

University of Huddersfield

Research Integrity

Annual Narrative Statement

The University of Huddersfield subscribes to the principles of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>) 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 at: <https://research.hud.ac.uk/strategy/concordat-research-integrity/>.

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 Security Sensitive Research

To increase the awareness of the latest UUK guidance (<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/security-sensitive-research-material-UK-universities-guidance.aspx>) and the University's related procedures, a new intranet page (<https://staff.hud.ac.uk/portal/informationforresearchers/securitysensitiveresearch/>) has been established. The webpage facilitates access to information about security sensitive research and associated processes and procedures, including forms. Training materials can also be accessed from this site and the site is also highlighted in compulsory PGR supervisor training.

1.2 School based training and support

Training and support provided in 2019-20 within Schools is summarised as follows:

- **Applied Sciences** – The research governance website has been reviewed and refreshed to include a number of changes to the research governance documents: (i) the inclusion of a section on 'Guidance on the Authorship of Papers' with the aim of reducing disputes between authors re publications; (ii) similarly, a section on 'Guidance on Intellectual Property' has also been included for similar reasons; and (iii) clarification of the process of ethical approval for projects being led by external collaborators and projects requiring IRAS approval by the NHS. Nineteen ethics approvals have been granted. School training sessions for 19 new staff and 41 postgraduate researchers

(PGRs) were included within induction processes. In addition to PGRs, all pharmacy undergraduate (UG) students received training in research ethics and integrity as part of their research project module. All Biology UG students received training in research ethics and the School's Research Integrity and Ethics Committee procedures. They are required to complete an Ethics declaration which is summatively assessed. This is part of the Year 2 Research Skills activity preparing students for their final year Honours project and a requirement for the Royal Society of Biology accreditation. In other subject areas within the School, training has been given on a one-to-one basis with supervisors.

- **Art, Design and Architecture** - The research governance website has been reviewed and updated. Procedural documents for ethical approval have been separated into two separate forms to avoid confusion between parts A (No specific ethics risk declaration) and B (Limited or significant risk). Further guidance and training will be provided in the next academic year to resolve this. 64 ethics approvals have been granted. Two new members of staff and 23 PGRs have engaged with online (Epigeum) training.
- **Business School** - The research governance website has been reviewed and refreshed. New forms for the ethics application process have been uploaded and School Research Integrity and Ethics Committee (SREIC) member profiles updated. Forty-seven ethics approvals have been granted. Ten applications are still under review. Two new members of staff have received reviewer training. Induction of PGRs includes a 45 minute training session with the Chair of SREIC.
- **Computing and Engineering** – The research governance website has been reviewed and refreshed. Procedural documents for ethical approval have been updated. No new projects required ethics approval.
- **Education and Professional Development** - The research governance website has been reviewed and refreshed. Seventeen ethics approvals have been granted. All staff have received training and it is reviewed at appraisal with those needing further training being identified. An online video relating to ethics guidance is available and distributed to staff and PGRs. Fifteen PGRs have received an ethics and integrity induction and had access to and were encouraged to engage in the module DDE2230 *Evaluating research fields and design*, which includes emphasis on ethical principles and practices in research design and delivery.
- **Human and Health Sciences** - The research governance website has been reviewed and refreshed. A total of 125 ethics approvals have been granted. Four staff and 32 students have received *Ethics and External Governance* training. Twelve staff have received *Ethics Training for SREIC Members* training.
- **Music, Humanities and Media** - The research governance website has been reviewed and refreshed. The peer review process documentation has been updated. Eighteen ethics approvals have been granted. Training is built in to all final year project modules. School training sessions for all new PGRs are included within induction. All postgraduate monitoring vivas at the end of the academic year include a review of ongoing ethics issues.

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 and Enterprise, 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.

The Research Integrity Champion role description has been incorporated into the [framework 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. In 2019-20 a new version of *Research Integrity (UK Edition)* was purchased and will be rolled out in Autumn 2020.

