



Department of Engagement, Research and Commercial

Annual Research Integrity Statement for Academic Session 24/25

Background

As a subscriber to the **Concordat to Support Research Integrity**, the University of South Wales is committed to upholding and promoting the principles found within the concordat and its framework.

This annual statement sets out the University's position in relation to research integrity, including what is in place to achieve compliance, as well as facilitating the disclosure of any allegations of research misconduct related to all staff and postgraduate research.

As a recipient of public funding, the University recognises the need to manage risks and minimise the occurrence of adverse events. We acknowledge that Research Integrity should not prevent or block research and innovation activities from taking place but rather it should enhance the success and resilience of such endeavours. To maintain and build upon the University's research portfolio, it is important that the University is committed to maintaining the highest standards in research, from design through to dissemination, by demonstrating openness, rigour, and integrity in all our research activity.

We achieve this through underpinning our research with quality assurance and risk management processes and by providing relevant support, policies, and guidance in a widely accessible format.

Governance

The Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation (PVCR&I) oversees Research Integrity and ensures that this information is kept up to date and publicly available.

The Research Governance Manager is the first point of contact for those seeking information about Research Integrity or any related matters.

Individuals who wish to raise concerns in confidence about the integrity of any research being undertaken by the University of South Wales are invited to contact the Deputy Director of the Department of Engagement, Research and Commercial.

This information is publicly available on our USW Research Integrity web pages including our annual statements and links to our Research Misconduct and Whistleblowing policies.

Embedded within its terms of reference, the **University Ethics Sub Group (UESG)** holds overall responsibility for overseeing and implementing the Concordat, as well as overall integrity (ethics) and governance related policies and procedures. The UESG meets at fixed times throughout the year but also convenes as is required as well as managing requests via Chair's Action. The UESG is a sub-committee of the university's Research and Innovation Committee which itself is a sub-committee of the Academic Board.

The UESG Committee is chaired by the PVCR&I, a member of the **University Executive** group. The UESG also has oversight of and / or receives reports from all Faculty Research Ethics Committees, which exist in each faculty and are responsible for ensuring faculty

compliance with institutional policies related to research governance and ethics, as well as reviewing high risk research ethics applications and ensuring low risk ethics applications are being reviewed appropriately.

Operationally, the Research Environment Team within the Department of Engagement, Research and Commercial (ERC) provides day-to-day support for all matters relating to research ethics, research integrity, and research governance. This includes providing advice and the arrangement of training and awareness raising events across all levels of the research community, and policy and guidance development. In addition, the Research Environment Team also supports the UESG.

Part of the role of the PVCR&I is to ensure the work of developing, publicising, and assuring the University's arrangements satisfy the standards required of research ethics, research integrity and good research practice. As the University's lead for research ethics the PVCR&I also works to ensure that research and innovation activity, both by academic members of staff and students, meets the highest ethical standards.

Equally, faculties and the subject areas within them play a key role in ensuring that the research conducted by its staff and postgraduate research students is conducted appropriately and to the highest standard.

Each faculty has an Associate Dean for Research and Innovation who is an academic member of staff, whose role includes overseeing and championing a range of research-related issues.

Tailored for postgraduate research (PGR) students, the Graduate Research Office oversees and supports the further development of PGR students through the provision of training, and a series of induction events throughout the academic year.

Policies and Procedures

The University maintains a framework of policies and guidance to ensure the expectations of research integrity and good research practice can be fulfilled. Including the reporting of research misconduct. Relevant policies and guidance are:

- *Good Research Practice Code of Conduct,*
- *University Research Ethics Policy,*
- *Publication and Authorship Policy,*
- *Research Misconduct - procedure for reporting and investigating,*
- *Whistleblowing policy,*
- *Data Protection for Research (GDPR),*
- *Research Data Management,*
- *Open Access Policy,*
- *PREVENT Protocol for security related research*
- *Research Risk Matrix for preliminary approval of research intended for overseas or that poses significant risk to researchers, participants, or institution.*
- *Guidance on the Nagoya Protocol*
- *Guidance on Trusted Research including Export Controls, ATAS, NSIA and FIRS.*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy.*

Training and Dissemination

It is widely agreed that training and awareness raising in the areas of ethics and integrity play an important role in facilitating good research practice. Recent reviews and subsequent revisions to the training and awareness raising events at University of South Wales are aimed at all levels of researchers and it is necessary to ensure that all researchers are aware of their responsibilities towards maintaining the highest ethical standards when undertaking their research.

At undergraduate and postgraduate level, module co-ordinators and other lecturing staff are encouraged to embed the appropriate University processes and procedures into the delivery of their teaching.

Postgraduate students and academic staff are invited to participate in training that covers fundamental research ethics issues, research integrity, and university processes. In the 24/25 session 61 individuals participated in research integrity and ethics training as part of the Research and Innovation Development Programme. While 69 postgraduate research students attended a session that focussed on research ethics, research integrity, and research misconduct.

