

University of Bristol annual statement on research integrity

Section 1: Key contact information

1A. Name of organisation	University of Bristol
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	16.11.2023
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Phil Taylor, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise
	Email address: pvc-research@bristol.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	Mr Nathan Street, Research Integrity Officer Mr Liam McKervey, Research Ethics and Integrity Manager
	Email address: Nathan.Street@bristol.ac.uk Liam.McKervey@bristol.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

Policies and systems

The University of Bristol are actively engaged in protecting the rights, dignity, health, safety and privacy of research participants, the welfare of animals and the integrity of the environment. The University is a centre for properly conducted, high quality research and is also committed to protecting the health, safety, rights, and academic freedom of researchers as well as the reputation of the University.

Research Integrity is a core funded element of the role of the Research Governance Team and is the specific remit of the Research Ethics and Integrity Manager and the Research Integrity Officer.

The University's quality assurance framework for research conduct includes:

- ethics processes which are embedded within faculties and schools with strategic oversight from the Ethics of Research Committee which is a key committee of Senate
- risk management processes to ensure that researchers are guided and supported in obtaining the necessary approvals
- regularly reviewed policies, regulations, and guidance provide the framework in which we deliver our commitment to research integrity.

These include:

- [Research Governance and Integrity Policy \(PDF, 300kB\)](#)
- [Regulations on Research Misconduct](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy \(PDF, 95kB\)](#)
- [University Human Tissue Act Code of Practice](#)
- [Ethics of Research Policy and Procedure \(PDF, 195kB\)](#)
- [Guidance on Working with Animals](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Regulations](#)
- [The Data Protection \(GDPR\) Guidance](#)
- [Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy \(PDF, 580kB\)](#)
- [Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Guidance on Preventing Harm in Research](#)
- [Responsible Research Evaluation](#)
- [Guidance on Peer Reviews](#)
- [Research Integrity Funder Requirements](#)
- [Guidance on Authorship](#)

- Acceptable Behaviour Policy

These are integrated into our governance and administrative processes and training programmes to ensure they are an active and recognisable part of our research culture.

Communications and engagement

The University offers training & development opportunities for staff and students, e.g. staff development courses covering ethics and integrity, delivered on the University internal MyDevelop training platform. Programme-specific postgraduate workshops are run in close collaboration with course leaders and sessions with a focus on research ethics and integrity are delivered for school away days in addition to annual Faculty Research Ethics Committee member training. We try to include interactive and participatory elements in our training sessions, to keep attendees engaged to their own circumstances, and seek feedback with the aim to keep improving our training content.

Our webpages are a key branch of communications, keeping researchers aware of our latest guidance and best practice in research integrity. Updates are cascaded via internal communications channels at the university to reach relevant personnel.

Culture, development and leadership

The University of Bristol is globally recognised for the quality of its research, as evidenced by the Research Excellence Framework 2021 which ranked Bristol among the UK's top 5 research universities. In order to maintain and uphold the high standards of our research, we continue to undertake initiatives to ensure that integrity, ethics and excellence are at the core of our research activities and fully embedded in our research culture. The University of Bristol is committed to meeting the commitments of Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity, 2019 (PDF, 372kB).

We are committed to ensuring we sustain a positive research culture. Senior management support includes the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture, Professor Marcus Munafò, who leads on our efforts that focus on sustaining a positive research culture, including improving research conduct, fostering collaboration, and supporting the careers of researchers. This agenda is also supported by the Research Culture Committee, which reports directly to University Research Committee.

The University of Bristol's 4 values are: 'curious and creative', 'listening and learning', 'caring and inclusive' and 'bold and Bristolian'. Where possible we aim to incorporate and be mindful of these values in how we approach research integrity. 'Listening and learning' in particular has resonance in how we aspire to be

approachable for members of our University community to contact us on matters relating to research integrity.

Monitoring and reporting

The University of Bristol engages in an annual audit programme, to ensure quality, consistency and the sharing of best practice between university RECs - this incorporates a review of adherence to research integrity practices. We cooperate fully with external audits conducted by funders, partners and national and international oversight bodies. Formal monitoring is conducted for 10% of all Health and Social Care Research and in response to concerns or incidents.

The University Ethics of Research Committee (UERC) is tasked with fostering a research environment in which research ethics and integrity issues are firmly embedded in working practices. UERC monitors the University's compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. It is also the body that receives annual reports and presentations from each faculty research ethics committee and the Research Governance Team. UERC report formally to the University Research Committee on its proceedings after each meeting on all matters within its duties and responsibilities, and provides an annual report to Senate on how it has discharged its duties during the previous academic year.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

We are committed to supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers

We continuously look for opportunities to further improve all areas of research integrity; harnessing current activity and recognising that future developments for students, researchers, supervisors and research managers should be harmonised by joint working. An area which has received increased engagement is in relation to safeguarding and the preventing of harm in research to participants, to researchers and to the wider community.

The number of training sessions delivered has increased over this past year and we aim to continue to further this reach across the institution, including the development of asynchronous modular courses to compliment in person training.

We have developed an integrated internal approach to support and nurture research integrity with input from multi-professional teams and senior management oversight that can be evidenced against UKRI expectations and the UK Research Integrity Office Self-Assessment Tool.

The Research Integrity team have continued to add to guidance for stakeholders about the varied reporting requirements for different funders at different stages of the funding and research process - in relation to research misconduct, professional misconduct, preventing harm in research and conflicts of interest. The Research Integrity team work closely with the departments responsible for investigating such incidents to ensure prompt reporting, as required. This year we have also added guidance about authorship to our webpages.

Externally, active membership of the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum enables us to share best practice and benchmark against activity within the HEI sector, as well as engagement with stakeholders such as United Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), United Kingdom on Research Integrity (UKCORI) and World Conferences on Research Integrity (WCRI). We have also added more information on the webpages about these external stakeholders. One such example of engagement with these stakeholders is reflected in this year's annual integrity statement. It follows a standardised format and structure in accordance with The Concordat to Support Research Integrity Signatories Group new template.

We are working to incorporate the recommendations outlined in the Cape Town statement on fairness, equity and diversity in research.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Since getting a core funded Research Integrity remit with staff sitting within the of the Research Governance Team, progress has been steady. The University of Bristol's plans for future development in research integrity include:

- implementing the recommendations in the Cape Town Statement, including updating and revising our research ethics review process with integrity principles embedded.
- developing asynchronous modular online training, to accompany existing in person training options.
- restructuring our integrity web presence to be more harmonised and clearly titled as areas of research integrity.
- Reviewing and updating existing policies- in accordance with policy review timelines - including the Research Governance and Integrity Policy, Ethics of Research Policy and the Regulations on Research Misconduct.

- Continuing to develop and improve processes for tracking allegations of Research Misconduct and Bullying and Harassment, relating to research.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

We are committed to using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

Clear and effective policies in this area have been in place for a number of years; policies are routinely reviewed and updated to ensure that they meet all relevant requirements and are reflected in current practice. These include, Regulations on Research Misconduct, Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy, Acceptable Behaviour Policy and Conflict of Interest Regulations.

These policies are available to all staff and are signposted in our primary communication channels with researchers.

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

NB: This format requires a report of allegations reported within the period and formal investigations *completed* within this period. As not all allegations are found to require a formal investigation, and as investigations can be complex and lengthy – these numbers are not necessarily correlated.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations completed	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication	0	0	0	0
Falsification	1	0	0	0
Plagiarism	2	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (e.g. data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	3	0	0	0