

Annual Statement on Research Integrity

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Newcastle University
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	Approved by Senate 18/01/2023
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.ncl.ac.uk/research/researchgovernance/research%20integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Matthew Grenby <i>Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation</i>
	Email address: Matthew.Grenby@ncl.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: Louise Jones <i>Research Integrity and Governance Manager</i>
	Email address: research.integrity@ncl.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

Policies and systems

The University has a number of policies and procedures in place to support a culture of research integrity and support researchers to understand and act according to expected standards and behaviours:

- Animal Research Policy
- Code of Good Practice in Research
- Confidentiality and Intellectual Property (including Inventions) and Results for Research Students Policy Statement
- Declarations of External Interest Policy
- Ethics in Research, Teaching and Consultancy Policy
- Ethics Toolkit
- Grievance Policy
- Open Access to Research Outputs
- Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct
- Policy regarding Participation of Volunteers in Research Projects
- Student Assessment Irregularities Procedure

Communications and engagement

Information about University policies and procedures is provided to new colleagues and students as part of their formal induction programme. Information about new policies is communicated to the research community via a range of different platforms including staff meetings and newsletters. Individual training needs are identified through annual appraisal processes and discussions between students and their supervisors.

Culture, development and leadership

The University provides a number of formal training, tools and resources to support researcher development and leadership. Including:

- Faculty Postgraduate Researcher Development Programmes: include introductory level workshops on research integrity, ethics and data management.
- Skills workshops: statistical skills, working with animals, research data management plans.
- PI Development Programme: 12-month internal leadership development programme including workshops on research culture, research project management, and leading and managing teams.

- Good Academic Practice hub: provides advice on developing academic skills to help avoid plagiarism.
- Methods Hub: provides information and resources on different research methodologies. The Methods Hub also regularly runs events to promote discussion of best practice and engagement in interdisciplinary research across the University.

Following consultation with the research community, the University has developed a Research Culture Action Plan based on the following aims:

- Providing the time, space and opportunities for researchers to be creative and enjoy discovering new things.
- Supporting continuing personal and professional development.
- Building inclusive, supportive and safe research environments.
- Encouraging best practices and new ways of working to improve the quality and reach of research.
- Recognition and reward of diverse contributions towards research.

Monitoring and reporting

Learning needs are identified through the University's annual appraisal process and used to inform training and development plans. The University also maintains a central record of participation in staff training. This functionality will be developed further as part of the planned development of the research Skills Academy.

Detailed and confidential records of research misconduct proceedings are maintained by the University for monitoring and reporting purposes. Anonymised data on the number and type of research misconduct allegations is presented to University Research and Innovation Committee, Senate and Council on an annual basis. A copy of the Annual Statement on Research Integrity is also published on the University's Research Integrity webpage. Relevant third-party organisations (such as funders, journals, professional and regulatory bodies) will also be informed of any allegations which proceed to a formal investigation.

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.

Research Culture Roadmap and Action Plan

Following the publication of the University's Research Culture Roadmap 2020/21, the Dean of Research Culture & Strategy (Professor Candy Rowe) held an extended period of consultation with the research community, including the first Research Culture Survey in Spring Term 2022. The findings of this survey were used to inform the development of an institutional Research Culture Action Plan. One pillar of this comprehensive Action Plan specifically addresses the need for our community to '*be encouraged to embrace best practices and new ways of working*'. Within this pillar lie a number of actions, including the delivery of training in Open Research, piloting DMPOnline, forming a network of 'champions'

for good research practices and catalysing 'team research' to tackle complex issues. These actions will be taken forward by the University over the next three years, alongside a number of additional workstreams to improve research culture. A full-time Research Culture Manager (Dr Nicola Simcock) was appointed in July 2022 to support this work.

