Template: annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Greenwich
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	16 October 2024
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.gre.ac.uk/research/governance-and-awards/research-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Peter Garrod, University Secretary Email address: researchethics@greenwich.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: Peter Garrod, University Secretary Email address: researchethics@greenwich.ac.uk

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

2A. Description of current systems and culture

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

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

The University of Greenwich is committed to the principles outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Policies and systems
Public visibility of the University's research integrity policies and processes is provided by the University Research Integrity webpage which links to the following key documents:

- The University's Code of Practice for Research, which presents the guiding principles and standards of good practice in research across all subject disciplines and fields of study in the University;
- Staff and student policies for investigating research misconduct (see below);
- The University's Research Ethics Policy;
- The Ethical Research Collaboration Policy, which sets out how the University will manage research collaborations to ensure these are consistent with the University's values; and
- The Academic Regulations for Research Awards.

The Research Ethics webpage links to the Research Ethics Policy and the University's Research Ethics Guidance, and provides information about the University's research ethics committees (see below) and the research ethics applications process.

The Research Ethics Policy clarifies which procedures should be followed when investigating allegations of research misconduct:

- Allegations against staff are investigated under the Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct;
- Allegations against postgraduate research students are investigated under the Postgraduate Student Research Misconduct Procedure;
- Allegations against undergraduate and taught postgraduate students are investigated under the Assessment Misconduct Procedure.

Communications and engagement
The University's key policies on research integrity are available to staff and students on the University's website, and any significant changes are communicated to staff via web articles in the staff e-newsletter. Academic staff are periodically reminded of requirements through emails from the University Secretary explaining the deadlines and processes for submitting research ethics applications. The Postgraduate Research Students' and Supervisors' Handbook includes information on Research Integrity, including the Code of Practice, Research Integrity Checklist, plagiarism and how the University handles allegations.

Culture and development
Research staff are required to complete two online ethics training courses. Periodic ethics workshops organised through the Research and Enterprise Training Institute (RETI) are also provided and staff are strongly recommended to attend them. Research integrity and research ethics are included in the mandatory Research Skills training provided by RETI to postgraduate research students, who may also optionally complete the online ethics courses available to staff. All applicants to the University Research Ethics Board are required to demonstrate that they have completed the online ethics training before their applications will be approved.

Governance, leadership and reporting
The committee with primary responsibility for oversight of research integrity is the University Research Ethics Board (UREB). Each faculty has a Faculty Research Ethics Committee reporting to UREB. UREB consults over policy changes with the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Board.

As required by the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, cases of research misconduct and any lessons learnt are summarised in anonymised form in an annual report approved by the University's Academic Council which is provided to the University's Governing Body.

Research ethics is reviewed periodically by the University's internal auditors, with the results reported to the University's Audit and Risk Committee. The last review in 2021 had overall ratings of 'substantial' (the highest rating) for design and 'moderate' (the second highest rating) for operational effectiveness, with one medium and two low risk recommendations, all of which were subsequently implemented.

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 following policy changes were approved during the year by the University Research Ethics Board (UREB):

- The University's Natural Resources Institute (NRI) has historically operated a devolved ethics process to support the NRI's need to move swiftly in research applications. This was reviewed in 2023/24 and a revised NRI Code of Practice for Research with People and associated guidance were approved by UREB and the NRI Director. These set out how 'low risk' projects from NRI staff will be approved through the local process and those deemed higher risk will be referred to UREB. All NRI student ethics applications are referred to the Faculty of Engineering and Science Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) for approval in the usual way.
- Amendments were approved to the Research Ethics Policy following consultation with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board. These primarily reference the delegated approval process operating in the NRI (see above) and give greater prominence to provisions setting out the requirements of the Human Tissue Act and where approval of projects by the Health Research Authority is required.
- A template was approved for a participant information sheet (PIS) to improve the quality and promote standardisation in PISs submitted as part of ethics applications. The template sits alongside the model consent form which UREB already provides.

A new full-time Research Ethics Officer role in Greenwich Research and Innovation (GRI) was created as part of GRI's restructuring and recruited to, with members of UREB participating in the appointment process. The role is already improving the turnaround of ethics applications and supporting the development of the ethics process. The role holder will play a key role in administering an online ethics system when one is implemented (see below).

The University's meeting management software (BoardEffect) was extended to UREB at the start of 2023/24, improving the organisation and distribution of

papers. During the year, members of UREB contributed to the development by GRI of a business case for a new research management system, including an ethics component. This is expected to be submitted for approval in autumn 2024, with implementation following over the course of 2024/25.

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.

Over the course of 2024/25, UREB will continue to support the procurement and implementation of a new online ethics system (see 2B) as part of a wider research management system. The ethics system (if approved) will operate at University and faculty level, supporting the flow of applications between Faculty Research Ethics Committees and UREB and consistency of approach. There is the potential for a step change in performance in the processing of applications as we move away from the current manual process.

In preparation for an ethics system, UREB has begun reviewing the research ethics application process, looking at examples from other universities to identify areas where it can be simplified and streamlined. It is likely that we will adopt a risk-based categorisation of applications, with 'low' risk applications going through an expedited process and 'high' risk applications requiring more detailed consideration. An ethics system will also allow for a more dynamic approval process that is less centred around committee meetings.

The University's Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct (covering staff) will be reviewed in 2024/25 in light of the current guidance provided by the UK Research Integrity Office.

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.

For the past three years, the University Research Ethics Board has required applicants to demonstrate that they have completed the University's two online research ethics courses before their application will be approved. This is now universally accepted and ensures that the University's training requirements are met.

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.

Policies and processes
As indicated (see 2A), the University has three procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct. Allegations against staff are investigated under the Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct while allegations against postgraduate research students are investigated under the Postgraduate Student Research Misconduct Procedure; allegations against undergraduate and taught postgraduate students are investigated under the Assessment Misconduct Procedure. The Postgraduate Student Research Misconduct Procedure and the Assessment Misconduct Procedure are reviewed every three years or as required, while the Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct is reviewed as required.

While not specifically related to research misconduct, the University provides a Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure for the reporting of 'whistleblowing' concerns. Students and staff may report concerns related to

harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, hate crime and discrimination through the University's Report + Support portal.

The research environment
As indicated (see 2A), training on research ethics is mandatory for postgraduate research students and research staff. The University's procedures for investigating research misconduct are available on the University's website. Any changes to policies are communicated to staff via the University's e-newsletter. The Research Ethics Policy and guidance for staff explain which procedure should be used depending on whether the allegation concerns a staff member, a postgraduate research student or an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student.

Lessons learnt
One of the two postgraduate research student misconduct cases in 2023/24 (see 3B - plagiarism) was the first one that identified the use of generative AI in a student's thesis. A training session has been introduced for PGR students and staff called Generative AI and the Researcher: Strategies, Insights and Practical Uses. This training is new for 2024/25. We plan to continue to expand guidance and resources for PGR students and supervisors in this area.

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

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

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

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism	1	1	0	1
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	1	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
Other*				
Total:	**2**	**2**	**0**	**1**

*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.
The data in table 3B represents two investigations under the Postgraduate Research Student Misconduct Procedure in 2023/24. There were no investigations under the Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct (covering staff).