data Management is commensurate with the goals of this Concordat.

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to support open research, the PVC R&I has appointed a UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) Institutional Lead to support robust and transparent research at UEA, promote awareness and adoption of best open research practices, and training and development activities to contribute to research reproducibility and replicability. Also, the RIN Open Research team organises a programme of events to mark International Open Access Week each year.

Culture, Development and Leadership

The University's values inform the application of the leadership at UEA to guide and facilitate researchers to maintain a high research standard at UEA. Within the University, it is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, and Heads of Schools (or other equivalent senior officer in non-School units) and their formal delegates to ensure that an environment is created which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good research practice.

The University's commitment and leadership in this area are specified in the University's *Guidelines on Good Practice in Research*, on the University's Research Integrity webpage and RIN's Research Integrity and Ethics portal pages, and publicised in School e-Bulletins/University e-Bulletins.

The institutional leadership at UEA is also at the forefront of promoting a positive research culture. Responsibility for maintaining the professional standards of research integrity at UEA rests with the PVC R&I, who is supported in this area by the UREC Chair, the UKRN Institutional Lead, and the Research Integrity Manager.

School and departmental heads, research team leaders and senior administrators lead by example in promoting a positive research culture and researchers follow this lead. The Schools and PCD work together to discuss matters aligned to the Researcher Development Concordat and to Athena Swan.

The PVC R&I established a Research Culture Group in 2023 to ensure that priorities for research culture are an explicit part of UEA's research and innovation strategy. In May 2024, the University launched its Research and Innovation Strategy 2024-30 with a specific priority to address research culture. The Faculties and Schools are developing their visions for research culture at UEA and what they would like to achieve drawing upon the University's Strategy.

The Research Culture Group's priority areas in line with the University's R&I Strategy's Aim 1. "to extend our research and innovation base" are:

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI)
- Research Integrity
- Open Research
- Research Ethics
- Researcher Development
- Collaborative Research Environment

The Group is chaired by the PVC R&I and includes the UREC Chair, the Faculty of Social Sciences ADR, the UKRN Institutional Lead, the Director of Research and Innovation Services, the Research Integrity Manager, the Open Access and Research Data Officer, the Library Director, the Open Research Librarian, the Associate PVC for UEA Doctoral College, an ED&I representative, a representative from the PCD, and a PGR representative.

As well as promoting awareness of research integrity, UEA has developed education and training to strengthen a researcher's understanding of research integrity issues.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of research integrity and ethics throughout the whole process of project and research design. Ethics applications are rigorously processed and the benefits to improving the quality of research are highlighted to staff and students, including the expected rigour of peer review and publishing. For courses offering professional qualifications, focus is placed on the transferability and applicability of academic skills into a profession and the need for due consideration to ethics and integrity throughout a professional career. For researchers, research integrity and ethics is also an important aspect and expectation of their profession. When applying for funding and submitting papers for publication, it is expected that the integrity and ethics of a project has been carefully considered in the research design. Journal publishers frequently require evidence of ethics approval, and emphasis is also placed on the reproducibility of results. Researchers are therefore made aware of the importance of providing journals with data and codes. Whilst publication in a prestigious journal is considered a significant achievement, awards are also offered in some Schools for the publishing of high-quality research papers.

New staff and students receive Induction training, which may refer to research integrity and ethics. A new UEA Research Integrity and Ethics e-Learning Module for staff across all disciplines and services, provides a foundational understanding of research integrity and ethics to complement the established specialised training in the Schools and the bespoke training provided by RIN to Faculties/Schools/Committees/individuals. Refresher training is undertaken every three years.

The main ethics training is currently delivered through bespoke School-level training, and the Research Skills and Methods training delivered by the Schools. This training is tailored to the researcher's career stage and discipline. Training includes the knowledge and skills researchers need to have to assist on the following issues to ensure their research has integrity throughout the entire project lifecycle:

- study design and research rigour and reliability;
- consideration of ethics issues;
- data collection, management, sharing and storage;
- statistical methods, and
- good practice in disseminating research to support an accurate and complete research record.

School-level training on research integrity is offered to staff and students at UEA in multiple ways, depending on the needs and requirements of each School. Undergraduate (UG) student training is typically incorporated into teaching modules, with several courses offering dedicated modules on research methods that incorporate topics such as study design, statistical methods, replication procedures and ethics. Permission is also sought from students to use their projects as examples of best ethics practices when providing advice to students in subsequent years. Summer Schools have previously been offered to both UEA and external students, providing teaching on best practices for the translation of an experimental design through to its implementation. Ethics and research methods training is also incorporated into dissertation modules for many courses, and much effort is made to pair UGs with supervisors having the relevant expertise for their planned dissertation topic.

Postgraduate taught (PGT) students continue to receive training through dedicated modules and/or workshops on research skills and methods. In other Schools, regular seminar series are offered to students, with sessions occurring regularly on a fortnightly basis. These series may offer general training, including an introduction to research ethics, or they may provide more dedicated teaching on research methods, depending on the course. In one School, the S-REC Chair provides a lecture on ethics and Ethics Monitor to third-year UGs and PGTs at the start of their dissertation preparation. Schools may also make use of the UEA Internships Scheme to give important research experience opportunities to final year UGs and PGTs.

All Doctoral Training Pathway students must undertake mandatory ethics training in order to pass their probationary period. This is delivered by the relevant Faculty/Partnership Training Pathway Lead, or by an external provider if the research involves procedures on live animals. In some Schools, their S-REC Chair and Deputy Chair undertake teaching and workshops on several doctoral programmes focusing on the work of the ethics review committee, research governance and research integrity. These sessions can be filmed and rewatched by participants and accessed as part of the resources for the relevant course. Postgraduate research (PGR) students may also receive a training session on the preparation of their ethics application as part of their regular training and support programme. PGR students are also given opportunities to attend ethics workshops that include elements of role play, with scenarios aligning to the type of project undertaken at a PGR level. Other School-specific initiatives are also available to students, including monthly ethics training sessions, and ethics drop-in sessions, for example, may be hosted by the PGR Director. PGRs typically receive advice and training throughout their research project, whilst Schools offering professional doctorates provide training through dedicated modules or course components on research methods and research dissemination.