Training, tools and resources

A new [Training, tools and resources webpage](#) has been created to bring together internal and external resources to support research integrity and ethics in one place. This includes free access to a new [Research Integrity e-learning programme](#) for colleagues and students. The programme consists of a range of introductory level modules including good research practice, irresponsible research practices, scholarly publication and professional responsibilities. Other resources include an [Introduction to Newcastle University Ethics Policy and Procedure](#) online presentation slides, which can be downloaded and used as a local training tool. A [Responsible Research Innovation Toolkit](#) has also been developed to help researchers consider the potential social, cultural, economic and environmental implications of introducing a new product, service, process or business model to market.

The webpage also provides information about training opportunities such as statistical skills and data management workshops, the PI Development Programme and the three Faculty Postgraduate Researcher Development Programmes. In addition to which, a new workshop for PhD Supervisors on Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance was launched in July 2022.

Louise Jones, Research Integrity & Governance Manager, who was appointed in December 2021, has been instrumental in taking this work forward as part of a broad remit to support research integrity, developing associated policies, managing the ethical review process and co-ordinating the University's research misconduct procedure.

Development of research policies and procedures

A review of the University's research governance policies was conducted during 2021/22 in line with funder policies and professional guidance. Academic and Professional Service colleagues have been consulted in the development of new and revised policies, including the University's Open Access Policy Statement, Research Ethics Policy, Authorship Guidelines and an [Open Research Institutional Position Statement](#). The Research Integrity & Governance Manager has also consulted with the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) regarding the updates to the University's Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure. The new policies are due to be implemented during 2022/23 (see further below).

Processes relating to the Trusted Research agenda have also been developed and a programme of engagement and awareness raising introduced in order to help colleagues engaging in international research identify and manage potential risks and ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Support is provided via the Research Strategy and Development Service.

UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN)

As an institutional member of UKRN, the University engages with other universities in sector-wide projects and discussions around Open Research and reproducible research data. The University appointed a Local Network Lead (Dr Helen Gray) in May 2022 to work alongside the Institutional Lead (the Dean of Research Culture & Strategy, Professor Candy Rowe).

During Summer 2022, the University also published an [Open Research Institutional Position Statement](#) and hosted an [Open Research Awards Celebration Event](#). The University is also in the process of recruiting a full-time Open Research Training and Development Officer to undertake other activities linked to the delivery of the [UKRN Open Research Programme](#). This is a five-year programme supported by Research England, UKRN institutional members and project partners to deliver three key aims:

- 1) To develop and implement coordinated training in key transferable skills (including research integrity, core data skills, transparent and reproducible workflow).
- 2) Sharing of successful and effective practice (e.g. open research policies, hiring and promotion policies, etc.).
- 3) Ongoing evaluation of the impact of these initiatives, and the resulting changes to training and practice, in order to foster a culture of continuous research improvement across the UK Higher Education sector.

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.

Reflections on progress

Progress has been made against all of the activities referred to in the University's 2020/21 Annual Research Integrity Statement. Further information is provided in Section 2C. Data is not currently available to demonstrate the impact of these activities but will be collected and reported in future years.

Plans for future developments

The following activities will be taken forward during 2022/23:

- Launch of new Authorship Guidelines and Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Implementation of revised Open Access Policy Statement, Research Misconduct Policy, Research Ethics Policy and Code of Good Research Practice.
- Consideration of a proposal to establish a Research Integrity Champions Network at Newcastle University to promote good research practices within their local areas, based on case studies of existing networks at other universities.
- Researchers and Professional Service colleagues will be invited to join the UKRN Local Network at Newcastle University and host activities including a ReproducibiliTea Journal Club aimed at promoting peer support and discussion plus regional activities in collaboration with Northumbria and Durham universities.
- Launch of the Skills Academy platform to provide a "one stop shop" for training provision for everyone (postgraduates, academic and professional services colleagues) in our research community.
- Build on the University's existing training offer to address current and future needs. Including face-to-face workshops on potentially high-risk areas such as 'Working with Human Participants' and 'Good Practice in International Research'. Plus the delivery of Open Research workshops and engagement activities as part of the UKRN Open Research programme.
- Consult and work with our community to develop a preventative approach to all forms of discriminatory and inappropriate behaviour as part of the University's Research Culture Action Plan.
- Consideration of a new ethics workflow system to support and promote engagement with the University's ethical review process.

