

The University of Nottingham
Annual Statement on Research Integrity to the Council
2017

1. Context

Following the publication of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity¹ (the Concordat, hereafter) in July 2012, compliance with the commitments of the Concordat was made a condition of receiving research grants from HEFCE, from July 2013. HEFCE requires the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to confirm compliance through the University's annual assurance statement to HEFCE. The 2016/17 assurance statement is due in December 2017.

As per the requirement of the Commitment 5 of the Concordat, this is the *fourth annual statement on Research Integrity* that the University of Nottingham (referred to as 'the University' hereafter) is presenting to the Council (University of Nottingham's governing body) on the actions and activities undertaken during 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 to sustain and further enhance research integrity, thus meeting compliance with the HEFCE requirement. Subsequently, this statement will be publically released for accountability and assurance on activities undertaken in support of research integrity.

This annual statement, coordinated by Research and Innovation, has been developed following the guidelines and suggested structure of the statement from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) self-assessment tool. It provides a wide ranging summary of actions and activities undertaken across the University to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity, including addressing allegations of misconduct. This information was collected through a survey of activities supporting research integrity conducted across all academic Schools and relevant Professional Services Departments (Human Resources, Graduate School and Academic Services) by Research and Innovation. All 21 academic Schools and the Faculty of Engineering have responded to the above-mentioned Survey. An overarching summary of the survey responses are presented in this statement in a reporting format recommended by the UKRIO.

2. Supporting and Strengthening Research Integrity

i. Overview of institution's strategy and objectives to strengthen understanding of research integrity

The University of Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (referred to as 'The Code' hereafter) provides a comprehensive framework for good research conduct and the governance of all research carried out across the University. The Code underpins the University's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, rigour and excellence in all aspects of our research, and for all research to be conducted according to the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks and standards. The Code is disseminated to all staff and students across the University through the University Research Ethics Committee representatives and the School Research Ethics Officers.

¹ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf>

ii. Introduction or revision of research integrity policies and procedures, requirements, process reviews or support mechanisms

The Code and its implementation are reviewed on an annual basis by the University's Research Ethics Committee and on a triennial basis by consultation across the institution. These reviews take into account changes and recommendations from external research funders, Acts of Parliament and other legislations. All reviews are undertaken by the University's Research Ethics Committee in conjunction with and ratified by the University's Research Board, and coordinated by Research and Innovation. The Code was reviewed in 2013 to make it consistent with the recommendations and requirements of the Concordat and is the basis for applying research integrity across the University. In 2016 the Code was reviewed by consultation across the institution.

In response to changing requirements of the funders, the University is undertaking a review of the current governance structure and processes for strengthening research integrity across the University.

iii. Summary of education and training provision, communication or awareness raising activities undertaken by Schools and departments within the University

A wide range of education, training provision, communication and awareness raising activities are undertaken by Schools across the University.

In all academic Schools across the University, Research Integrity is central to staff induction processes, PhD programmes (via different modules which are delivered as a part of the taught component) and the work of School Ethics Committee, which monitors and ensures high ethical standards across all areas of School research activity. Research Integrity plays a particular role in the teaching and supervision of dissertation modules of undergraduate courses.

Each School has a Research Ethics Officer with the responsibility of ethics approval, raising awareness of and providing training on research integrity and ethics, writing annual monitoring reports for Research Ethics Committees and keeping the School informed about the University policy on research ethics and integrity. Research integrity forms part of the termly staff meetings agenda for Schools as a regular reminder of the importance of integrity in their research, especially, in terms of the collection, storage and use of research data, thereby highlighting the importance of research data management and open access of research outputs and research data. Additionally, the University's Research Ethics Officers' Forum provides opportunities for sharing of best practice amongst the Schools across the University.

The University, a member of the UKRIO, has access to training provision of UKRIO on research integrity and organised Research Integrity workshops for academic staff and research students in 2017.

