

University of Huddersfield
Research Integrity Annual Narrative Statement 2022-23

The University of Huddersfield subscribes to the principles of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and is committed to excellence in all aspects of research. As an employer of researchers, the University acts in accordance with the commitments and the related responsibilities for employers of researchers as outlined in the Concordat. This includes fulfilment of the expectations held by funders of research for employers of researchers. The University [policies, framework and procedures](#) can be found on the University website.

The University's on-going commitment to the Concordat is reflected below.

1. Supporting and strengthening research integrity understanding and processes

“a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews)”

1.1 School based training and ethics/integrity matters

Training and support provided in 2022-23 within Schools is summarised as follows:

- **Applied Sciences** – The terms of reference were reviewed, and minor amendments were made. A Teams site has been set up for the ethics committee, and all information and documentation had been migrated over from SharePoint. 41 applications for ethical review were granted approval. Three new staff members undertook training on ethics as part of their induction process, and 41 PGR students had received training.
- **Arts and Humanities** – The terms of reference and membership of the School Research Committee have been reviewed and amended to reflect changes in the committee membership, including the appointment of a new Associate Dean (Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange). The process for ethical review has been reviewed and a panel-led approval process has been proposed. The webpages are currently under review and a discussion will take place at the next committee meeting. 109 applications for ethical review were granted approval. Training for each PGR intake is provided during their induction, and as a separate session within the Research Seminar Programme.
- **Business School** – The research governance and ethics webpages have been reviewed and refreshed to reflect updates to the committee membership. The terms of reference have also been updated to reflect the membership changes. 40 applications for ethical review were granted approval and one approval was not granted. Eight new committee members have received training, and the whole PGR and PGT cohort received training.
- **Computing and Engineering** – The School Research Ethics and Integrity Committee Terms of Reference, membership, and procedural documents were reviewed and updated. A review of the webpages is currently being undertaken, any necessary changes will be made, as well as adding guidance on AI. Four applications for ethical review were approved.
- **Education and Professional Development** – The Committee documentation was reviewed and refreshed. The webpages were reviewed and links to internal and external resources were updated accordingly. 27 applications for ethical review were approved. Training for

academic staff is reviewed annually and the relevant training identified and undertaken where necessary. All PGRs received an introduction to research ethics and integrity from the Chair of the School Research Ethics and Integrity Committee during their induction.

- **Human and Health Sciences** - The membership of SREIC and links to external webpages have been reviewed and updated. Data storage and destruction of data has been raised and additional information is to be reviewed. A total of 94 applications for ethical review have been submitted, 82 have been approved and 12 are undergoing review at the time of writing. 51 applications were approved for revisions to previously approved applications. Induction training events were held throughout 2022/23 for new committee members and a member training event was also held as part of the committee meeting on 3 July 2023. An online PGR ethical review training event was held on 17 Jan 2023, this was recorded to allow unlimited access for PGRs.

School websites include information about the approval processes for research proposals, which are based on the knowledge of discipline specific ethical, legal and professional frameworks. Each Associate Dean (Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange), supported by a Research Integrity Champion, is responsible for the communication of and continuous improvement in policy, procedures, support and information for staff, PGRs and student researchers within their School.

1.2 Research Integrity Champions Network

The network for the School Research Integrity Champions has been established through a series of meetings held over the last couple of years. This has enabled discussion, sharing of training materials across disciplines and wider communication within and between the Schools. Awareness of the Epigeum Research Integrity packages and the importance of engaging staff in the CEDARS survey has been raised and will continue to be raised over the coming academic year. The Champions were also made aware of the UKRIO and Vitae’s [Research Integrity: a landscape study](#) document.

1.3 Centrally based training and support

The University provides online training and support for research staff and postgraduate researchers (PGRs) in the form of modules within Epigeum’s *Research Integrity* and *Research Skills* packages.

Research Integrity: Concise from the academic year 2020-21 was a requirement of research integrity training at PGR progression monitoring. All PGRs must submit a ‘pass’ certificate as a means of evidencing compliance alongside any discipline specific in-School or external training. Uptake has continued to improve considerably, with 617 users having passed the course.

	13 Oct 2020	5 Oct 2021	25 Oct 2022	12 Oct 2023
Failed	7	20	32	39
Incomplete	15	32	45	52
Passed	59	241	455	617

Figure 1 Research Integrity: Concise online completions (totals)

However, Epigeum discontinued this course in the Summer of 2023 replacing it with a more expansive and generic Research Integrity, Second Edition. As such, we and other Universities have had to compile their own suite of compulsory modules to fulfil research integrity training from the larger suite on offer. We announced changes to research integrity training on 18 July 2023, these records are all taken from after this date.

