

Ethics & Governance

Explore

Research & Business



Concordat for Research Integrity - Public Statement 2024

Section 1: Key Contact Information

Name of organisation	Durham University
Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education Institution
Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	10/12/2024
Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/ethics--governance/
Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Colin Bain, pvc.research@durham.ac.uk
Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Catherine Brewer, research.policy@durham.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

Responsibilities for research integrity are set out in the [Research InResearch Integrity Policy and Code of Good Practice](#). The University also has supporting policies on specific aspects of research integrity, including Ethics in reseach and scholarship, [Research Data Management](#), and [Responsible Use of Metrics](#). Central services, including Research and Innovation Services and University Library, provide systems and guidance to support implementation of these policies.

The University provides a range of training, development and mentoring opportunities for researchers at different career stages. These include the Researcher Development Programme aimed at PGRs and ECRs, the Leading Researchers Programme for mid to late career researchers, a new training programme for supervisors, online Research Integrity training modules (via Epigeum) and a range of tailored sessions and workshops on different aspects of research integrity.

Implementation and further development of the university's vision for Research Culture, [Flourish@Durham](#), is now overseen by the Associate PVC for Research Culture (a new post created in 2024 dedicated to an area of work previously within the remit of the Deputy PVC Research). They are supported by the Research Culture Committee, a sub-committee of University Research Committee, which receives regular reports on activity relating to Flourish@Durham, as well as specific activities relating to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the Research Integrity Concordat.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

A number of developments have taken place during 2023/24. These include:

Systems: Implementation and roll-out of a new online ethics system, which is now in use in all departments. Branded as the 'Ethics and Research Integrity Portal', the first part of the form includes an ethics and governance checklists which guides researchers through a consideration of whether their project needs ethical review and signposts them to other governance processes they may need to consider, including trusted research and export controls, insurance, health and safety and data protection impact assessments. We are in the process of collecting initial feedback to inform further development and improvement of the system.

Policies: Approval of an updated [Public Interested Disclosure Policy \(Whistleblowing\)](#). Review is taking place of a number of other relevant policies, including Research Misconduct, Research Data Management, Research Integrity, and Ethics in Scholarship and Research. These will take account of recent lessons learned in these areas and ensure that policies meet current requirements.

Guidance: The following new guidance has been developed and highlighted to researchers:

- Use of generative AI in research
- [Fair Attribution Guidance for Research Technical Professionals and other Research-performing and Research-enabling staff](#). This is part of wider ongoing activity in support of the Technician's Commitment.
- [Guidance on authorship and acknowledgement](#) has also been enhanced through the development of a flowchart for staff and students, based on the new fair attribution guidance and existing authorship guidance, to aid them in identifying when authorship credit or acknowledgement of contribution is warranted.

Training and development:

Activity to develop and enhance our training offer on research integrity and related areas includes:

- Relaunch of the suite of Research Integrity modules with the aim of increasing visibility and take-up of this training. The module on Trusted Research and Export controls has been made mandatory for researchers in the Faculty of Science. This is part of wider activity to support researchers to understand and address international security risks, also including establishment of an International Security Risks Group and development of a resource toolkit.
- Development of a tailored online Research Integrity resource for students, which is due to be released in the new academic year. This will be followed by a similar resource for supervisors.
- Provision of workshops on AI for Researchers. These (and similar workshops with a focus on teaching) have proven successful and will be continued and updated in the new academic year.
- A pilot of a new Research Supervisor training programme, and updates to the Research Supervisors Handbook. Positive feedback has been received from supervisors who have attended the training. Lessons learned from the training pilot include the need to improve marketing and promotion to new supervisors.
- A Research Culture working group has been established to look further at adoption of a single platform or portal for research training, to make relevant training more easily visible to researchers. This group is also reviewing our HR Excellence in Research (HREIR) action plan for implementing the Concordat on the Career Development of Researchers.

Research Culture:

- The University has continued its investment in research culture initiatives and activities as part of the [Flourish@Durham](#) This includes additional support for career development of early career researchers and technical staff, and launch of an Institutional Research Culture project: 'Reimagining Governance for a Flourishing Research Culture', funded by the Wellcome Trust.
- Following review of our PGR provision, an initial action has been creation of a new Doctoral Research Hub in our intranet structure, to pull all existing PGR resources from across the University together in one easy-to-access area. The Hub will continue to evolve as more resources become available. New training led by the Durham Centre for Academic Development (DCAD) was also developed as part of the PGR Review.
- The University has continued to develop its vision for Open Scholarship through its Open Scholarship Working Group. This has included staff surveys and engagement events in 2023-2024 to highlight priority areas for Open Scholarship developments. The report on the vision for OS will be made in Michaelmas term 2024.

The University has revised its EDI Strategic Framework. For researchers, the Inclusive Durham Framework is aligned with our Flourish@Durham research culture initiatives in attempting to enhance the sense of belonging across our community and create the conditions by which colleagues can thrive and flourish in their roles.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Research Culture continues to be a key area of progress, with the development of the Wellcome Reimagining Governance project. The Flourish@Durham programme will also continue its evolution in 2024-2025, particularly with the development of Prosper, a model for unlocking the career development and potential of postdocs. Flourish@Durham is continuing to work with Faculties and Departments with a focus on people, culture and environment and looking at research culture developments and opportunities across different communities in the University.

Of the priorities identified in [last year's report](#), we have

- completed implementation and initial roll out of the new online ethics system and put in place mechanisms to capture user feedback.
- progressed work relating to improving access to and provision of research training, with the establishment of a working group to look at this.
- continued to work with the N8 on support for mid-career researchers. We expect that work on the cross-institutional mentoring programme will be taken forward in the next academic year.
- initiated a regular awareness campaign to signpost University research integrity related policies and guidance
- taken forward review of processes related to ethics and integrity, including looking at streamlining our research misconduct procedure as part of our review of the related policy, and looking at improving our processes relating to institutional sponsorship for external reviews (NHS, MOD). We are continuing work to refined trusted research and export control processes building on the communications and training offering beyond the higher risk areas which where the initial focus of work to date

Future developments:

- continue to build on the ongoing initiatives previously mentioned in this report.
- develop enhanced reporting on research ethics and governance, utilising data from our new ethics system, to better target tailored support and training.
- undertake a review of research project and collaboration governance, including reviewing our Work with Outside Bodies Policy and associated guidance on areas for caution, to ensure that we have simpler, transparent processes for our research and partnership due diligence.
- review our processes and support for higher risk research and develop training and awareness campaigns to support responsible practices.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

The current [Research Misconduct Policy](#) was approved in October 2022, and work is currently underway on a review in relation to lessons learned as outlined in the previous statement, and UKROl's updated Research Misconduct Procedure. Related policies include the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing), approved May 2024, and the Staff Concerns Policy, which covers Bullying and Harassment as well as other concerns, approved in February 2022.

The Research Integrity Policy and Code of Good Practice highlights informal routes for raising potential issues of poor practice or inadvertent error, while also signposting the formal routes available where needed. Similarly, the 'Staff Concerns Hub' provides guidance on both informal and formal avenues for raising concerns, and supporting information for those involved in these processes, whether they are raising a concern, having a concern raised about them, or involved in a management role.

We have included information about the Research Misconduct process in communications to raise awareness of this and related policies.

Only one misconduct investigation was carried out in the past year, and did not progress beyond the informal investigation stage. Key lessons include:






- the need to clarify guidance on requirements for ethical review for project in which the researcher conducts experiments involving their own body
- the need for increased engagement in and monitoring of ethics and integrity training in departments

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

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

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