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.

Research Culture Roadmap and Action Plan

Following consultation with over 400 students, researchers, academics and professional services colleagues, the University launched a Research Culture Roadmap in Autumn Term 2021. The aim of the document was to provide a collective vision for positive Research Culture at Newcastle University and a roadmap for 2021-2022 and beyond. Additional consultation on key issues was carried out in Spring Term 2022 to inform the development of a Research Culture Action Plan, which includes clear and specific actions to effect positive change. This is a 'living' document, adapting and evolving as work progresses in this domain.

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.

Organisational policies and processes

Allegations of research misconduct against colleagues may be raised via the University's Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct or Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing). Both policies were last updated in 2018. Student research misconduct is dealt with via the Student Assessment Regularities Procedure, which was updated in 2022.

Following an initial review, of the University's Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct, further work has been undertaken during 2021/22 in order to streamline the policy and procedure and improve the process for all parties involved and ensure that the policy is consistent with recently revised funder requirements. Lessons learned from recent research misconduct investigations have also been considered to support continuous improvement. The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) was also consulted on the revised draft, which is due to be approved in Autumn Term 2022. A suite of template letters and forms has also been developed to support record-keeping and standardisation in decision-making.

Creating and embedding a research environment whereby everyone is comfortable reporting instances of misconduct

The University's Code of Good Practice in Research sets out the institution's position on investigating all allegations relating to research misconduct. Colleagues and students are encouraged to report concerns in a responsible and appropriate manner.

The University's named contact for matters relating to research integrity and misconduct is the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Concerns relating to the integrity of research conducted under the auspices of the University may also be addressed to the Research Strategy and Development team.

Following the implementation of the updated policy and procedure, a dedicated webpage will be created to raise awareness of University expectations. The webpage will include a links to the policy and procedure as well as a formal reporting form. A confidential inbox will also be established for reporting internal and external queries and co-ordinating the formal research misconduct procedure; managed by the Research Integrity and Governance Manager (research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk).

One of the key workstreams of the University's Research Culture Action Plan is to build inclusive and safe research environments. Tackling inappropriate behaviour and building inclusive leadership is a priority action area for 2022/23. A new Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure is also currently in development alongside an anonymous reporting form.

Lessons learnt from formal investigations of research misconduct

The University is in the process of developing formal Authorship Guidelines in response to issues raised in formal investigations, as well as a number of authorship queries which were resolved informally during 2021/22. The aim of the new guidelines is to promote good practice across the University by encouraging researchers to have an early conversation about who should be listed as an author to avoid any disputes at a later date.

PhD Supervisors will be encouraged to signpost their students to the introductory level workshops on research integrity and ethics which form part of the Faculty Postgraduate Researcher Development Programmes.

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	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after	Number upheld in full after

	the organisation		formal investigation	formal investigation
Fabrication	1	1	0	0
Falsification				
Plagiarism	1	1	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
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)				
<i>Other*</i>	2	2	0	1
Total:	2	4	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.**

Summary of Student Research Misconduct cases:

No.	Nature of alleged misconduct	Outcome
1.	Alleged assessment irregularity in relation to a PhD student's Annual Progress Review report.	Allegation upheld. The Student Disciplinary Committee determined there was a case to answer. The Panel found that the assessment irregularity was 'negligible', within the meaning of the Procedure for Assessment Irregularities. The student was given a formal caution regarding future academic conduct.
2.	Alleged assessment irregularity in PhD thesis.	Allegation not upheld. The Academic Registrar's nominee determined that there was no

		<p>evidence that an Assessment Irregularity had occurred. Therefore the University did not pursue the matter further.</p> <p>The student was advised to be mindful of how data is explained and analysed within their thesis should any corrections or revisions be recommended.</p>
<p>Advice was also sought on a number of authorship disputes during 2021/22 which were resolved informally.</p>		

Report completed by Louise Jones, Research Integrity & Governance Manager
8th December 2022