

Newcastle University Annual Statement of Research Integrity 2019/20

Newcastle University is a signatory of [The Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(revised 2019\)](#), which provides an agreed mechanism through which researchers, employers of researchers and research funders can work together to promote and support research integrity. The Concordat requires employers of researchers to provide a short annual statement – which should be made publicly available - that should include:

- A summary of action and activities undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues;
- 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 of the organisation;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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.

1. Supporting and strengthening research integrity

1.1 Appointment of a University Convenor for Research Ethics and Integrity and a Dean of Research Culture & Strategy

We have appointed a University Convenor for Research Integrity and Ethics, who provides academic leadership in this area working alongside the Research Strategy and Development Team to ensure compliance with the Revised Concordat for Research Integrity.

More latterly, a University Dean for Research Culture and Strategy has been appointed with the broader remit of shaping and co-ordinating strategies to further develop a positive and inclusive research culture across the University. This includes matters relating to research integrity and line-management of the Convenor for Research Ethics & Integrity.

1.2 Special Interest Group (SIG) in Research Integrity & Ethics

A Research Integrity & Ethics SIG has been introduced to share knowledge and information around conducting responsible, rigorous and ethically sound research. This includes discussion and dissemination of the fundamental ethics regulations, guidance and process as well as more aspirational work on how to embed and lead the sector in conducting responsible and ethical research and fostering the sharing of information and best practice in this area.

1.3 Training provision

The Convenor for Research Ethics and Integrity has worked with the Research Strategy and Development team and Integrity & Ethics SIG to undertake an audit of training activities relating to research ethics and integrity currently being offered at all levels of

the University. A detailed plan has been presented to the University Research and Innovation Committee which outlines how the current provision will be expanded to meet the needs of all researchers across the organisation over the next 12 months.

2. Processes for dealing with allegations of research misconduct

The University has policies and procedures in place to ensure that research is conducted to the highest levels of ethics and integrity. The University recognises the importance of clear policies and guidelines in embedding a culture of integrity and ethics within research practices. Such documents support researchers in understanding and acting according to expected standards, behaviours and values.

The University's Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct are freely available on the [University website](#). As a result of lessons learnt from previous investigations into allegations of research misconduct, the Policy and Procedure have recently been updated and streamlined in order to improve the process for both complainants and respondents. In addition, a new toolkit has been created to aid the standardisation of investigations. The documents provide greater clarity for everyone involved in investigations into research misconduct. The revised policy and procedure are due to be considered for approval via the relevant University approval processes with a view to being implemented during the 2020/21 academic year.

Student research misconduct is dealt with via the [Assessment Irregularities Procedure](#).

[Appendix A lists other relevant policies and processes which support and promote research integrity]

3. Formal investigations of research misconduct undertaken

During the 2019/20 academic year there have been four complaints of research misconduct made against University staff, which are all currently being investigated under the Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct. The nature of these allegations is outlined in Table 1 below.

During the same period there were three allegations of research misconduct made against postgraduate research students, which were investigated under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure. The nature of these allegations is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 1: Staff Research Misconduct Cases

No.	Nature of alleged misconduct	Outcome
1.	Allegation of falsification of research data	Ongoing
2.	Allegation of failure to obtain appropriate consent from research participants	Ongoing
3.	Allegation of misrepresentation of intellectual property and comportment as supervisor of a research group which led to a culture of unhealthy research practice.	Allegations not upheld however discussion with line manager required re best practice in research group supervision.

4.	Allegation of plagiarism	Allegation upheld: Additional support and training to be put in place including academic integrity and plagiarism awareness.
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Table 2: Student Research Misconduct Cases

No.	Nature of alleged misconduct	Outcome
1.	Alleged plagiarism and attempt to procure help with PhD submission.	Allegation upheld; Final Warning issued.
2.	Alleged plagiarism of research training programme assignment	Allegation upheld; Awarded mark of 0
3.	Alleged plagiarism of research training programme assignment	Allegation not upheld; no further action

4. Lessons learnt from formal investigations of research misconduct

The University is committed to continually reviewing and revising its processes to ensure they are fit for purpose. We have used lessons learnt from previous research misconduct cases to review the efficacy of our current policies and procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct and develop these accordingly. Both the policy and procedure have been updated to reflect feedback from previous allegations, and a new toolkit has been created to ensure consistency of approach across all investigations.

5. 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. The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct and has a written procedure for investigating and resolving such allegations. Researchers are encouraged to report cases of research misconduct and to do so in a responsible and appropriate manner.

The University's named contact for matters relating to Research Integrity and Misconduct is Professor Brian Walker, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources. Concerns relating to the integrity of research conducted under the auspices of the University may also be addressed in confidence to the Research Strategy and Development team (res.policy@newcastle.ac.uk).

Appendix A: University Policies and Procedures which support and promote research integrity

[Animal Research Policy](#)

[Assessment Irregularities Procedure](#)

[Code of Good Practice in Research](#)

[Commercial Costing and Pricing Policy](#)

[Confidentiality and Intellectual Property \(including Inventions\) and Results for Research Students Policy Statement](#)

[Declarations of External Interest Policy](#)

[Ethics in Research Policy](#)

[Ethics Toolkit](#)

[Open Access to Research Outputs](#)

[Ownership, Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property for Employees Policy](#)

[Participation of Volunteers in Research Projects](#)

[Research Data Management Policy](#)

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