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)	07/10/26
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 Laura Caulfield, Dean of Research Culture & Postgraduate Research
	Email address: L.Caulfield@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, Senior Officer Governance & Integrity
	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 Dean of Research Culture & Postgraduate Research (PGR) (Professor Laura Caulfield), and the University's administrative lead is the Senior Officer Governance and Integrity (Ms Jill Morgan).

This annual statement reports on the University's compliance with the principles of the Concordat in the academic year 2025/26, and the steps we have taken to review our processes and procedures to ensure they remain aligned the principles of the Concordat.

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.

Policies and systems

Our central policy for Research Integrity is the Code of Good Research Practice. The revised version of the Code was approved in October 2023. Through the Committee for Ethics and Research Integrity (CERI) & University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) policies are subject to regular review (every 3 years) and ongoing review to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory and funder requirements as well as evolving research practice.

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

We provide subject-based ethics resources on the website (organised by Faculty). The Senior Officer Governance & Integrity supports the University and researchers to adopt best practice in relation to research integrity and ethics.

Embedding a culture of research integrity

The University aims to promote a positive research culture where all research is undertaken with integrity including the planning and conduct of research, the recording and reporting of results and the dissemination, application and exploitation of findings.

During 2025/26 the new research & innovation governance committees completed their first full year, and Terms or Reference & Membership will be reviewed to ensure they continue to operate effectively in 2026/27. Oversight of research integrity, ethics, trusted research and open research lies with the new CERI, a sub-committee of URIC.

CERI was initially chaired by the PVC Research & KE, who was also the senior institutional lead for research integrity. For 2025/26, a new role of Dean of Research Culture & PGR was created, and Professor Laura Caulfield was appointed, taking the Chair of CERI and 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/ .

CERI is responsible for the development, implementation and review of procedures and guidelines relating to research ethics. It is also responsible for strategic development of the University's research integrity agenda, in compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Each Faculty has a Faculty Ethics & Research Integrity Committee (FERIC) to reflect the importance of Research Integrity and good research practice alongside ethical research practices. FERIC is a sub-committee of the Faculty Research & Innovation Committee (FRIC). Each Faculty also has a number of Ethics Subject Panels which scrutinise and approve ethical submissions by researchers at subject level and provide additional guidance in respect of subject-specific ethical requirements. FERICs have lay membership. CERI receives FERIC minutes throughout the year and annually, each FERIC provides a standardised report, which enables the monitoring of FERICs and sharing of good practice.

Resources on research integrity are available through the website www.wlv.ac.uk/ethics.

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.

The University joined the UK Reproducibility Network https://www.ukrn.org/ in 2020 and became signatories to the Declaration on Research Assessment DORA https://sfdora.org/ in 2019 to contribute to best practice on research culture and research integrity.

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.

Policies & Guidance

In this period, a number of new and revised policies were created and approved.

New Policies & Guidance:

- Policy on Consultancy
- Intellectual Property (IP) Policy for Staff
- Intellectual Property (IP) Policy for Students

Revised Policies & Guidance:

- Academic Authorship Policy

- Open access publications policy
- Policy on Animal-Based Research
- Policy for Use of Human Tissue for Research

Our web pages were updated and revised for Research Integrity and Ethics Guidance, plus new 'Research involving Cultural Heritage' guidance.

The Research Policies, Procedures & Guidelines webpage www.wlv.ac.uk/researchpolicies was updated and brings together guidance for researchers on and links to University policies addressing issues of research integrity, responsible research, research ethics and general matters of good research practice.

HR Excellence in Research Award

The University of Wolverhampton was successful in gaining the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award in 2025, which demonstrates our long-term commitment to the career development of researchers.

The submission for the HR Excellence in Research Award reflects the University of Wolverhampton's commitment to:

- supporting researchers throughout their careers
- implementing the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The University's Committee for Researcher Development & Doctoral Studies (CRDDS) is overseeing progress against the Action Plan.

Trusted Research

The University has been engaging with the Research Collaborative Advice Team (RCAT) for some time and in 2025/26 they delivered Research Security and Due Diligence training sessions to all relevant staff in the Research & Enterprise Directorate, Legal Services and Associate Deans of Research & KE.

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.

In 2024 the university appointed a Director of Research & Enterprise to create a new Research & Enterprise Directorate. During 2024/25 the University underwent an organisational change process to build the Directorate resulting in team restructuring and changes in staffing. It is anticipated that the Directorate will have a full complement of staff by the end of the 2025/26 academic year, and mobilisation of the Directorate has begun in earnest.

New roles of Head of Research & Enterprise Governance, Integrity and Systems and Senior Officer Research and Enterprise Systems were appointed in 2025/26 and therefore the project to implement the new Ethics Management System, WERM (Wolverhampton Ethical Review Manager) has recommenced. The Institutional Sponsorship Policy - Health & Social Care Research and Institutional Sponsorship application process will be reviewed alongside the implementation, with a view to incorporating the application process into WERM.

Networks & Working Groups

In April 2026, CERI agreed to establish two working groups agreeing Terms of Reference for each one, they include:

1) Research Integrity – to identify the gaps and challenges in our existing practices regarding research and data integrity and any cultural issues around what are accepted norms across the university. Following the completion of a gap analysis, an action plan will be presented to and approved by CERI. The working group are now taking forward delivery of the action plan.
2) Ethical Considerations – to identify the gaps and challenges in our existing practices/ culture and training.

UKRIO Subscription & Training Resources

Towards the end of 2025/26 under the leadership of the Head of Research & Enterprise Governance, Integrity and Systems the University subscribed to UKRIO and will be taking advantage of their advice, support and online training resources for research integrity and ethics. These will be rolled out the staff and research students during 2026/27, and the University will also take part in the trial for UKRIO's train the trainer course on running misconduct investigations.

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.*

Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research

The Procedure underwent a major review and was approved in January 2024. This review was scheduled but provided the opportunity to align to the new UK Research Integrity Office's Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (2023).

The Procedure now applies to research students. Alleged misconduct relating specifically to the assessed element of a research degree, i.e. Annual Progress Review, Progression Stage, the thesis, or a resubmitted thesis are dealt with under the Research Degree Regulations 'Appendix 13: Procedure for managing an alleged assessment offence'. However, alleged misconduct in a research degree programme relating to the conduct of the research itself is investigated using these procedures.

To make it simpler for people to follow, a flowchart was constructed that documents the process throughout the policy.

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.

Alternatively, the University of Wolverhampton has a new Whistleblowing Policy (2025). This policy sits under the University's Complaints Framework, which sets out the different ways in which staff and students can raise concerns or make complaints to the appropriate body.

The number of investigations, via receipt of this statement, are reported annually at the CERI, URIC, and Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

In 2025/26 the University conducted one formal research misconduct investigation at the university, relating to an allegation of plagiarism. The investigation was completed in a timely manner and concluded that there was no misconduct on the part of the University of Wolverhampton researcher.

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	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
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:	**1**	**1**	**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]