

Research ethics and integrity

Annual statement on research integrity 2024

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Loughborough University
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	06/11/24
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/research-integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Dan Parsons Email address: D.Parsons@lboro.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 Jacqueline Green Email address: researchpolicy@lboro.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research

integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

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

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

The University is committed to the principles outlined in the Concordat and to embedding research integrity within its research culture.

The University has published a Code of Practice for Research which reiterates this commitment and provides additional guidance to staff. This Code of Practice is now available through the University's Policy Gateway and [Research Ethics and Integrity](#) website.

An external facing [Research Integrity](#) website includes links to our research integrity policies, annual statements, and contact details for the named person for receiving allegations of misconduct.

The [Research Ethics and Integrity](#) website provides details of relevant policies and guidance documentation. Guidance on ethical considerations and ethics processes is available alongside details of the online ethics system, LEON, which was introduced during 2020.

Guidance on external ethics processes is also provided. Loughborough University continues to develop its processes for sponsoring projects involving the NHS, which are expected to increase following the opening of the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine. Robust Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to meet the sponsor responsibilities, as defined in the NHS Research Governance Framework.

Research integrity continues to feature within training sessions for academic staff on the research environment, e.g. Working in the Current Research Environment, and research ethics for doctoral research students, e.g. Ethical Thinking in Research.

Two ethics training courses have been developed and introduced for academic staff. One is an Introduction to Ethics and the other relates specifically to those supervising student projects which involve human participants. These are being monitored to determine uptake and to encourage participation.

The University is a subscriber to UKRIO (UK Research Integrity Office) and Research Governance staff have attended their regular webinars and annual conference to ensure that guidance remains current.

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.

The new Core Plan for Research and Innovation emphasises the importance of culture. One of the guiding principles is to '*advance a sector leading research and innovation culture that is supportive and nurturing of talent such that everyone is involved and is valued for their contributions*'. One of the key objects is:

To encourage a culture of imagination, creativity, and openness that supports researchers and entrepreneurs in constructing a vibrant and inclusive research and innovation ecosystem that draws from our diverse talent base.

A R&I Culture Working Group has been convened which advises on issues relating to R&I Culture as agreed by group members in response to institution-level feedback including prioritising research integrity, prizing equity, diversity and inclusion and recognising and rewarding responsibly. University-wide consultations and events are planned.

In addition, investment in the Research & Innovation Office has resulted in the creation of new roles for Trusted Research and Due Diligence. The appointment of Research Integrity Champions in each School is also being pursued.

Development work on the online ethics system continues to address any issues that arise and to enhance the experience for applicants.

Development has commenced on a package of online training courses relating to the Human Tissue Act. During 2024 the University will be involved with the UKRIO Research Integrity Training pilot.

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.

The University continues to make progress with ethics and integrity. The new Core Plan for Research and Innovation emphasises the importance of integrity and this is pivotal to the developments relating to research culture.

There are plans to develop student training resources based on the existing staff ethics training package and also to produce an online HTA training package to make this easily accessible.

The University is involved with the pilot of the UKRIO Research Integrity Training. A review of the research integrity

training provision would be undertaken once the UKRIO training pilot has been completed.

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

N/A

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 [Research Misconduct Policy](#) is available on the University's Research Ethics and Integrity website and through the Policy Gateway. This Policy ensures that dealing with allegations of misconduct is transparent, timely, robust and fair. Informal advice on research integrity is available through the Research Governance Officer in the Research & Innovation Office and formal reporting of allegations of misconduct is made directly to the PVC(R&I) or Chief Operating Officer following discussions with the School's AD(R&I) and Dean as appropriate.

Three allegations of misconduct by an academic member of staff were investigated. One allegation of misconduct by a research student was investigated. In all cases the allegations did not proceed to a formal investigation.

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

undertaken

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

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

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld after formal investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	3	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	1			
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				

Other*	0	0	0	0
Total:	4	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.

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