Within teaching and training activities of the Schools, Research Integrity is discussed as part of Research Ethics. Research Integrity is discussed in terms of good scientific practice, for example, observing high standards, compliance, honesty as a researcher, and, bad practice, such as, misconduct, secretive working and self-interest. Research Integrity is also discussed in terms of supporting the good elements such as training, codes of conduct, UK Concordat implementation, mentoring, etc. as well as dealing with elements like procedures for investigating misconduct, whistle blowing and journal responses. School Intranet pages containing regularly updated guidelines on Research Ethics and Integrity and module pages in Moodle are also used as means of communication for academic staff, researchers and students.

For Students: Lectures on research integrity and ethics are embedded in most Under Graduate (UG) courses, Post Graduate Teaching (PGT) and Post Graduate Research (PGR) training programmes. Information and guidance about research integrity are provided to students through a variety of channels such as,

- Postgraduate research training modules on research methods, research design
- Professional Skills modules required as part of the specification for degrees accredited by professional societies, especially in Engineering
- Training on research integrity provided University Graduate School and central Professional Development services
- Postgraduate Studies Handbook
- Research integrity advice, for example, how to avoid plagiarism, reinforced as part of regular postgraduate student supervision meetings and annual reviews, including Masters dissertations on research integrity
- University's online course on 'Research Integrity'
- workshop on research integrity which included a presentation by the CEO of UKRI, followed by consideration of a number of case studies
- Separate classes are also provided by the DTC and integrated into courses in research design and philosophy of social research which are compulsory for PhD students
- Responsible conduct of research and research integrity introduced as part of new student induction process and student handbook.

For staff: workshops on research integrity, ethics and integrity website, regular email updates, a regular item on ethics and integrity in School meetings and in the School Research Ethics Committee meetings are various means of raising awareness and training on research integrity within Schools. School Research Ethics Officers play an important role in raising awareness and updating the researchers in the School with information about any change in either the University and/or the government and UKRIO policies and procedures.

Information and training on research integrity to staff member is provided through a variety of routes, for example,

- Staff mentoring programme
- Research planning
- Communication from the School Ethics Officer via Research Committee
- School series of seminars and dedicated workshops on research integrity led by the UKRIO
- School Away Days with dedicated sessions on research integrity
- Training and information dissemination on research data management, grant writing, open access implications, the supervisor's role in the ethics process
- School Research Career Liaison Officer, a representative for research staff, facilitates sharing of good practice through new staff inductions,
- Provision of guidance on research governance during informal mentoring and regular research staff meetings
- Promotion (via email, staff meetings) of the Research Integrity online course
- Circulation and promotion of updated University of Nottingham Code of Research Conduct via email, at monthly staff meetings and termly research staff meetings
- Responsible conduct of research, including ethical review, and research integrity discussed at monthly staff meetings and termly research staff meetings
- Research integrity reinforced as part of annual staff review (PDPR) process

Research integrity training is also integral to many of the central training and professional development programmes provided by the Graduate School for PGR students, early career researchers and ethics officers. It is explicitly addressed in the following courses:

- Ethics of Human Tissue and Animal Studies in Research
- Exploring Ethics in Research
- Global Research Ethics and Integrity
- Good Clinical Practice
- Good Laboratory Practice: Techniques
- Introduction to Research Integrity
- Open access: What researchers need to know
- Philosophy of Science and Scientific Ethics
- Research Ethics and the Ethics Review Process for Doctoral Research
- Research Integrity
- Resolving Copyright Challenges in your Research
- Unconscious Bias Workshop

In total these courses had 588 attendees in 2016-17. The Graduate School provision is augmented by a new face-to-face Graduate School course 'Introduction to research integrity' which was launched in March 2017. This course was delivered on 4 occasions during the reporting period and 44 researchers attended, including 7 research staff.