Ethics training sessions on the use of Ethics Monitor are delivered by the S-REC Chairs to staff in their respective Schools, and new specific School level guidance documents have also been introduced. Some Schools hold drop-in ethics sessions for staff.

Upon starting at UEA, new academic staff receive an induction, providing an opportunity to discuss the various procedures within their School, including the ethics review processes. These inductions may also be complemented with seminars and workshops, as well as annual training sessions on several topics including research, teaching, integrity and ethics, depending on the School. One School, for example, incorporates UEA research ethics practices and policies into their Accelerator Research Workshop Series for staff. This includes workshops on generative artificial (AI) intelligence and the UEA ethics review process.

All newly appointed members of staff with responsibility for supervision, and existing members of staff taking on their first supervisory role, are required to attend the appropriate programme of development for new supervisors. In order to continue supervising postgraduate researchers, experienced supervisors are expected to attend continuing professional development sessions in relation to their supervisory role every three years. Research integrity and ethics is touched upon in this general training. Further training sessions for supervisors to aid their support for undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking an ethics review process are now available.

Upon commencement of employment, all staff are required to undergo mandatory EDI training 'Diversity in the Workplace', with subsequent refresher courses every two years. Staff engaged in recruitment also undergo recruitment and selection training every two years, incorporating elements of unconscious bias awareness. UEA staff and students have access to LinkedIn Learning, where a variety of wellbeing and EDI pathways 'Race in the Workplace' and 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' have been established.

There are a range of resources and opportunities to support managers and leaders at different stages in their career at UEA to manage and lead colleagues effectively. These resources complement the learning gained through on-the-job learning, practice, and shared experiences with others.

A wide range of additional learning, training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers are available, for example the University's Organisational Development Service (ODS) provides a wide range of professional learning and development opportunities to assist the professional development of researchers, including coaching and mentoring. LinkedIn Learning is available to all researchers at UEA and a content map relevant to research specific learning paths is available via the online UEA Research Advisory Forum. A targeted learning needs analysis for researchers is planned for 24/25. Partnering with key stakeholders within research areas and RIN, the ODS and Professional Learning team will facilitate a review to strengthen and further embed learning and development practices for both transferable and peer-to-peer/job-specific needs. This will include supporting individuals, teams, line managers and supervisors to utilise personal development plans and schedule meaningful development conversations through the appraisal

cycle, and increase the visibility and utilisation of existing mechanisms to raise learning and development needs at any time to enable the identification and delivery of targeted interventions and solutions to meet core or emerging requirements.

There are specific PCD portal pages about support for research staff working at UEA providing a Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff and Guidance on Appraisals for Researchers, designated research staff Coordinators in each School, and Guidelines for Research Managers, and other relevant information.

UEA utilises both mentoring and 'Buddy' systems to ensure staff and students are provided with formal and informal routes for seeking academic advice and support. The buddy system is designed to strengthen and improve the connections between education-focussed staff and research-focussed staff and PGRs. A supervisor of a PGT student may be allocated a Buddy to assist them to support the student through their dissertation project. These Buddies may also be a member of one of the S-RECs, assisting supervisors to support their students' ethics applications and providing guidance for the supervisor.

The University recognises the importance of addressing mental health issues and strives to create a supportive research environment. UEA has a Wellbeing team as well as a range of toolkits, guidance and systems in place via the PCD portal pages, including an Employee Wellbeing Toolkit, Mental Health Awareness support signposting, Wellbeing Ambassador Network; Employee Assistance Programme and a wide range of activities that support national mental health wellbeing initiatives such as Mental Health Awareness Week, Men's Health and similar. Some managers also benefit from Mental Health First Aid Training and, where the role requires, more specialist interventions.

Staff are also allocated a Line Manager and Mentor upon joining their School at UEA. Mentors are assigned to new staff members based on the latter's contract type (research/teaching) and specialism, in order to provide support that is specific to the needs of the individual. Mentees requiring ethics knowledge in a certain area are also likely to be matched with mentors possessing the required ethics expertise in that specialism. The Eastern Arc runs a Mentoring Scheme, matching mentors and mentees across the partnering institutions. This offers non-hierarchical, professional support outside of the institutional, managerial and reporting structures that might be found within the mentoring programmes of a single university. It also provides opportunities to gain new perspectives on behalf of the mentor and mentee, including insights into the practices of other institutions and professionals.

As part of the University's Research Activity Planning (RAP) annual exercise, researchers undertake regular meetings with their Directors of Research and/or Heads of School to discuss their projects and this involves discussions and raising awareness of the ethical considerations for their studies. Funds may also be provided to research staff members to attend conferences and external training in research skills. Some Schools also utilise Time and Motion audits to evaluate the amount of time devoted to training and to aid in the provision of time and space afforded to researchers to learn and develop.

In the case of students, supervisors provide a first point of call for queries relating to research integrity and ethics. If additional advice is required, students are encouraged to contact the relevant S-REC, either directly or through their supervisor. Schools also operate a system of Peer Assisted Learning (PAL), whereby final year undergraduate students provide support and advice to undergraduates in their first and second years at UEA. Postgraduate students also provide support to undergraduates as part of this system. Some Schools aim to provide spaces and opportunities for students to come together and discuss their work with other students. The University's Learning Enhancement team may also be involved, giving students the opportunity to seek further advice.

Some Schools hold regular Research Forums, providing opportunities for staff and postgraduate students to discuss specific projects and the ways in which they are managed, including sharing knowledge of research methods and ethics considerations. These Forums are an open space to build people's understanding of good research practices. Staff from RIN are also invited to contribute to these discussions. Schools are also introducing new initiatives, for example, the introduction of a 'Research Exercise Framework (REF 2029) Environment Action Plan' in one School, includes plans to promote the School's research culture. This will include areas such as mentoring, research dissemination and support for writing grant applications. Research Culture seminars have also been launched that encourage the presentation of research projects by undergraduate students, postgraduate taught students and Early Career Researchers; postgraduate research students already have opportunities to do this.

Whilst the University provides guidelines on best research practices at an institutional level, it also encourages the adaptation of specific guidance at a Faculty and School level to better reflect the needs of a School or specific area of study, and to help develop their specific best research practices. These may also be combined with guidance and information from professional bodies. Research Team Leaders undertake regular meetings with their Research Groups to discuss best research practices with regards to their particular research. Team Leaders also invest considerable time in discussing experimental design with Postdoctoral Research Associates (PDRAs). Line Managers may also be involved in the practical planning stages of projects for research staff starting their first research projects. Local guidance designed to assist with raising awareness and promoting academic research has also been reintroduced in the form of 'Research Dissemination' policy briefs.

