

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2021-2022

1.0 Background

The University of Central Lancashire is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity which was first published in July 2012 and revised and strengthened in October 2019.

This statement covering the period of September 2021 – August 2022 has been prepared for the University's Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Ethics Committee to summarise how the University of Central Lancashire ensures compliance with the terms of the Concordat and meets the expectations outlined within this for both research institutions and individual researchers.

2.0 Policies and Procedures

The University sets out its commitment to research integrity in the [Code of Conduct for Research](#), further Strengthened by the [Ethical Principles](#) document which are reviewed annually by the Ethics, Approval or any amendments are made by the Academic Board via the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee.

The University [Policy for Misconduct in Research](#) outlines the process to be followed for investigation of allegations of research misconduct. Details of these policies are disseminated through the academic staff induction and the research student induction, as well as the training programme run throughout the year.

In addition to these policies, other documents are available below:

- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Information Security Policy](#)
- [Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy](#) – available via Staff Intranet
- [Public Interest Disclosure Procedure](#) (Whistleblowing)

3.0 Supporting and Strengthening Understanding of Research Integrity

3.1 Training and development

A programme of training in relation to research integrity and ethics is managed through the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit in the Research and Enterprise Service which is further supported by the University mandatory training programme. Ethics Committees at Faculty and University level also reflect on case studies to identify and disseminate good practice at all levels.

The following training is available in research integrity and ethics:

3.1.1 Face to Face Training

- An Introduction to Research Ethics – staff and students

- Research Integrity and Ethics at UCLan – academics and research students
- Lay Reviewer Training – Ethics committee members
- Chair and reviewer training – Ethics committee members
- Procedures for ethics applications – staff and students
- Research Supervisor Workshop: Ethics and Integrity – staff

3.1.2 Online Training

A bespoke online research ethics training course for University staff has been developed by Professor Doris Schroeder and Dr Kate Chatfield from the University's Centre for Professional Ethics. The training covers:

- Introduction to ethical theories
- Overview of ethics codes and guidance
- Ethical dilemmas
- Equitable research
- Incorporating ethics into all stages of research
- Ethical issues in different kinds of research
- Research with humans
- Research Governance and Ethical approval processes at the University
- Global research

3.1.3 University Training

The specific training in research integrity and ethics is underpinned by a mandatory training programme for staff members which is managed by HR. The following modules are mandatory; any anomalies in completion of the mandatory training programme is managed through Heads of Schools and Director of Services and the appraisal process.

- Data Protection (GDPR)
- Intellectual Property Essentials
- Information Security essentials
- Safeguarding Essentials
- Bribery Act Training
- Anti-Fraud Training
- Unconscious Bias
- Prevent Training

3.2 External Memberships

To ensure that the University keeps abreast of best practice in matters related to the Concordat and research integrity, it is a member of a number of external bodies including:

- UK Research Integrity Office
- Association for Research Managers and Administrators
- UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)
- Laboratory Animal Science Association

3.4 Research Integrity Culture

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to significantly impact research activity in the academic year of 2021-22. The Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit (EIGU) invested a significant amount of the team's resource to ensuring that University guidance on conducting face to face research and research involving remote data collection was kept up to date in line with changing government public health guidelines. The EIGU included updates to procedures related to COVID-19 in all research integrity and ethics training sessions and provided one to one support to researchers on how to maintain research integrity and ethical standards whilst working online.

The University recognises the importance of ensuring effective communication around research integrity issues as well as sharing of good practice. The Head of Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit attends all Faculty Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Ethics Committees to promote University policies in relation to research integrity and discuss any emerging issues. Whilst the plans for Research Integrity and Ethics "drop in sessions" had to be put on hold due to the pandemic, the EIGU is aiming to implement these sessions in the next academic year to further strengthen communication around research integrity and provide an additional support mechanism for researchers.

4.0 Research Misconduct

The University requires that all research projects undertaken under the auspices of the University observe a commitment to good research conduct. The Chair of the University's Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee is the Named Person responsible for receiving allegations of research misconduct.

The University is committed to creating a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. The University [Policy for Misconduct in Research](#) includes various mechanisms to ensure any concerns about research misconduct can be raised with the Named Person confidentially, including the ability to raise concerns with the assistance of an intermediary such as a line manager, Trade Union representative, Guild advice service representative, or colleague. In addition, the Named Person will act as a confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspices of the University.

Details of how to raise concerns regarding research misconduct with the Named Person are clearly outlined on the external [research integrity webpage](#). The process of raising concerns and reassurances around confidentiality are also part of the research integrity training.

Mechanisms to implement and communicate lessons learned from investigations of research misconduct have been incorporated into the updated University [Policy for Misconduct in Research](#).

4.1 Number of Reported Allegations of Research Misconduct 2021-22

In the academic year 2021/22, one case of potential research misconduct was identified. However this was considered by the Named Person at the initial assessment stage to be appropriate for resolution through further training and development.

5.0 Ongoing Review and Oversight

The University Governance Framework was restructured in September 2021. The newly formed Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee is responsible for developing and overseeing policy and procedure relating to both research ethics and integrity across the University. Ethics reviews for staff and research students are processed digitally through one of three Ethics Review Panels, each of which is constituted from academics of the relevant subject groups, in addition to independent lay members. Reports on each Ethics Review applications and matters of national or local significance are provided to the committee.

The University will maintain oversight of the conduct of researchers through its Governance Framework (Figure 1) which is based upon a committee structure which reports to the Academic Board.

Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the Governance Framework at UCLan.

