



Annual statement on research integrity: Academic year 2023/24

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of the West of England
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/ independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	March 18, 2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.uwe.ac.uk/research/policies-and-standards
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor John T Hancock john.hancock@uwe.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	Ros Rouse ros.rouse@uwe.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

UWE has a suite of policies related to research integrity. UWE's policies can be found [here](#). UWE's research integrity guidance can be found [here](#). The University has a system of ethics committees which covers all research with human participants, their tissue or their data, and animals and animal by-products, and a Human Tissue Sub-Committee. All Committees produce annual reports which are subject to assurance review. The University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC) has overarching oversight for research integrity, and reports to the University's Academic Board. Deans (Research and Enterprise) cascade relevant communications through their Colleges and Schools with communications through the College Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees. Research integrity is embedded in our research structures through training and governance processes. Staff undertaking funded and unfunded research are expected to undertake relevant research ethics training and adhere to UWE's policies and codes of practice, as well as best practice in their field of study. The need for specialist research governance advice is flagged through our external application management system, and internally funded schemes' application forms include issues such as due diligence and highlight mandatory research ethics and research data management training. The extent to which staff researchers' contribution is aligned with the University's Strategic Priorities and reflects UWE values is reflected in our personal development review process.

The UWE Student Ethical Review Record, which is a systematised record across the whole University of all taught programme research projects, records whether these are high or low ethical risk, and whether they need full ethical

approval or are suitable for Supervisor sign off. This is essential to be able to assure that the appropriate level of ethical scrutiny is given, in a timely way, and that students are provided with the appropriate level of ethical support.

UEIC also reviews the Research Governance Risk Register, oversees and critical actions to reduce level of risk and this is reported on to Academic Board and the Board of Governors. There is therefore a clear line of Committee assurance. A Research Governance Record is also mandatory for use by staff across the University, recording critical research integrity related details, and providing managers with information for monitoring purposes of research.

Student research is overseen by staff who are responsible for the oversight of research integrity. For postgraduate researchers (PGRs), the Director of Studies is the designated UWE Project Manager and is therefore responsible for their PGR's adherence to research governance policies. Directors of Studies are reminded of this responsibility as part of their supervisor training. As researchers-in-training, PGRs must now complete the University's online research ethics and data management training modules in order to complete the Confirmation of Project process. A dedicated research governance workshop Foundations of Good Research is offered termly aligned with PGR cohort start dates and is actively promoted to new starters at the point of offer. Research governance matters are also addressed in workshops pertaining to each PGR checkpoint/milestone (Confirmation of Project, Progression, Progress Review and Final Viva) and in relevant topic-based workshops such as Introduction to Qualitative Research and The Art of Research Interviewing. All currently registered PGRs also have access to, and are encouraged to use, our research governance related resources via our digital Skills Development Resources Library.

UWE's Invest in Yourself programme, offering skills development and training to all staff engaged in research, was launched in September 2022. It aims to foster a positive research culture, bringing together staff from across the University to develop broad research skills, make connections and develop their research careers. Research governance matters are included in workshops including Project Management for Researchers, bidding, commercialisation, and training for doctoral supervisors.

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 University has now established a University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC) which reports directly to the University's Academic Board.

In addition, the University has established a new underpinning Ethics Structure which sits beneath UEIC. This involves three College Research Ethics Committees (CRECs) supported by three College Scrutineering Pools. This is aligned with the University's new College structure, and will provide timely and expert ethics review. Significant additional resourcing has been made available for this activity in line with the University's view of the crucial nature of excellent research ethics practice. UEIC considers annual Assurance Reports from each CREC, and also matters referred up from CRECs, where necessary, at each meeting.

The UWE Research Ethics and Research Data Management training online modules are mandatory for staff and PGR students, and available to all students.

UEIC reviewed and approved: Export Control Guidance to support colleagues to successfully progress activity in compliance with legislation; a University-wide Conflicts of Interest Policy; and, the University's Corporate Ethics Policy.

