Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2021/22

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/) in order 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 2021 to 31 July 2022.

Activities to Promote 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 activities shown in the table below have taken place during the 2021/22 academic year with the aims of:

* embedding a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable in reporting instances of misconduct;
* where we are constantly working to support a culture of high standards of rigour and integrity; and
* there is clear leadership supporting staff and driving the development of research integrity across the University.

| **Activities** | **Reference to Concordat commitment** |
| --- | --- |
| Research Ethics Advisory Board received and monitored the action plan arising from the external review of the operation of the Faculty Research Ethics Committees | 1  |
| Research Ethics Advisory Board received reports from sub-groups: research integrity; internet mediated research & publicly available data; research with animals; human tissue; and proportionate review | 2 |
| Research Ethics Advisory Board discussed whether further action could be taken to enhance the processes whereby all members of our community should feel comfortable reporting matters of concern | 3 |
| Research & Innovation Office reviewed compliance with the concordat | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| Provision of research integrity training via Epigeum to staff and PGR students | 1, 3 |
| Director of R&KE responded to specific enquiries relating to integrity/misconduct, directing matters to the appropriate route (e.g. academic integrity procedure for students) and providing appropriate feedback | 4 |
| Events and Newsletters to inform and embed a culture of rigour and integrity amongst staff and PGR students including the Research & Knowledge Exchange festival and PGR conference | 1, 3, 5 |
| Research Ethics Advisory Board and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee received and discussed the annual research integrity report | 5 |

The Commitments in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity are as follows:

1. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
2. We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
3. 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.
4. We are committed to using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.
5. We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

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) until January 2021 who was succeed by Professor Paul Bissell, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) p.bissell@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/research/research-environment/research-governance-ethics-and-integrity)

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 Exchange) e.christopher@chester.ac.uk

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

Learning from our investigations

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

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. There were no external reporting requirements arising from the cases reported in 2021/22.

|   | 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) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| Research without appropriate ethical approval | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 0 |
| Misrepresentation of authorship | - |  | 1 | - |  |  | - |  | 0 |
| Commissioning | - |  |  | - |  |  | - |  |  |
| Plagiarism |  |  |  | 2 |  |  | 2 |  |  |
| Reuse of material previously submitted for an academic award |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 0 |  |  |
| Falsification of research data |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |

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 | Meredydd David | 01244-403793CouncilPresident@chester.ac.uk |
| 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 | Dr Angela Seeney | 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, September 2022

Approved by University Council Audit and Risk Management Committee: [29.9.22]

Publicly available at: <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/research/research-environment/research-governance-ethics-and-integrity> from [28.11.22]

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