Module Title	Passed	Failed	Incomplete
Good research conduct	33	2	4
Irresponsible research practices	29	0	1
Planning your research	25	1	0
Managing and recording your research	23	0	1
Data selection, analysis and presentation	22	0	0

The data shows us that PGRs are not persisting and completing all five of the modules that have been selected as core training. It will be necessary for the Graduate School to emphasise to new PGRs and to the Schools that they need to have passed *all* modules, with individual certificates for each, to meet their commitment to research integrity.

1.4 NHS Integrated Research Approval System (IRAS)

All NHS IRAS approvals for research activities in all Schools continue to be routed through Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange prior to submission. Work on implementing a new process in relation to the new indemnity arrangements for 'NHS research' that has HRA/HRCW approval is ongoing.

1.5 Human Tissue Licence

The University's School of Applied Sciences (SAS) is the largest user of human tissue in its research activities and the School's Research Committee oversees wider compliance with the Human Tissue Act across the University. The University holds a Human Tissue Licence for storage of relevant materials within SAS, <https://www.hta.gov.uk/professional/establishments/university-huddersfield>. A change to the designated individual was approved on 29th September 2023.

2. Dealing with allegations of misconduct

"a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation"

The University's procedure for identifying how allegations of misconduct in research are reported and investigated is documented in the staff handbook and was last reviewed in January 2022. The [procedure](#) follows UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) guidance.

The named person for receiving allegations of misconduct is Professor Tim Thornton (Deputy Vice Chancellor).

Misconduct in research by postgraduate researchers is covered in [Section 9 of the Regulations for PGRs](#).

The Regulations for postgraduate researchers were last updated in May 2023 by Registry and Graduate Board. The review formed part of the regular annual review of processes by Registry in consultation with internal stakeholders and amendments made to improve clarity and the consideration of best practice. The 2023-24 Regulations were published on the Registry website following their approval at the Graduate Board meeting on 17 May 2023.

The University's [Freedom to Speak Up: Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure](#) was reviewed and approved by University Council in November 2021 is available on the university website.

3. Formal investigations of research misconduct and lessons learned

“a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, which will include data on the number of investigations. If no formal investigation has been undertaken, this should also be noted”

and

“a statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring”

In 2022-23 there were 32 formal investigations of research misconduct, an increase on the 25 investigations in 2021-22, but still a marked decrease from the 51 of 2019-20. The following figures show a breakdown of the category the formal investigations came under:

	Plagiarism	Self-Plagiarism	Ethics
Applied Sciences	1	2	0
Arts and Humanities	7	3	0
Business School	4	1	0
Computing and Engineering	6	5	0
Education and Professional Development	2	0	1
Total	20	11	1

A more consistent adherence to the University regulations and test Turnitin checks would help to further reduce incidences of self-plagiarism, which highlights an area where more time should be spent on this, particularly during PGR supervisory sessions.

In 2019-20 there were 10 cases escalated to the most serious Stage 3 level. This was reduced to four in 2020-21 and again to only two in 2021-22. The figure for 2022-23 remains low at just three. This significant reduction suggests the majority of cases are now minor breaches of the regulations, and our processes and procedures as well as the training offered are improving standards.

	No case to answer	Written caution	Penalty 1	Total
Stage 1	3	18	0	21
Stage 2	0	2	6	8
Stage 3	1	1	1	3
Total	4	21	7	32

4. Institutional research environment

“a statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct”

In 2023 the 4th national CEDARS (Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey) provided feedback from our staff regarding aspects of research integrity as the survey included several relevant questions. The survey was sent to researchers and 16% (149) of University of Huddersfield academic staff responded to the survey. Their responses are summarised as follows:

- 73% (65.2% in 2022) said that they had done training or other CPD in research integrity, above the benchmark for the sector.
- 55.2% (75.2% in 2022) agreed or agreed strongly that they are familiar with the University's mechanisms to report incidents of misconduct.
- 66.4% (79.8% in 2022) agreed or agreed strongly that they would feel comfortable reporting any incidents of research misconduct.
- 63.1% (80.8% in 2022) agreed or agreed strongly that they trust the University to investigate any reported incidents of research misconduct fairly and take appropriate action.
- 92.1% (89.7% in 2022) did not personally feel pressured into compromising their research standards or integrity.
- 6 (20 in 2022) respondents indicated that they had reported incidents of research misconduct.
- 69.3% (75.4% in 2022) agreed or agreed strongly that the University promotes the highest standards of research integrity and conduct.
- 22.9% (26.7% in 2022) indicated that they had some understanding of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. A further 33% (29.4% in 2022) stated that they know it exists but do not know the detail.

Although uptake of the survey was lower than in previous years, the survey results generally indicate a level of improvement in the awareness and understanding of research integrity and confidence in reporting instances of alleged misconduct and are broadly in line with or above benchmark scores for CEDARS nationally.

Publication of the Annual Narrative Statement

This is the University's ninth annual narrative statement. The University annual statements are publicly available through its [Concordat to support research integrity pages](#) on the website.

Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange

October 2023