Collaboration across Schools and Faculties, as well as with external institutions, is encouraged, providing opportunities for discussions on best research practices. Students can engage across multiple disciplines and experience different research practices through involvement in larger collaborative projects at the University. The EDESIA: Plants, Food and Health PhD Programme at UEA, for example, provides PGRs with access to a wide range of expertise and facilities in plant-based food and health across the University and the wider Norwich Research Park before deciding on a specialism in their second year of research.

Self-reflection also forms an important aspect of research culture and is emphasised in the research methods training and ethics review processes. Questions included on the University

ethics application form also assist with this process of self-reflection and the importance of the research to be undertaken, for example the form asks, 'What impact will the research have?'.

Monitoring and Reporting

The minimum requirements of the Concordat: producing an annual report on research integrity and having named primary contacts for research integrity on the University's [website](#), have been in place at UEA for a number of years.

Alongside UREC, the University with the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) Trust operate a Joint Research Governance Committee and Joint Research Governance Operations Group overseeing healthcare research within the NNUH Trust and the UEA, under the HRA Framework.

Schools at UEA use several methods to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with standards of best research practice and integrity. For staff, such topics are embedded within induction sessions and training received within the School, whilst appraisal meetings also provide ongoing opportunities to monitor and discuss methods of best research practice and integrity. Depending on the School, there may also be a reporting mechanism to the Director of Research relating to activities being undertaken as part of an individual's research.

For students, these principles are heavily embedded in relevant modules, notably those containing a research component, such as dissertation modules. This can also be monitored using the Module Level ethics approval process, allowing the relevant S-RECs to assess the type of project being undertaken by students in a particular module. A new procedure is also being considered in one School in regard to best research practice. This includes a proposal for all taught student project data to be stored in a central location, giving supervisors access to this data and to ensure consistency in this approach across all the student projects in that School. Clear guidance on the reporting of adverse events has also been developed by one School to assist with this process and emphasis has also been placed on the necessity for risk assessments.

The Schools at UEA also provide several informal channels to assist individuals who may wish to raise concerns regarding research integrity and its implementation at the University. These may exist as part of the UEA Supervisor and Mentor pathways for students and staff respectively, as well as discussion opportunities with Line Managers, Heads of Schools and Directors of Research, depending on the School's approach. S-REC Chairs are also readily accessible, as are other S-REC members for those S-RECs representing a Faculty. Consideration is also being given to the creation of 'safe spaces' within some Schools to help encourage discussions around research integrity without the fear of recriminations for staff and students.

Opportunities to provide feedback on the School's research environment are provided in several ways: 'Research Away Days' incorporate discussions on undertaking research and include consideration of research integrity and ethics. Regular discussions take place across the Schools, including informal research meetings, School monthly meetings, Research Group meetings and Executive Meetings. In some instances, representatives for undergraduate and postgraduate research are invited to attend the latter, allowing for information to be

disseminated to the wider student body. Students are also offered opportunities to provide feedback in the form of surveys.

The University's all-staff Pulse Survey was launched in December 2021, its quarterly and aims to give a regular check on how staff are feeling about work life and wellbeing at UEA so we can continually monitor what's going well and where we can improve.

Each year Senate gives assurances to Council on the activities undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues across the University.

Changes and developments during the period under review

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* is the UK's national framework for research integrity. It was first published in 2012 then revised in 2019 and is now undergoing a 5-year review. Staff and PGRs at UEA have been encouraged to take part in the 2024 Stakeholder Consultation and comment on the content of the Concordat to help shape any revisions and make sure it remains fit for purpose.

In February 2024, UEA took part in the UKCORI Stakeholder Workshop series to advance the discussions about research integrity indicators in five domains: Strategy, Leadership, Procedures, Practices, and Skills. UKCORI is currently in the process of analysing the outputs of the workshops and UEA is keen to convene conversations around quantitative and qualitative indicators of research integrity following the publication of the UKCORI Report in summer 2024. A benchmark indicator used in UEA each year is the number of student dissertation projects that were undertaken without having the correct ethics approval in place.

The University's research integrity policies, procedures and guidelines are subject to scheduled reviews every three years. UREC has been given responsibility to comment on and endorse those under review before being further endorsed by the University Research Executive and approved by Senate. During the year, the following reviews have been initiated by UREC:

- *Research Ethics Policy* (last approved by Senate in June 2021).
- *Ethics Review Appeal Procedures* (last reviewed by UREC in January 2021 and no changes were made).

The Policy was endorsed by the University Research Executive on 23rd May 2024 and approved by Senate on 12th June 2024. The Procedures were last reviewed by UREC in January 2024 and no changes were made.

To complement the University's *Research Ethics Policy*, the University has over 30 Ethics Guidance Notes issued by the University Research Ethics Committee. This year several have been updated and new ones have been created as detailed below.

UEA is committed to providing support and protecting staff and all students (UGs, PGTs and PGRs) in their use of generative AI. As part of this commitment, the University has developed a *Generative AI Policy for Research and Innovation* under the UEA AI Working Group (chaired by

Professor Kay Yeoman, APVC LTE). This Policy sets out the University's position on the use of generative AI tools by researchers undertaking research and innovation activities as part of their UEA role. The potential of generative AI is recognised but this must be balanced with managing its risks, and it is crucial to exercise caution and adopt responsible practices when utilising these tools. Researchers should be mindful of the following: security risks, legal aspects of data protection, ethical issues, intellectual property protection, and other considerations such as biases and inadvertent data linkages when involving generative AI tools. The University has also produced an *Ethics Guidance Note* on 'UEA Ethics Review of Research Involving Generative AI Tools' to assist researchers, and a new Participant Information Sheet (PIS) template, which should be used when a study involves a generative AI tool. UKRIO have provided a link to the University's *Generative AI Policy for Research and Innovation* on their 'AI in Research' resources webpage. A new flowchart clarifying the key governance steps supporting the new Policy is proving to be very effective and a new Generative AI Review Group has been set up to support the implementation of these steps. For the S-RECs to understand the different angles of risk when a project is proposing to involve a generative AI tool, and to be able to assess the safeguards being implemented by the researchers to mitigate them, new questions have been added to the ethics application form in Ethics Monitor to request additional information from the researchers.