The Epigeum online module on research integrity, tailored to provide bespoke Nottingham content has been implemented for use by researchers across all career stages.

iv. *Any research into research integrity or related fields, such as research ethics, undertaken by members of the School*

Growing number of researchers across different disciplines in the University are actively engaging in research and studies on Research Integrity or related fields. *Eight* out of 22 Schools have reported to be undertaking direct research on research integrity or related fields. Details are:

- **The School of Biosciences and the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science** host the Centre for Applied Bioethics. This research group comprises academic members of staff, honorary professors and lecturers, research fellows and PhD students and they are conducting research in the field of applied bioethics focused on animal, agri-food and environmental management issues, and participatory ethics. Some of the current work is funded by EC H2020, The Wellcome Trust, The Leverhulme Trust, DFID/Royal Society. Projects are examining themes of (i) Ethics of Animal Use in Experimentation; (ii) Harm/Benefit in Ethical Assessment, (iii) the relationship between Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and Research Ethics, (vi) development of Ethical Tools to support decision-making in (animal) Research Ethics Committee processes, (v) openness and transparency in bioscience research; (vi) developing subject-specific research ethics training for PGR researchers. Other academics in the School a social science training are also interested in research ethics questions related to their research topics (e.g. within the Division of Nutritional Sciences) but at present external funding has not been secured.
- **Nottingham University Business School** is actively engaged in research into:
 - Social Media Research Ethics, based in the Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
 - Responsible Innovation, based in the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility.

- **Economics** undertakes research which includes data collection involving humans (surveys and experiments) and which requires research ethics approval.
- Research in the School of **English** includes work on health communication, dementia, eye-tracking, linguistic profiling, language acquisition (L1 and L2), and ancient biotics, as well as on the more traditional elements of literary and linguistic studies.
- **The School of Geography** is active in research that sets out 'best practices' for research communities e.g. in mapping from remotely sensed imagery for rigorous and credible support of major international policies such as UN REDD+.
- In the SPMIC (MRI group) within **Physics and Astronomy**, in the SPMIC (MRI group), data is acquired in a way that can be used for future studies of incidental findings.
- **Politics and International Relations** is involved in a number of initiatives to promote research transparency and is blogging on research reproducibility.
- In **Veterinary Medicine and Science** recent research projects include;
 - *The UK veterinary profession and management of the social and ethical implications of the clinical use of donated companion animal blood and tissue (Wellcome Trust, 2013–2016).* This project combines empirical social scientific research with normative ethical analysis; focussing on the social and ethical implications of companion animal blood and organ donation. Staff involved from SVMS are an academic and Research Fellow.
 - *Animals and the making of scientific knowledge (Leverhulme Trust, 2013-2016).* This project focuses on the public consultation launched by the Home Office in 2011 to explore: To what extent does legislative change and democratic consultation open up the black box of animal research, and how are definitions of 'science', 'politics' (and ethics) reconfigured in this process? This project is part of a larger programme of research entitled 'Making Science Public: Challenges and Opportunities' and one member of academic staff is involved from SVMS.
 - *The Animal Research Nexus: Changing Constitutions of Science, Health and Welfare (Wellcome Trust 2017-2022).* This programme of work aims: 1) to understand the historical interrelations between science, health and animal welfare 2) to identify challenges to animal research raised by scientific and social shifts around species and supply, professional roles, and patient engagements and 3) to facilitate dialogue with stakeholders, scientists and publics across the Animal Research Nexus. The overall programme seeks to identify what is required to remake the social contract around animal use in 21st century science and medicine. Staff involved from SVMS are an academic and Research Fellow.

v. *A description of internal monitoring and audit processes, including information on any revisions or developments*

The University Research Board has overall responsibility for monitoring research integrity, including application of the Code. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) undertakes an annual monitoring review of all ethics reviews and committees operated by Schools and Faculties. The current monitoring requires the annual collection of qualitative and quantitative data from Schools by Research and Innovation. These are then reviewed by a sub-group of UREC, who highlight any issues and make suggestions for new policies that need to be developed, identify training requirements, highlights good practice and areas for any other development. UREC receives a detailed report from the sub-group and signs-off the process. Following recent changes in the funder requirements on research integrity, the University is undertaking a review of the current governance structure and processes to strengthen research integrity further across the University.

