Annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Wolverhampton
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	June 2023
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/research-integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Prashant Pillai, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research & Knowledge Exchange
	Email address: p.pillai@wlv.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Jill Morgan, Research Integrity Manager
	Email address: J.Morgan4@wlv.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- *Policies and systems*
- *Communications and engagement*
- *Culture, development and leadership*
- *Monitoring and reporting*

The University of Wolverhampton is committed to maintaining the highest levels of research integrity and adheres to the five principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The University's senior lead for research integrity is the Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & KE (Professor Prashant Pillai), and the University's administrative lead is the Research Integrity Manager (Ms Jill Morgan).

This annual statement reports on the University's compliance with the principles of the Concordat in the academic year 2022/23, and the steps we have taken to review our processes and procedures to ensure they remain aligned the principles of the Concordat.

Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity

In line with the Concordat, all researchers at the University are required to conduct research in accordance with the core elements of research integrity, namely honesty in all aspects of research, rigour in line with prevailing disciplinary standards and norms, transparency and open communication, and care and respect for all participants in and subjects of research.

The University provides Ethics Guidance (www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics) to enable all researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours. We provide a Handbook for Ethical Review and Approval, alongside the University Ethics

Policy and Code of Good Research Practice. These provide researchers with a framework of processes, but also articulate standards, values and behaviours.

Conduct of research according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

The University Ethics Policy, Code of Good Research Practice, and the Handbook for Ethical Review and Approval outline the policies and processes related to ethical approval. It is made available to researchers via the Ethics Webpages, which are referred to at induction and through ethics training.

In addition to the Handbook, the University has policies and procedures which support the University's commitment to research integrity. 'Research Policies, Procedures and Guidelines' www.wlv.ac.uk/researchpolicies contain all relevant policies, whereas the 'Ethics Guidance' www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics provides the repository for all ethics-related policies and processes.

We provide subject-based ethics resources on the website (organised by Faculty). The Research Integrity Manager supports the University and researchers to adopt best practice in relation to research integrity and ethics. The Faculty Research Support Administrators provide administrative support for ethics processes.

Embedding a culture of research integrity

Oversight of research integrity lies with the University Ethics Committee (UEC), a sub-committee of the University Research Committee. The UEC is chaired by the PVC Research & KE, who is also the senior institutional lead for research integrity. The contact details are published on the University website: https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/research-integrity/ .

Each Faculty has a Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC), a sub-committee of the Faculty Research Committee, which scrutinises and approves ethical submissions by researchers at subject level and provides additional guidance in respect of subject-specific ethical requirements. FECs have lay person membership. Annually, each FEC provides a standardised report to UEC, which enables the monitoring of FECs and sharing of good practice.

Resources on research integrity are available through the website, and via the University' Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) – Research Staff Development Programme and Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme.

The University has made a commitment to supporting researcher development through subscription to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner. This assists with professional development and career planning and provides developmental resources.

Training on research integrity is provided by the Doctoral College. The programme is signposted to staff via the University's Organisational Development webpages, and to research students via the Doctoral College webpages. We run an annual Research Integrity Symposium for our research students.

We regularly review and update our policies and procedures in the light of national and international developments.

Our research strategy highlights research integrity as an underpinning principle as well as identifying the development of a research culture that promotes rigour integrity and responsible research among the three strategic priorities.

We joined the UK Reproducibility Network https://www.ukrn.org/ and became signatories to the Declaration on Research Assessment DORA https://sfdora.org/ to contribute to best practice on research culture and research integrity.

We include a session on Research Integrity on the mandatory training for new academic staff 'Essentials of the Classroom'. This session familiarises staff with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, signposts resources and discusses a number of current integrity issues.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

The University of Wolverhampton has purchased the Ethics RM platform from Infonetica to manage applications for ethical review and approval at all levels. The implementation process is ongoing and the Wolverhampton Ethical Review Manager (WERM) will be in place during academic year 2023/24.

During 2022/23 the following policies, procedures & guidelines were reviewed:

- Academic Authorship Policy
- Policy for Use of Human Tissue for Research
- Open Research Statement
- Research Studentship Policy
- Research Data Management Policy

The following policies, procedures & guidelines were developed:

- Policy on Animal-Based Research
- Trusted Research webpage
- Guidance on the NS&I Act, and Dual Use
- Guidance - Considering the environmental impact of research
- Guidance - Considering the impact of research on society

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

During 2022/23 the University underwent an organisational change process, resulting in departmental restructuring and changes in staffing. This had an impact on continuity as new roles and role holders were confirmed throughout the year. It is anticipated that staffing will become more stable for 2023/24.

During 2023/24 the University will implement our new Ethics Management Systems (WERM), review the Code of Good Research Practice, and the Procedures for Investigating Research Misconduct, which will now include PGR students.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

Please provide:

- *a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).*
- *information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).*
- *anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.*

For staff (current and honorary), the Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research (Staff) govern how we deal with allegations. For research students, misconduct processes are encompassed in the University's Regulations and Procedures for Academic Misconduct. Both are published on the University website https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/ethics-guidance/research-misconduct/ and kept under regular review.

The Procedure sets out the safeguards in place for the complainant and respondent, when suspected instances of misconduct are reported. It is confidential, transparent, timely, robust and fair and protects the rights and interests of all parties to ensure accountability when things go wrong with clear rights of appeal.

The University has incorporated its policies and procedures for Anti-Bribery, Staff Interests, Fraud, and Whistleblowing into one policy. The University's Transparency Policy identifies the procedures of making public interest disclosures ('whistleblowing'), and how the University deals with disclosures. The contact email address for such disclosures is transparency@wlv.ac.uk.

The number of investigations, via receipt of this statement, are reported annually at the University Ethics Committee, the University Research Committee and Academic Board.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

Type of allegation	**Number of allegations**			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	**Number of formal investigations**	**Number upheld in part after formal investigation**	**Number upheld in full after formal investigation**
Fabrication	-	-	-	-
Falsification	-	-	-	-
Plagiarism	-	-	-	-
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	-	-	-	-
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	-	-	-	-
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	-	-	-	-
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	-	-	-	-
*Other**				
Total:	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

***If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.**

[Please insert response if applicable]