The University's new *Internet Monitoring and Filtering Policy* was implemented in 23/24. To support the Policy, UEA's ethics review process has been further developed to include requests from UEA researchers to access an external website, for legitimate research purposes, that has been blocked by either the Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU), or the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). The University has produced an *Ethics Guidance Note* on 'Security Sensitive Research'.

Real life experiences help to improve the University's research integrity documentation, for example, workshops/activities that are part of a consultation process are routinely undertaken within UEA particularly in work adopting a participatory or co-production approach to research. UREC has made minor amendments to the University's *Ethics Guidance Note* on 'Ethics Approval for Workshops' providing clarification as to when ethics approval is required for such types of consultative workshops.

The University receives a large number of requests from external researchers or organisations to recruit UEA staff and/or students as research participants. To ensure that these requests have undergone an adequate process of ethics review and comply with the University's regulations, a new procedure has been developed, whereby UREC will consider the external request and give permission or not for the recruitment to take place. This is captured in the University's *Ethics Guidance Note* on 'Process for Seeking UEA Permission for External Requests to Recruit UEA Staff and/or UEA Students as Research Participants'.

Following a number of queries from staff asking if a UEA project had obtained UEA ethics approval after reading its recruitment advert, UREC has produced a new *Ethics Guidance Note* on 'Producing a Recruitment Flyer' stating that researchers must include information in their adverts to ensure that potential participants are: well informed; can identify the individuals

and/or organisation undertaking the project, and are clear that it is a legitimate advertisement before they decide to take part in the project or not.

UREC has revised the *Ethics Guidance Note* on 'Research in Other Countries and Research with Partners in Other Countries' to include a position statement on qualitative primary data collection from participants overseas by proxy for UG and PGT studies.

In August 2021, the University improved its research ethics practices through the implementation of a new online ethics review system, Ethics Monitor. The University has continued to develop the system including implementing new auto routing rules for the review of some of the ethics applications affected by the restructuring of Schools in UEA. The University has taken part in the User Group discussions with Cayuse regarding UEA's priorities on the Ethics Monitor 'Roadmap' for further product development/enhancement.

Over the 23/24 period, improvements have been made to dedicated S-REC webpages and Blackboard sites for staff and students. This has included linking to relevant University policies and the publication of S-REC meeting dates.

The S-RECs have updated their membership with some increasing their numbers of members and S-REC support staff in the reporting year. Training for new members and support staff has been undertaken. Administrative support of the ethics review processes has continued to be improved, for example through refining shared mailbox processes. Local practices have also been documented to aid training and consistency for seeking ethics approval.

The Schools and S-RECs have continued to review and improve their processes, training and guidance in 23/24. Training sessions for PGRs in some Schools, for example, have been more formally integrated into courses and given more emphasis. New guidance documents have also been developed to assist with the UEA ethics review process. These include new supervisor and students guides alongside checklists and Participant Information Sheet good practice documents containing annotated examples, as well as video presentations to assist with ethics training. One School has also made improvements to the probationary review requirements for PGRs, and ethics training has been embedded in student courses. Drop-in sessions in this School are now being offered to supervisors twice a year, whilst course-specific training is also being offered to supervisors of students taking these courses. Furthermore, an updated PhD Seminar series, renamed the 'Conversations with Academics Programme' has incorporated dedicated ethics sessions that all new PGRs must attend. Another School has developed their own *Safeguarding Policy* that is accessible through Blackboard and must be read and followed by researchers undertaking face-to-face testing. Clarifications have also been made to this Policy regarding Gillick-competent 16 to 18-year-olds to ensure that the minimum consent requirements are extensive. The compulsory completion of an ethics application for all students undertaking an independent project is also being trialled in one School. Another School has introduced the use of secondary datasets with ethics approval given by their S-REC, to assist PGTs with their project completion.

Completion of the annual survey under commitment 4 of the *Concordat on Openness on Animal Research* was undertaken in June 2023. This has subsequently led to process changes within UEA to provide a better alignment with the Concordat's requirements.

New S-REC annual reporting has been introduced so that we can share best practices/experiences across UEA's 10 S-RECs and to allow regular monitoring of the S-RECs to demonstrate the high quality and consistency of the work they are undertaking. The UREC Chair will also communicate this information in their new Annual Report to Senate in February 2025.

UREC agreed that it would be very beneficial to have short Case Studies based on real-life experiences, which illustrate ethics issues and promote good research practices to help other researchers or members of the S-RECs. UEA has developed three such Case Studies the details of which are provided in the 'Case Study on Good Practices' section below.

Consultation with Schools/Faculties to gather examples of local research integrity activities was extended to the Professional Services who also have a key role in these activities. The focus in 23/24 was UEA's People and Culture Division (PCD) to provide a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support research integrity.

Significant work has taken place within UEA to clarify the UEA approved software to create transcripts. This information along with details of the University's three pre-approved online survey platforms have been signposted better to researchers on UEA's portal pages.

The University has launched its own e-Learning Module on 'Research Integrity and Ethics' for staff. The course was developed by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) Chair and UEA colleagues: Research Integrity team, Learning Technologists and the Digital Learning team. The course has been endorsed by UREC and the Research Executive. The course is mandatory for all new academic staff and technicians, and existing UEA academic staff and technicians are encouraged to complete this course as it will provide a valuable refresher and Research Integrity training is now a mandatory requirement for receipt of grant funding from many funders. Students can also access the course to compliment the University's training already available in this area.