Risks associated with managing University research are considered in the Internal Audit Service (IAS) annual planning cycle. Audit coverage to date has focused on the overall governance framework for research, including policies relating to research conduct and ethics and responsibilities of key groups and committees.

3. Addressing research misconduct

i. Confirmation that the University has processes for reporting and investigating of allegations of research misconduct

The University has relevant policies and procedures to respond to research misconduct; namely Regulations of Academic Misconduct, Staff Disciplinary Procedure, Code of Discipline for Students and Fraud Policy. These procedures have appropriate principles and mechanisms to ensure that investigations are thorough and fair, carried out in a transparent and timely manner, and protected by appropriate confidentiality.

These procedures can be found at:

Research Misconduct Policy for research student:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicservices/qualitymanual/assessmentandawards/academic-misconduct.aspx>

Quality Manual - Academic Misconduct Policy:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicservices/qualitymanual/assessmentandawards/academic-misconduct.aspx>

Academic Misconduct Procedure:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicservices/documents/qmdocuments/regulations-on-academic-misconduct---academic-misconduct-committee-hearings.pdf>

The University also has a number of resources on research misconduct which can be found at the workspace intranet pages for staff use.

As all these procedures and policies are reported into different administrative services, the Director of Research and Innovation is the single point of contact for reporting allegations of research misconduct and is the University Research Integrity Officer who will refer these to the appropriate procedure dependent on the nature of the allegation.

ii. Brief anonymised summary data on any formal investigations conducted by your institution into allegations of research misconduct

Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017, formal investigations were conducted by the University on 2 members of **staff**: 1. One Clinical Associate Professor and PI for allegations relating to a breach of data protection. This resulted in a disciplinary hearing and sanction of an oral warning. 2. Breach of SAPO licenced by a Clinical Professor. This Resulted in a visit by the HSE and the School is currently considering undertaking a disciplinary investigation.

Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017, formal investigation was conducted by the University on **3 student cases at taught level** (2 postgraduate and one at undergraduate). Two of the cases involved misuse of research data (presentation of interviews derived from another study as conducted by the student) and the other one a case of failure to secure research approval prior to commencing the study. All cases were upheld and dealt with through the examination processes.

1 further **student** case has been investigated under the Code of Research Conduct and Ethics. The case was not upheld and related to a claim of plagiarism, misrepresentation and misuse of intellectual property.

The University confirms that it fulfils all requirements to make reports to external bodies, including regulatory and professional bodies, regarding the initiation or completion of a formal investigation.

4. External Engagement

i. Collaborations or initiatives with external organisations to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues.

Eight Schools have reported to have either contributed to or be involved in external events and activities in support of research integrity. For example,

- In **Engineering**, all courses are accredited by relevant professional bodies, research integrity/ethics elements make up a part of both the accreditation requirement and also the accreditation process itself at course level.
- In **English**, 3 members of staff are Fellows of the English Association; 7 are members of the AHRC peer review college; a member of staff sits on the AHRC Council and on the ESRC's Capability Committee. Staff regularly deal with issues relating to research integrity via their work as reviewers for a range of national and international funding bodies, including the Leverhulme Trust, ESRC, AHRC and Wellcome Trust; and via serving on the editorial boards of leading journals. They participate in the governance of national and international subject organisations, including, for example, as the President and as an Executive Officer of the Scottish Text Society; Research Officer of TAPRA, the national Theatre and Performance Research Association for UK and Ireland; as Convenor, Theatre Historiography Working Group, International Federation of Theatre Research; and as a Board Member and Trustee of Red Earth Theatre, touring theatre for children and young people with a commitment to making work that is diverse (Deaf and disability).
- Linked to previous work on a Hate Crime Commission in 2014, the **School of Geography** has ongoing links with Nottingham Citizens e.g. picking campaigning topics, attending commission launches, and integrating students with the Citizens work (through the Techniques in Human Geography module). Teaching (F630 Environmental Geoscience) and Research (Centre of Environmental Geochemistry) links with the British Geological Survey ensure regular exposure for students and staff to professional practice from an external organisation e.g. in risk assessment, complementing the School's own robust procedures for fieldwork.
- **Health Sciences** noted an NCARE Research Practitioner Network Seminar on Ethical Dilemmas in Research held in September 2016.
- An academic member of staff in **Politics and International Relations** is an ambassador at the Centre for Open Science (CFO) and a catalyst at the Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS).
- In **Sociology and Social Policy**, many staff and students are members of their professional associations, and these have interest in Research Integrity and Ethics: Social Policy Association, British, European and International Sociological Associations, European Association for the Study of Science and Technology, Society for the Social Studies of Science, Science and Democracy Network.