As part of the annual review of the University's statement of research integrity, underpinned by review of continued compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the University reviews any associated risks to this fundamental principle of research, to ensure UWE has a robust and stable platform for research to flourish.

UEIC also considered issues associated with Freedom of Speech legislation and will continue to consider opportunities for further promotion (proportionate to the requirements of the Act), including areas of assurance that may be required, further actions needed, and responses to any future changes in the legislation.

The University has also reinvigorated its procedures for research staff leaving the University, by means of a new leavers' checklist and process, which includes matters critical to research integrity, such as appropriate transfer of responsibilities for projects, materials and data.

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 most significant development for the University in relation to research integrity was the establishment of the University Ethics and Integrity Committee (UEIC). This has been established specifically to focus on issues of integrity on a University-wide basis, so that all elements of integrity, whether that be research ethics, due diligence, conflict of interest, will be assured by one Committee, with a clear line of reporting to Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

As planned in last year's Statement:

- The new College based Research Ethics Committee and Scrutineer Pool Structure has been established. In support of this, a new Worktribe based application system has been developed and set in place (went live on 1 August 2024).
- UEIC considered future provision for the recording of project level research governance information, and the Research Governance Record System has now been agreed to be mandatory.
- Research ethics guidance in areas such as power dynamics in research, and autoethnography, has now been included in the revised Research Ethics Handbook. The revised Handbook was approved by UEIC in this period.

UEIC has had an initial discussion of the integrity elements of Artificial Intelligence in research including a consideration of the key areas for the University to take forward in the responsible and ethical use of AI, including a review of the University's 'Principles for the use of generative AI in learning and teaching' through an ethical lens. However, more broadly, this is clearly a complex issue, and the University will continue to consider how best to address

the opportunities and pitfalls of AI, in the context of the wider sector, National and International debate.

In line with the University's ongoing development of its risk framework, 2024/25 will see an emphasis on risk assurance and in particular strengthening the role and functioning of 'second line of defence' committees, such as the University Ethics and Integrity Committee, and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. Recognising the existence of varying approaches to due diligence across the institution, the University is in the process of developing an overarching framework for third-party risk management, including due diligence. The framework will establish minimum requirements to ensure robust third-party risk management where it is required and covering the whole lifecycle of arrangements.

The University has now established a Doctoral Academy which positions PGR students more clearly under the auspices of Schools in terms of their experience, progression and governance.

As a note on University research leadership, a change in research senior level responsibility occurred after the PVC Research and Enterprise left the University in February 2023. The University DVC has taken over the institutional responsibility for research and has delegated authority for oversight of integrity and ethics to Professor John Hancock.

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

<p>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.</p>
<p>Research Misconduct at UWE is considered under the auspices of the Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct (last reviewed December 2022, next review date December 2024). Where research misconduct is proven under the procedure, this may then be referred to the University's Procedure for dealing with matters of Conduct, should disciplinary action need to be considered. The University also has a Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure (last reviewed in June 2022, next review date June 2025). The University also has a Dignity at Work Policy (last reviewed November 2022, next review be November 2025).</p> <p>UWE has a Code of Good Research Conduct, which sets out the University's expectations of researchers and research supervisors. This is supported by mandatory research ethics and research data management training modules, and a suite of guidance including the Research Ethics Handbook, Quality Management Systems for work with human tissue and with animals, as well as research specific data protection guidance. These set out clearly what is expected practice. Chairs and Members of research ethics committees provide support and guidance to individuals. The Research Governance and Ethics Team is a central point of contact for queries and support, and there are named points of contact for the raising of research misconduct issues.</p> <p>New Director of Research roles have been established in all of the new University Schools. These provide support in addition to the support available from the Research Governance and Ethics team and Chairs and Members of the ethics committees. Additionally, we have a Women in Research mentoring scheme.</p> <p>No cases were considered during this period under the Staff Procedure for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.</p> <p>One PGR case was investigated and is entered into the table below.</p>
<p>3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken</p> <p>Please complete the table on the number of formal investigations completed during the period under review (including investigations which completed</p>

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		1
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
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	1		1