Staff regularly take part in external initiatives to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of the frameworks, standards and obligations that apply to their work and areas of expertise, and take up opportunities to contribute and influence developments in external policy and strategy pertaining to research integrity, for example in 23/24 RIN's Research Integrity team contributed to the:

- UKRIO Roundtables on 'Research Culture', and 'AI and Research Integrity'
- Trusted Research Working Group Meeting on 'Looking at AI and Ethical Review'
- ARMA Ethics Governance & Best Practice Special Interest Group Discussions on 'UKCORI Narrative Statement'
- UKRIO Annual Subscriber Day 2024: Research integrity: the big and small changes to improve research quality
- ARMA Event on the REF 2029 People, Culture and Environment (PCE) Consultation
- Selected Attendee at the UKCORI REF 2029 PCE Roundtable

- Consultation on the UKCORI Draft Strategic Plan 2023-25
- Selected Attendee at the UKCORI Workshop on Exploring indicators of Research Integrity
- Workshop funded by the University of Plymouth's AHRC Impact Accelerator Account in collaboration with Fast Track Impact and the Institute for Methods Innovation on 'Scoping an Ethics of Engagement and Impact'
- TASO workshop on 'Ethics and the Collection/Analysis of Institutional Data'
- Research Culture Enablers Network

In 23/24, the University's Research Culture Group produced a Timeline on its external webpages to capture the University's progress in developing a positive research culture, and also presented the University's Research Culture Strategy showing UEA's current activities and initiatives to improve and enhance the University's research culture. The Research Culture Group also initiated discussions on research culture at the University's REF Spring Meetings in 2024.

The University undertakes research, whether on its own or with third parties, that aligns with the principles of trusted research, for example protecting (i) intellectual property; (ii) sensitive research; and (iii) people and infrastructure, from potential theft, misuse and exploitation. A draft *University Export Controls Policy* is currently in preparation and is expected to be approved in 23/24. This Policy is to ensure the research activities of UEA staff and students remain in full compliance with the UK export controls that restrict the export of goods and/or technology, with the aim of preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and countering terrorism.

The University's Data Protection Officer is in the process of updating the *Data Protection Policy* to redefine the University's position on who is the Data Controller for students' research activities. The recommendation is that UEA will be the Data Controller when students are processing personal data involving living identifiable individuals in their research (PGRs) or in their research as part of their course/programme of study (UGs and PGTs), as they are doing so under the instruction and supervision of the University. This recommendation will be presented to the Information Management Board on 1 August 2024 for its decision. Should this be approved, this Policy and the Data Protection legislation would then apply to these students.

The University holds an active Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP)-approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA). This Assurance applies whenever the University becomes engaged in research on human subjects, conducted or supported by any US federal department or agency that has adopted the US Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. In March 2024, the expiration date of the FWA was extended to 7th March 2029.

Ongoing reviews of the Joint NNUH/UEA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) continue, with the UEA review being undertaken by the most appropriate person(s). Additional SOPs have been introduced as required over the last year, as identified by both the NNUH and UEA teams.

The Research Governance Operations Group, with members from NNUH, QIB and UEA (RIN and Norwich Clinical Trials Unit)), have updated their Terms of Reference to only meet as required, at the request of the Joint Research Governance Committee or members of the Group.

RIN, working with UEA researchers, are responding to ongoing requests from the NIHR Research Delivery Network to assess whether UEA sponsored studies are recruiting participants to target. The introduction of this monitoring for NIHR studies is to ensure the delivery of high-quality research, for the benefit of patients, the public and health and care organisations across England. Using the IRAS data in Ethics Monitor, the RIN team have audited whether Chief Investigators of UEA sponsored studies that have received NHS REC approval have completed End of Study declarations and Final Reports, and where relevant have registered the trial on an appropriate open database.

The University is a member of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), and Dr Stephanie Rossit is the UKRN Institutional Lead. During 23/24, the UKRN Local Lead has continued to run a successful series of hybrid ReproducibiliTeas with talks by national and international speakers. The goal of the UEA ReproducibiliTeas is to raise awareness and foster training about reproducible research practices across disciplines. All events were open to UEA and externally. Recordings have been uploaded onto the ReproducibiliTeas YouTube channel. This was a collaboration with UEA Library staff, who helped advertise these events and host the schedule on their LibGuides website.

UEA Code Clinics have continued with the goal of fostering best open research practices of sharing code, which have received excellent feedback by students and staff and will be a useful resource for researchers across UEA to adopt this open research practice, which is now mandatory for journals such as the BMJ.²

²BMJ 2023; 382 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p1609>

UEA has joined the UKRN Open Research Program (ORP) as an unfunded institution. This is an important milestone for UEA as it demonstrates the University's commitment to foster, develop, evaluate, and adopt the best reproducible research practices. Enhancement of research practices to improve reproducibility is a priority for UK government, parliament, funders, and publishers. The objective of the ORP is to foster and facilitate coordination and sharing of practices across participating institutions nationally, and the REF provides a unique opportunity to evidence success of ORP projects. For instance, its work on open research indicators will enable institutions to design and test solutions that meet their aspirations and needs; institutions will thereby be well-placed both to inform decisions by the REF team as the details of REF 2029 are refined, and to respond to those decisions.

The University is taking part as a case study institution in the UKRN Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) Project that is running until August 2026. OR4 is a major initiative to reform how open research is recognised and rewarded in recruitment, appraisal and promotion practices. Work has begun on the OR4 project, and we have now completed the institutional self-assessment tool to enable UEA to produce a status maturity assessment and help plan institutional development and progress up the maturity scale. The analysis of this data is underway, and a short report will be produced and circulated to the UKRN in due course.

UEA staff have completed the Open Science Train-the-Trainer course delivered by the renowned Center for Open Science (COS, USA). The course was developed by COS to provide participants who already have basic working knowledge on open science to further strengthen their knowledge and practical skills in open science adoption and learn about how to teach COS's Openness and Reproducibility Research Practices Training to other researchers or practitioners within their institutions or communities. Upon completion, a Certification of Completion is jointly issued by UKRN and COS as recognition. The curriculum of the course was curated from use cases developed in collaboration with the community of open researchers that COS engages with. Training sessions were led by experts in open scholarship trends and technology from COS. Through real world examples and hands-on activities, participants walked through material that enables them to recognise reporting guidelines and good practices, document their research planning, develop collaborative environments for data management on Open Science Framework (OSF), and utilise ways to share their research outcomes to maximise their discoverability and citation. In parallel, the pedagogical methods used to develop, facilitate, and adapt the modules to participant communities of research were shared, discussed, and demonstrated. All activities and resources were prepared, implemented, and made openly available under CC-BY license in OSF, a dynamic, free project management tool. The UEA staff who completed this course, have delivered this to UEA Library staff in 23/24.