- The **School of Veterinary Medicine and Science** has been collaborating with the RSPCA, under the auspices of an ESRC Impact Accelerator Award, on a project entitled 'Improving UK animal research governance: Delivering effective ethical review'. Through engagement with key stakeholders, including the Laboratory Animal Veterinary Association, the Laboratory Animal Science Association, the Institute of Animal Technology and the Home Office, this project is seeking to identify and prioritise training needs, and co-produce a framework for improved ethical review of animals in research. This work has led to the publication of a leaflet which has been distributed to all AWERBs across the UK (available at <https://view.pagetiger.com/AWERB/AWERB>)

ii. *Details of staff or student contributions or involvement in external events and activities in support of Research Integrity such as: Public Engagement Events, Conferences.*

Five Schools have reported to have either collaboration, initiatives or memberships with external organisations in support of Research Integrity. Examples are;

- In July 2017, **Nottingham University Business School** ran a NUBS-funded event on publishing social media research that focused primarily on issues relating to research ethics and integrity. The event involved talks from several leading academics in the field and was attended by over 50 researchers both internal and external to the University of Nottingham, including some European delegates. NUBS will also be running a social media research ethics workshop in September 2017 at the British Academy of Management conference in Warwick, aimed at international management scholars from the Academy.
- In **English**, the School's staff and students regularly participate in external events and activities and thus engage with the theory and practice of research integrity. Recent examples of external activity include: the international conference 'Lavender Languages & Linguistics 24' (hosted by the School, April 2017); special events, including Nottingham in Parliament Day (October 2016), where members of the School led a panel on 'The Language of Misogyny as a Hate Crime'; and on-going public engagement initiatives such as the Dementia Reading Group, the Community Reading Group, and the Literacy Support Project.
- Staff and students in the **School of Geography** have contributed to engagement events through the Universities WP programs such as the Sutton Trust Summer School and Ambition Nottingham. They also regularly attend and present at international conferences, several with support from the School of Geography Research Committee conference attendance funding stream. Many staff also serve on journal editorial boards and so often deal with a range of integrity issues e.g. dual submissions, unattributed copying etc.
- The **School of Sociology and Social Policy** ran 3 lectures in an open lecture series through the academic year and also ran an open Research Celebration event in June which showcased key work of colleagues in the School.
- The **School of Veterinary Medicine and Science** has been involved in several external events, including as an invited speaker, which relate to the topic of animal research ethics and public engagement:
 - One-day Stakeholder workshop held at Kings College London in May 2016 on 'Improving UK animal research governance: Delivering effective ethical review'. This included a specific sub-workshop on 'The AWERB as forum for discussion'. https://www.rspca.org.uk/webContent/staticImages/AWERBUK/AWERB_UK_out.pdf
 - A Keynote presentation at an international conference on 'Ethics and the future veterinary professional', held at Utrecht University in May 2016 <http://www.uu.nl/en/events/ethics-and-the-future-veterinary-professional>.

