**Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2020/21**

The University of Chester is committed to fulfilling the principles of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](http://ukrio.org/our-work/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity/) to create a framework for responsible research conduct and governance. In compliance with the Concordat, the University is publishing a statement on Research Integrity on an annual basis. This Research Integrity statement covers the period from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.

**Promotion of Research Integrity:**

The University is committed to supporting high quality institutional research and to meet the requirements of [the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.](https://ukrio.org/our-work/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity/) The Research Integrity Sub-Group (reporting to the Research Ethics Advisory Board) continued to meet termly to review compliance with the Concordat and to identify actions for enhancement. During this year the University also commissioned an external review of the operation of our Faculty Research Ethics Committees and has identified an action plan to deal with the review recommendations. The action plan will be monitored by the Research Ethics Advisory Board.  Furthermore, we have continued our subscription to the Research Integrity on-line training programme provided by Epigeum which is available to all staff (in particular PGR Supervisors and Principal Investigators on external funding applications) and research students.

The Named Person in accordance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity during the period of this review was Prof Neville Ford, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) njford@chester.ac.uk

**Research Misconduct**

Responsibility for monitoring cases of research misconduct in relation to staff and PGR students lies with the Research and Innovation Office (RIO) who also publish the  [Research Governance Handbook](https://www1.chester.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020%20Research%20Governance%20Handbook%20v3.6.pdf)

Allegations of research misconduct are dealt with according to the UKRIO [Misconduct Investigation Procedure](http://ukrio.org/publications/misconduct-investigation-procedure/).  Occasionally RIO also receives enquiries – about procedural matters or policies – which do not always lead on to allegations and investigation.  Enquirers are reassured that the first stages of the procedure are informal resolution and screening, and thus where there are concerns, the appropriate step is to submit their concern according to the procedure.  Cases arising from the conduct of students on taught programmes fall under the remit of the academic integrity procedures (see [Handbook F governing the assessment of students](https://www1.chester.ac.uk/social-responsibility/academic-quality-support-services/academic-regulatory-information/quality-and)).

The Named Person in relation to the UKRIO Misconduct Investigation Procedure is Ian Britton (Head of Academic Quality and Standards) i.britton@chester.ac.uk (or, in their absence or where there may be a conflict of interest, a Faculty Dean will be appointed by the Strategic Executive Team).  Queries or concerns about research integrity and/or misconduct may also be made through the Research & Innovation Office (who will liaise with the appropriate Named Person where appropriate) to:

Dr Elizabeth Christopher (Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer) e.christopher@chester.ac.uk

or Marie-Anne O’Neil (Deputy Head of RIO) m.oneil@chester.ac.uk

**Summary of investigations of research misconduct**

The table below sets out the broad categories of queries, investigations and findings in relation to research misconduct procedures in the previous 3 academic years, covering staff, postgraduate research (PGR) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students. An investigation may involve more than one respondent.  Where allegations are upheld by an investigation, appropriate action is taken.

|  | No. of enquiries not leading to an allegation or resolved via the informal resolution/screening process | No. of allegations for which an investigation has been undertaken | No. of allegations upheld(in whole or in part) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
| Research without appropriate ethical approval | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 0 |  | 1 |
| Misrepresentation of authorship | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  | 0 |  |  |
| Commissioning |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 0 |  |  |
| Plagiarism |  |  |  |  | 2 |  |  | 2 |  |
| Reuse of material previously submitted for an academic award |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 0 |  |

**Learning from our investigations**

The small number of investigations and nature of the allegations only highlight the need to continue to emphasise to students (and staff) the importance of maintaining high standards of integrity in research activities.

When the national Covid-19 lockdown occurred in March 2020 the University wrote to postgraduate students and posted to our intranet information to remind individuals of the potential need to seek re-authorisation for revised research plans. This action appears to have been very successful, but serves to remind the University and our community of researchers of the need to be pro-active in communication and the need for contingency plans for circumstances where a research plan cannot be executed due to external factors.

**Public Interest Disclosure Policy (“Whistleblowing”)**

Members of the University or public wishing to ‘blow the whistle’ on suspected malpractice or impropriety should contact the Vice-Chancellor, though they may if they wish contact directly the Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee or the University’s internal auditors (RSM). Their contact details are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **NAME** | **TELEPHONE / EMAIL ADDRESS** |
| President of the University Council | Jeff Turnbull | Contact via the Registrar & University Secretary, marking correspondence as FAO – President of the University Council |
| Vice-Chancellor | Eunice Simmons | 01244-513455e.simmons@chester.ac.uk |
| Registrar & University Secretary | Jonathan Moores | 01244-511521j.moores@chester.ac.uk |
| Internal Auditor (RSM) | Lisa Randall | 0844 8797340lisa.randall@rsmuk.com |
| Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee | Cathy Bond | Contact via the Registrar & University Secretary, marking correspondence as FAO – Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee. |

Statement prepared by: Dr Elizabeth Christopher, Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer, August 2021

Presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee: [30.9.21]

Publicly available at: <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/research/research-environment/research-governance-ethics-and-integrity> from 11.10.21

Version control information: v2