The UKRN Institutional Lead at UEA facilitated one of the workshops for the REF PCE indicators project commissioned by Research England. This workshop explored options for evaluating different elements of research culture and environment at institutional and disciplinary levels, the availability and quality of evidence within institutions, and context-specific considerations that will need to be considered.

The RIN Open Research team set up a number of events and attended School meetings to provide updates on the revised UKRI *Open Access Policy*, as well as providing information on Transitional Agreements with publishers that allow UEA authors to publish their journal articles as gold open access at no additional cost to the authors. Throughout 23/24, the RIN Open Research team provided online and face-to-face UEA training on data management and archiving with particular focus on the digital aspects of this. Training is provided to new members of staff in RIN, in MED and to PGR students across the faculties as part of regular training events. Additional training is also provided on request.

The RIN Open Research team also organised events to mark International Open Access Week from 23rd to 29th October 2023. A collaborative session involving staff from RIN, the Library and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities focussed on making long-form publications such as monographs and book chapters open access. The team also held a drop-in session for researchers to ask questions and discuss any aspect of Open Research.

ORCID provides researchers with a unique digital identifier to facilitate the correct attribution of research activities and outputs and so serves to improve the researcher's recognition and discoverability. UEA has ORCID Consortium membership to support UEA staff with creating ORCID IDs and with using ORCID across external and internal systems, such as Pure. This helps maintain complete and up-to-date publication records, and facilitates reporting in ResearchFish.

UKRI's updated *Open Access Policy* affects long-form publications published from 1st January 2024, and so work in 23/24 involved communication around the Policy, following policy and guidance updates from UKRI, and helping authors affected by the Policy to find the most suitable open access approach for their particular publication.

Work around Transitional Agreements (TAs) with publishers, which allow corresponding authors to make their work open access at no additional cost to the authors as well as covering 'read' access to subscription journal content, has been continuing. These agreements are being negotiated by Jisc on behalf of the UK HEI sector. RIN and the Library have been working together closely to ensure that UEA provides input to Jisc on these deals, and to assess each deal on its benefit and relevance to needs of UEA researchers. The most significant deal to be renegotiated during 23/24 was with Springer Nature; the negotiations for this required frequent input from the HEI community. As well as former Palgrave journals, the new deal now incorporates some of the Nature Research journal portfolio; the open access charges associated with these journals is very high and so this aspect of the agreement will have a significant positive effect on UEA's publishing.

The Rights' Retention Strategy (RRS) is an important feature of Plan S principles which allows authors to make their work immediately available through an open access repository, without the need to pay an Article Processing Charge (APC) and provides a route to meeting open access requirements of the Wellcome Trust, UKRI and other funders. Staff in RIN and the Library have been working together to draft a Rights Retention Policy and during 23/24 have been consulting across the University for feedback from UEA authors on the draft Policy.

Details for UEA Sponsored studies that have NHS ethics and/or HRA governance approvals are now captured on Ethics Monitor, along with details of the individual research sites including when they were given the green-light to start recruitment. For studies that fall under the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency sponsored by NNUH with a UEA researcher as the Chief Investigator, the basic information is being recorded on Ethics Monitor to give oversight of all health and social care studies where UEA researchers are undertaking the role of Chief Investigator.

The University has specific guidance available for appraisals for researchers, although the process is one that is University wide. There is not presently any specific guidance within this that relates to research integrity. The process is currently under review by UEA's new Reward and Career Enablement team within PCD. The University has included criteria in UEA's Academic Progressions Handbook to recognise the contribution made to a positive research culture at UEA and open research.

Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Compliance with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)* is a status that needs to be maintained, and this requires continued training and development of the University's staff and

students. In doing so we will need to understand and apply the changes to the Concordat following the 2024 Consultation.

The national Research Integrity climate is building significant momentum. The UK Committee on Research Integrity (UKCORI) was formed in 2022, following a report by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee in 2018 that recommended greater attention be given to research integrity. Research integrity and ethics, open research and other good research practices will be an aspect of higher education providers which will receive greater focus in the new PCE element of REF 2029. The University will work with the indicators provided by UKCORI to monitor and develop research integrity within UEA and there may be some indicators from the UKCORI project that are useful for the new REF 2029 PCE element. UEA will be taking part in several of the workshops (between May and October 2024) that are part of the REF PCE indicators project commissioned by Research England.

It is clear that as the national profile of research integrity is steadily rising, more resources will undoubtedly be required to be diverted to this area to attain, maintain and demonstrate the necessary compliance expected within Universities and for the preparation of REF 2029. The S-REC Chairs take responsibility to cascade research integrity information to their relevant Schools. Ideally, this responsibility should be widened to enhance the progress in embedding good research practices across all Faculties at UEA. Other universities are setting up networks of Research Integrity Champions, for example [King's](#). In June 2022, the UKRIO issued [guidance](#) on implementing a system of local research integrity champions/leads/advisors.

In 24/25, the following scheduled reviews will be initiated by UREC and reviewed within the University:

- *Guidelines on Good Practice in Research* (last approved by Senate in November 2022)
- *Open Access Policy* (last approved by Senate in November 2022)
- *Research Data Management Policy* (last approved by Senate in November 2022)

These documents will be submitted for approval by the University Research Executive in January 2025 and by Senate in February 2025.

The University is developing its knowledge and expertise of the many aspects of generative AI relating to research and innovation, and the Generative AI Policy for Research and Innovation will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains current in light of the rapid developments in generative AI technology. As the University is significantly more advanced in its approach than other universities in this area, we are supporting other universities and the wider community, for example by speaking at the UKRIO Webinar addressing 'AI and Research: Supporting Research Integrity Through Governance and Ethics' on 9th October 2024. Also, by authoring an article on 'Developing a Generative AI Policy for Research and Innovation at the University of East Anglia' for publication in THE Campus (Times Higher Education's peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing platform).

As Ethics Monitor continues to evolve, the training videos and user guides for Applicants, Supervisors and Ethics Reviewers will require updating, and the S-REC Chairs will continue to work with supervisors to be more aware of their responsibilities in supporting their student's ethics

applications. The system generated Participant Information Sheets (and Parental/Other Responsible Person equivalents) and Consent Forms (PIS/CF) will be reviewed to ensure that these documents contain all the information that must be provided under UK GDPR when collecting personal data from individuals, and are clearly and concisely worded.