For those in the human health research field, several external training opportunities, such as Good Clinical Practice (GCP), are facilitated by Health and Care Research Wales and continue to provide training related to clinical research. These external opportunities are advertised via our internal communications and cover a wide range of clinical research governance requirements.

To further encourage engagement with Research Ethics and Integrity, the University has designed a Research Governance Checklist to guide researchers through the considerations applicable to their research project during its initiation and through its lifecycle.

Staff induction involves direct reference to the University's policies related to integrity, ethics, and governance.

The Research Governance Manager is available to support and advise staff and students regarding any matters related to research ethics and integrity and provides bespoke sessions to departments as required.

The Research Librarian and Research Support Advisor, based in Learning Services, provide support on Research Data Management and Open Access Publishing.

As part of postgraduate induction all research students attend a session entitled Introduction to Research Ethics, Research Integrity, and Research Misconduct. In these sessions the concordat and key internal policies are referenced, and key principles and responsibilities are discussed as well as institutional procedures.

As a commitment to furthering the visibility and understanding of matters related to research integrity, the University continues to invest in comprehensive online research training within our virtual learning environment, which covers in depth both Research Ethics and Research Integrity as well as broader research skills. This training is regularly advertised to the research community via the University Research Committee and Associate Deans of Research and Innovation, and Research and Innovation Group (RIG) leads.

The University will continue to offer support to researchers to help them ensure their research is conducted in accordance with the principles of the concordat and the institution will work to increase the number of staff that engage with the training on offer.

External Memberships

The Department of ERC continue to actively participate in the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA).

The university is also a member of the Universities UK group, the University Alliance (UA), and a member to the UA Research Integrity and Ethics Research Administration Network.

The University also participates and attends Research Integrity themed engagement activities with organisations such as the Higher Education Export Control Association, the Welsh Innovation Network, UK Research and Innovation, and the UK Research Integrity Office.

These memberships and engagement activities enable the University to further embed and support good research practice in a manner which is consistent with the principles and expectations found within the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Summary of Research Misconduct Investigations

Reports of suspected research misconduct are informally explored before being escalated by ERC to Human Resources (for staff), or the Academic Integrity team (students) if a formal investigation is required.

Our policy is mindful of treating suspected instances seriously while protecting those that might be the victim of unfair, inaccurate, or unsubstantiated accusations.

Our Research Misconduct policy instructs all staff and students to report all suspected instances of research misconduct directly to ERC, or the PVC-R&I, or to the Faculty Research Ethics Chairs.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations during 24/25 period			
	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	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	1	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement;	0	0	0	0

interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	1	0	0	0
Other*				
Total:	3	0	0	0

Overview of Activities Carried Out During the 2024/25 Academic Session

- Annual review research policies related to research governance and integrity, including research ethics, data management, authorship/publication, and research misconduct. Including updates to Research Ethics proformas and guidance to the reviewers of research ethics applications.
- Ongoing audit of research ethics compliance related to published outputs.
- Continued awareness raising of research ethics and research integrity (including training opportunities) via institutional communication channels.
- Review and revision to staff induction to enhance reference to Concordat to Support Research Integrity, good research practice and research ethics policies.
- Expansion of guidance and arrangements for Trusted Research to include Foreign Influence Registration Scheme. As well as the introduction of a Trusted Research Screening Questionnaire to help identify activity that potentially contains Trusted Research issues.
- Expansion of research integrity due diligence within the institutional research approval system to ensure all prospective research and innovation activity is screened in relation to research integrity, including good practice, research ethics and research security.
- Revisions to taught student regulations in relation to ensuring research ethics compliance and awareness.

Ongoing Work

Research integrity literacy

The concordat makes it clear that researchers are responsible for '*understanding the expected standards of rigour and integrity relevant to their research,*' by proxy this passes an obligation to the institution to ensure they do.

The number of researchers who have engaged with our training does not confirm whether researchers are actively aware or not of their responsibilities. However, this has suggested

there is a need to monitor the levels of 'literacy' related to research integrity amongst the research community. This information will enable the institution to assess whether our researchers are appropriately aware of and upholding of the concordat's principles.

Research Integrity Working Group

A Research Integrity working group has been created to oversee the institutional arrangements for Research Integrity and conduct a Research Integrity self-assessment, as well as a Trusted Research Self-Assessment via the TREF.

As a step to ensuring that all researchers take the time to understand their responsibilities within the concordat, the institution intends to revise its Code of Good Research Practice to further promote principles of Research Integrity, which will clearly promote the responsibilities and expectations that both the concordat and the institution place upon researchers.

Trusted Research

Increasing the visibility of the good practice expectations and legislative requirements relating to Trusted Research is a key objective our current programme of work. As part of this the institution intends to work more closely with the Research Collaboration Advisory Team (RCAT) within UK Government

Open door policy to raise queries related to Research Integrity

During the next academic period the institution intends to continue its open-door policy in relation to academic staff seeking support at any time from the Research Governance Manager. These open-door arrangements enable members of the institution to discuss concerns (or queries) related to research integrity within their work or the work of others in a confidential environment.

Department of Engagement, Research and Commercial
November 2025