In response to a request from Schools for an e-based learning package covering basic research ethics and integrity for staff and PGRs, an online package from Epigeum, *Research Integrity: Concise* was purchased and released in summer 2019. A review of its use has indicated low take-up, with only 61 users accessing the materials in the last academic year (45 passed the course, the remainder either failed and/or are still logged as 'in progress'). The course will be actively promoted in 2020-21. Following a change in the University's regulations, from academic year 2020-21 evidence of research integrity training is required at PGR progression monitoring. Submitting a 'pass' certificate for *Research Integrity: Concise* training is one way PGRs can evidence this alongside any discipline specific in-School or external training.

In 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PGR induction process moved from face to face to online enabling a full review of content and the opportunity to enhance signposting to *Research Integrity: Concise* and further learning opportunities to support PGRs with research integrity matters throughout their studies.

The 'Getting Started with your Research Degree' workshop which includes sections on Ethics, Integrity and Plagiarism was run twice in 2019-2020, with a total of 19 PGRs attending.

In January 2020, 18 members of senior academic staff, the Head of HR, the Deputy Director Research and Enterprise and the Head of Researcher Environment participated in a one day training session 'Ensuring Research Integrity and Effective Misconduct Investigations' which was delivered by an external consultant. The materials and resources were uploaded to the Researcher Environment module to augment a revised Research Integrity area. Additional materials on the challenges which researching remotely brings were also included following the move to remote working.

1.4 NHS Integrated Research Approval System (IRAS)

All NHS IRAS approvals for research activities in all Schools continue to be routed through Research and Enterprise prior to submission.

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/establishments/university-huddersfield-12641>).

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 November 2019. The procedure follows UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) guidance:

<https://research.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Investigating-Allegations-Of-Misconduct-In-Research.pdf>

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 available at:

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/regs-pgr/section-9/>

The Regulations for postgraduate researchers were last updated in 2019 by Registry and Graduate Board to bring the procedures in line with guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, such as e.g. shortened timeline and new grounds for appeal.

The University’s *Freedom to Speak Up: Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure* was reviewed and approved by University Council in March 2019 is available on the university website at:

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Whistleblowing-Policy.pdf>

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”

For PGRs, 32 formal investigations have taken place relating to plagiarism and 23 for self-plagiarism. The number of cases highlighted a lack of robust guidance and frameworks to support PGRs and academic staff with plagiarism and self-citation issues. A Task and Finish group has been established and is working on developing improved guidance, training and support. The group is led by the Dean of the Graduate School and includes representation from Registry, Research and Enterprise, Student Services, Schools and the Student Union.

No formal investigations of staff research misconduct have been carried out, but one case was screened as per the University policy and not taken any further.

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 2020 the first 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 specific questions which are relevant. The survey was sent to researchers and 29% (275) of University of Huddersfield staff responded to the survey. Their responses are summarised as follows:

- 67.6% said that they had done training or other CPD in research integrity, with an additional 23.9% indicating that they would like to
- 71.8% agreed or agreed strongly that they are familiar with the University’s mechanisms to report incidents of misconduct
- 77.2% agreed or agreed strongly that they would feel comfortable reporting any incidents of research misconduct
- 73.2% agreed or agreed strongly that they trust the University to investigate any reported incidents of research misconduct fairly
- 69.6% agreed or agreed strongly that the University would take action if appropriate after such an investigation
- 88.6% did not personally feel pressured into compromising their research standards or integrity
- 18 respondents indicated that they had reported incidents of research misconduct
- 69.6% agreed or agreed strongly that the University promotes the highest standards of research integrity and conduct
- 23.4% indicated that they had some understanding of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, with a further 26% stating that they know it exists but don’t know the detail

In the autumn of 2020-21 the first network meeting for the School Research Integrity Champions is planned online. The purpose of the network is to enable discussion across disciplines, identify best practice in support and training and to encourage wider communication within and between the Schools. The first meeting will focus on how we can ensure that relevant contacts and procedures for making allegations are understood by all staff and PGRs, and to review at School level the outcomes from CEDARS.

Publication of the Annual Narrative Statement

This is the University’s sixth annual narrative statement. The University annual statements are publicly available through its website at:

<https://research.hud.ac.uk/strategy/concordat-research-integrity/>

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