The University's *Whistleblowing Policy* (officially known as Public Interest Disclosure) will be reviewed by PCD in discussion with the named contact for disclosures under the University's *Public Interest Disclosure Procedure for Staff to Raise Concerns about Malpractice*. RIN will also be involved in any revisions to ensure that these guidelines and procedures, and the University's *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* complement one another.

The Research Culture Group will be holding a wider consultative process in 24/25 to inform the development of the University's Research Culture Strategy that will support the University's Research and Innovation Strategy and provide a synergy with the University's compliance of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*.

The University will address having an equivalent of the Student Insight Review Group (SIRG), to review studies recruiting UEA staff to provide advice on whether these studies can go ahead, what promotional activity can be carried out and timing clashes with planned staff surveys that are already being run centrally.

UREC will continue promoting the University's Research Integrity and Ethics e-Learning Module to provide institutional level introductory training, and continue developing Ethics and Researcher Development Case Studies.

UEA now has the functionality to carry out end of reporting year audits in Ethics Monitor. This will allow checks on whether applicants are completing applications accurately and if reviews are being conducted according to the University's policies and procedures, and thus providing the University with opportunities to improve its processes.

The S-REC Chairs have identified areas for development in 24/25. This includes reviews of their guidance documentation and training to consider how these fit with recent developments, including generative AI, and the new UEA Research Integrity and Ethics e-Learning Module. One School is currently in the process of implementing a new best practice policy, allowing for student project data to be stored in a shared space for supervisors to access, so that there is a standard practice across students and their supervisors. Some of the S-RECs aim to recruit additional members whilst one School is considering a potential reform of their supervising system for UGs and PGTs to reallocate supervisor workload to ethics reviewers who can dedicate more time to assisting students with ethics applications. Consideration is also being given to increasing the visibility of the S-RECs and ethics, particularly through Faculty Executive Committees, as well as the updating and maintaining of portal pages. Reviews are also ongoing with regards to the need for additional ethics training and information in Schools. The UREC Chair will address the S-REC achievements and developments in their new Annual Report to Senate in February 2025.

The University's Information Compliance team will be reviewing their processes for assessing UEA's research activities that are planning to process 'high risk' personal data and developing associated information on UEA's portal pages and training material. This is essential to support

the University when it is deemed to be the Data Controller for research activities that are processing personal data.

A short-term UEA Open Research Action Plan, which lays out the work for 24/25 has been approved by the Research Culture Group, and will progress the University's open research activities, working across the University and with the UKRN.

The RIN Open Research team will be organising a programme of events to mark International Open Access Week from 21st to 27th October 2024. The theme for 2024 continues the call to put "Community over Commercialization", which will provide an excellent platform for highlighting the ongoing work in UEA that involve Citizen Science and other Open Scholarship activities. Some events will be held jointly with the Library, including those around relevant policy updates. For the first time, UKRN events will be promoted during this week.

RIN and the Library will continue to work together to evaluate Jisc-negotiated TAs relating to open access publishing in journals. They will also be looking at ways to increase support for authors publishing long-form publications (such as monographs and book chapters) who wish, or are required by their funder, to make these publications open access. Models for open access publishing of these types of outputs are less well established compared with open access publishing of journal articles, and a range of different publishing models may be available to authors and editors. RIN and the Library will continue working on implementing a *Rights Retention Policy* to cover journal articles and conference proceedings written by staff involved in research; this is something that a number of other HEIs in the UK are working on or have already introduced, and UEA will be able to draw on their knowledge and experiences when formulating a policy approach to Rights Retention.

RIN is planning with the NNUH R&D team training for Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences researchers about the requirements for NNUH to undertake sponsorship of clinical trials.

The Schools at UEA are considering a diverse range of initiatives and improvements based on the needs of their research and courses. These include further development of the S-REC Chair role and increased visibility of research integrity and ethics. This could be achieved by further embedding these aspects in School-level guidance and training, as well increasing its inclusion on agendas for research and teaching meetings and communications to staff and students. This might include further use of periodical email notifications, reminding staff and students of the need to remain up to date with current best research practices and changes in processes regarding research integrity. Other proposals include the creation of dedicated ethics portal pages for Schools that currently do not have these and to complement the RIN's portal pages on Research Integrity and Ethics.

Consideration is also being given to improved teaching of research integrity and ethics in the Schools. Suggestions include increased training on research ethics as well as moving training sessions to the start of the relevant module timetables, emphasising it as a core consideration for students throughout the module. Proposals are also being considered to extend and adapt ethics workshops currently employed for the teaching of PGR students, to the wider community of PGT students. Discussions are also being held on the provision of a seminar series on

‘Decolonising and Participatory Research’ for students. From a research perspective, new guidance for Participant Information Sheets is being developed that are specific to the research and specialism of certain courses, whilst Schools offering professional degrees are seeking to widen the involvement of staff with relevant insight and expertise, for example from the People with Lived Experience Group, to better inform their ethics review processes.

Following a review of PGR supervisor training, from October 2024 core training for supervisors of postgraduate researchers will include two elements:

- A central online training module delivered through LearnUpon and developed by the UEA Doctoral College. This new module provides training around the regulations, student-supervisor relationship, and emerging guidance from the UKRI New Deal for Postgraduate Researchers and the UK Council for Graduate Education. This is mandatory training and will require successful completion every 3 years as outlined in the UEA Code of Practice for Research Degrees.
- Faculty-led training. This will deliver a more local best practice approach in-person and is mandatory for colleagues who have not supervised postgraduate research students at UEA previously. Faculty-led training will be optional for more experienced supervisors.

Case study on good practice

The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) agreed that it would be very beneficial to have short Case Studies based on real-life experiences, which illustrate ethics issues and promote good research practices to help other researchers or members of the S-RECs. UEA has developed three such Case Studies this year:

- Shaping the UEA’s Civic University Project through the UREC Ethics Review
- Supervisor Mentoring by the School of Education and Lifelong Learning’s Ethics Review Committee
- The UNESCO Chair Programme and Researcher Development

These are available on the UEA’s Research Culture webpage:
<https://www.uea.ac.uk/web/research/research-culture-uea>

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

Within the University, responsibility for ensuring that no misconduct occurs rests primarily with individual researchers.