- Invited presentation on 'Animal challenge to the social science of medicine' at a workshop co-organised by the University of Leicester and Warwick in May 2016. The event was entitled 'The animal challenge to the social sciences'.
- Launched in summer 2016 a [Mass Observation Directive](http://www.massobs.org.uk/images/summer_2016_final.pdf), a novel method for public engagement, on animal research (http://www.massobs.org.uk/images/summer_2016_final.pdf). This has resulted in a fascinating archive of responses, where members of the public reflect on what animal research means to them.
- Invited presentation on 'The UK veterinary profession: Regulation, responsibilities and research agendas' at 'Vets, One Health and Antimicrobial Resistance in the Past and the Present' workshop in June 2017 at King's College London.

iii. Memberships of, or collaborations with, organisations with a particular interest in research integrity and related issues.

Ten Schools reported memberships or collaboration with organisations with a particular interest in research integrity and related issues. For example,

- Staff members from **Biosciences** are members of The Nutrition Society, Society for Applied Microbiology, Society for Experimental Biology, British Ecological Society, British Society of Animal Science (BSAS), European Society of Agriculture and Food Ethics (EurSafe). Each of these organizations has a Code of Conduct / a form of Scientific Integrity Policy.
- An academic from **Nottingham University Business School** is a member of the British Academy of Management Research Methodology Special Interest Group (SIG) and the Ethicomp research community.
- Most R&T staff in the **School of Culture Language and Area Studies** are members of the national and international subject associations of their various disciplines, which also address issues of research integrity at national/international level.
- Programmes of study within the **Faculty of Engineering** are accredited by professional societies (e.g., IET, IMechE) that have interests and policies in Research Integrity in addition to being signatories (directly or indirectly) of the Concordat. The majority of staff and students are either members or following pathways to membership of these organizations and participate in the events offered by these groups through professional meetings and relevant student societies.
- In **School of English**, 3 members of staff are Fellows of the English Association; 7 are members of the AHRC peer review college; a member of staff sits on the AHRC Council and on the ESRC's Capability Committee.
- In **Geography**, many staff serve on editorial boards or on committees of learned societies therefore providing international research leadership for these communities e.g. European Councillor for International Society of Biometeorology, Secretary of the International Biogeography Society, Council for British Research in the Levant. Staff also contribute to the work of RCUK and European funding routes, through reviewing, but also sitting as panel members and/or chairs of: AHRC Peer Review College, the ESRC Peer Review Panel, the NERC Peer Review Panel, the European Facility for Airborne Research Committee, and the NERC Radiocarbon Steering Committee.
- Members of School of **Health Sciences** are members of local NHS Research Ethics Committees. In addition, individual staff hold positions which impact on research integrity for example, roles on editorial boards of journals, membership of funding bodies (NIHR, national charities), and membership of professional bodies (RCP, RCN, CSP, BPS, UKSBM). Two members of staff are current members of NHS RECs and in this capacity, they will also undergo regular training and updates. Members of staff are members of the professional bodies BPS and UKSBM.

- In **Psychology**, the schools undergraduate degrees are recognized by the British Psychological Society (http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_human_research_ethics.pdf)
- Many staff and students in **Sociology and Social Policy** are members of their professional associations, and these have interest in Research Integrity and Ethics: Social Policy Association, British, European and International Sociological Associations, European Association for the Study of Science and Technology, Society for the Social Studies of Science, Science and Democracy Network.
- A member of **Veterinary Medicine and Science** has an ongoing collaboration with RSPCA on 'Improving UK animal research governance: Delivering effective ethical review'.

Conclusion

The annual statement on research integrity is a valuable opportunity for a reflection on and an internal review of strategies, processes, and activities. This annual statement to the Council which presents the actions that the University has undertaken to sustain and further enhance research integrity confirms compliance with the commitment 5 of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the research integrity requirements of HEFCE.

Action for the Council

The Council is requested to take note of the actions, as delineated in this annual statement on research integrity, the University has undertaken to sustain and further enhance research integrity across all aspects of a research process.