The University's *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* outline the timely and robust actions undertaken when any allegation of research misconduct is brought against any present or past member of staff of the University in respect of research undertaken while employed by the University and/or while registered as a student at the University. Any allegations of misconduct in research against a present or past student while registered by the University are handled using the *Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct Made Against Students*. These Procedures are intended to provide reassurance that all allegations of research misconduct are treated seriously and fairly, and their merit investigated with integrity and with sensitivity.

The University's *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* are subject to a scheduled review every three years, but minor revisions can be made between reviews for example, following reflections on completed misconduct cases. The last scheduled review of the Procedures took place in 22/23 and the revised Procedures were approved by Senate in February 2023. The revisions made during the review are summarised on the front page of the Procedures, and include:

- strengthening the advice and guidance on taking informal steps initially.
- acknowledging the consequences of allegations made in bad faith.
- including the consequences of breaching confidentiality.
- clarifying the procedural stages and emphasising the prompt progression of the Procedures.

The next scheduled review of these Procedures will take place in 25/26.

All researchers are encouraged to report cases of suspected misconduct or malpractice and to do so in a responsible and appropriate manner in accordance with the University's Procedures.

Researchers must try to resolve the potential research misconduct matter they are concerned about informally before beginning the formal Procedures. In the first instance, an informal approach to the person concerned is encouraged and advice of the relevant Head of School or other equivalent senior office holder in non-School units sought. This is to ensure that wherever possible, issues are resolved without waiting for the formal process to be completed, and not to undermine the issue being raised. If an informal resolution cannot be achieved, any formal allegation is made following the University's Procedures above. Where misconduct or performance cannot be resolved informally, the HR Business Partnering (HRBP) team in PCD will be actively involved in advising on and supporting any formal process.

All allegations of misconduct in research are treated seriously and fairly and their merit investigated with integrity and with sensitivity. In all the University's enquiries following receipt by the relevant Head of School or equivalent, of an allegation of research misconduct and in any action taken as a result of their outcome, due regard is given to the need to:

- protect researchers against frivolous, vexatious, malicious or ill-founded allegations of misconduct in research. For example, any allegation found to be made to deliberately deceive will be treated as an act of dishonesty by the person making the allegation. The allegation may require immediate referral to the University's Staff or Student Disciplinary Procedures.
- protect the position and reputation of those alleged to have engaged in misconduct in research when such allegations are not confirmed. For example, if the case has received any publicity, the Respondent would be offered the possibility of an official statement released for internal and/or external purposes.
- protect the position and reputation of those who make allegations of misconduct in research in good faith, i.e. with the honest belief that misconduct in research may have occurred. For example, it is recognised that an allegation made in good faith should not be penalised and the Complainant might require support. The position and reputation of the Complainant will be preserved provided the allegation is considered to have been made in good faith.
- support those under investigation and observe the principles of natural justice. For example, all enquiries will be conducted on the basis of confidentiality to the strictest extent possible, and any breaches of confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action.

All enquiries are conducted on the basis of confidentiality to the strictest extent possible without compromising health and safety, or any issue related to the safety of the participants in any research, or the appropriate and thorough investigation of the allegation of research misconduct. The University throughout takes all reasonable measures to preserve the anonymity of the person making the allegation.

Named primary contacts to discuss issues relating to potential misconduct in research are on the University's portal pages and external [website](#), and have been in place at UEA for a number of years. They are circulated in e-bulletins at the start of the academic year and during the academic year.

The HRBP team in PCD has awareness of a wide range of policies, both those owned by PCD (such as: Whistleblowing; and Dignity and Respect in the Workplace), and by other departments (such as: Safeguarding; Conflict of Interest; Research Misconduct; Financial Regulations; Conditions of Computer Use; Data Protection). When issues are raised which include a potential research integrity concern, the HRBP team member will carefully consider which policies might be relevant to the matter and ensure liaison with the appropriate UEA expert for further advice if required.

Each year Senate is asked to verify that the processes that are in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research are transparent, robust and fair and are appropriate for the University's needs, before giving assurances to Council. Cases are reviewed following their

completion and revisions to the University's *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* can be recommended. The very small number of allegations of research misconduct each year within the University means that it has not been possible to identify any trends.

During 23/24, there was no allegations of research misconduct received concerning a member of staff. There was one allegation of research misconduct received against a student in respect of research undertaken while registered with the University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Following an Initial Assessment of the allegation, the Head of School determined that there was no case for further consideration, and therefore no further action would be taken. There was one allegation of research misconduct received against a student in respect of their research component undertaken while registered with the University for a Masters Taught degree. This allegation was referred to the Senate Student Disciplinary Committee under General Regulations 15 and 18, where it was determined that there was evidence to support the allegation.

In accordance with UKRI's *Policy on the Governance of Good Research Practice*, the University keeps the relevant Research Council(s) informed of all allegations of research misconduct at the stage that it is decided to undertake a formal investigation where it relates to an individual(s) associated with:

- a UKRI grant application under consideration.
- any directly or indirectly funded UKRI research activity.
- UKRI activity such as acting as an expert reviewer or strategic advisor (e.g. panel, committee, council member).

As UEA receives funding from Research England, information on all allegations referred for formal investigation are also given to Research England.

The University's *Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research* are followed for allegations of research misconduct received through the University's *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy*. The Procedures are analogous with the University's *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy*, tailored explicitly for research misconduct.

Workplace bullying and harassment of staff, students or any associated personnel by other staff, students or associated personnel are not tolerated by the University. Several funders have already made strong commitments to tackling bullying and harassment in the research and innovation sector, and RIN (in collaboration with PCD) has implemented procedures to address new clauses from some of the University's funders which deem researchers ineligible for funding if they have had claims of bullying or harassment upheld against them. The University is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying. The University's *Code of Practice for Staff: Dignity and Respect in the Workplace* sets out how the University intends to create an inclusive working environment and culture where staff are treated with dignity and respect and valued for their diversity. The University's values of Ambition, Collaboration, Empowerment and Respect support a 'no-blame' approach.

This Report was received by the Council of the University of East Anglia on 25th November 2024.

The University's 'Call It Out Bystander' Programme is available to address bullying, harassment, microaggressions, or other unacceptable behaviours, and submitting a report through 'Report & Support' enables access to various support systems.