

**The University of Nottingham**  
**Annual Statement on Research Integrity to the Council**  
**2018**

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## **1. Context**

This is the *fifth 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 2017 and 31 July 2018 to sustain and further enhance research integrity in the University. This statement will subsequently be publicly released through our University website for accountability and assurance on activities undertaken in support of research integrity which is a compliance requirement of both Concordat to Support Research Integrity<sup>1</sup> (the Concordat, hereafter) and the UKRI.

The UKRI requirement is that the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) confirm compliance through the University’s annual assurance statement to HEFCE. The 2017/18 assurance statement is due in December 2018.

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 as 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 (UREC) representatives and the School Research Ethics Officers. The Code was updated in 2013 to

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<sup>1</sup>

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

make it consistent with the recommendations and requirements of the Concordat and is the basis for applying research integrity across the University.

*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 Research Ethics Committee (UREC) 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 legislation. All reviews are undertaken by the University Research Ethics Committee in conjunction with and ratified by the University's Research Committee, and coordinated by Research and Innovation. The last triennial review of the Code was undertaken by consultation across the institution in 2016.

Further, in response to the requirements of the Concordat and the changing requirements of funders, the University is undertaking a comprehensive review of the processes and procedures in relation to (a) addressing and managing research integrity at an institutional level, (b) supporting staff to conduct research with the highest standards of integrity and ethics, and (c) communicating and promoting our approach to, and activities and requirements of research integrity, both internally and externally. A revised procedure for managing research integrity matters at an institutional level has been developed and is under consultation.

The Director of Research and Innovation is the named *University Research Integrity Officer* who has the responsibility to provide '*confidential liaison for whistleblowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under their auspices*'.

The REF and Research Policy Manager in Research and Innovation is the named *University Research Integrity Manager* with the responsibility to act as the '*first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity*'.

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

Each School has a Research Ethics Officer with the responsibility for ethics approval, raising awareness of and providing training on research integrity and ethics, writing annual monitoring reports for Research Ethics Committees and keeping Schools informed about University policy on research ethics and integrity. Research integrity is central to staff induction processes, PhD programmes (delivered via different taught modules) and the work of Ethics Committees in School, which monitors and ensures high ethical standards across all areas of School research activity.

Research Integrity forms part of termly staff meeting agendas in Schools as a regular reminder of the importance of integrity in their research, especially, 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. The University's Research Ethics Officers' Forum provides opportunities for sharing of best practice amongst Schools across the University. Research Integrity plays a particular role in the teaching and supervision of dissertation modules of undergraduate courses.

The University, a member of the UKRIO, has access to training provision by UKRIO on research integrity and runs annual training workshops on research integrity which are attended by staff and students

Within teaching and training activities of Schools, Research Integrity is discussed alongside 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. In addition to training, the University Code of Conduct, and copies of the UK Concordat, are also provided. School Intranet pages containing regularly updated guidelines on Research Ethics and Integrity and module pages in Moodle are also used as means of communication with 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 on 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 the University Graduate School and central Professional Development services
- Postgraduate Studies Handbook
- The University's online Epigeum course on 'Research Integrity'
- Workshop on research integrity led by the CEO of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) which included presentation and consideration of a number of case studies
- Separate classes are also provided by the Doctoral Training Centres that are integrated into courses on 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
- Research Skills Programme ran by the Graduate School

**For staff:** School Research Ethics Officers play an important role in raising awareness and communicating with 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 for staff is provided through a variety of routes, for example,

- By having a regular item on ethics and integrity in School meetings and in the School Research Ethics Committee meetings
- Regular email updates on ethics and integrity
- Staff mentoring programme
- Research planning

- School series of seminars and dedicated workshops on research integrity led by UKRIO
- School Away Days with dedicated sessions on research integrity
- Training and information dissemination on research data management, grant writing, open access of outputs, 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
- 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
- Plenary session on the impact of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation introduced in May 2018 on research in School Research Away days.

The following research integrity related courses were delivered to both research students and research staff either through the Graduate School central training programmes for researchers or through the faculty specific programmes convened by the Graduate School for the Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Engineering and Medicine & Health Sciences:

- Ethics of human tissue and animal studies research
- Exploring ethics in research
- Good clinical practice
- Good laboratory practice: one programme on fundamentals and other on techniques
- Introduction to research integrity
- Research integrity (standalone)
- Open access: what researchers need to know
- Philosophy of science and scientific ethics
- Research ethics and the ethics review process for doctoral research
- Resolving copyright challenges in your research (Also another training specifically for Arts and Social Sciences)
- Dealing with Intellectual Property issues (IP) in your research
- Identifying and managing intellectual property issues in research
- Introduction to research data management

Additionally **for staff only**:

- Introduction to the ethics review process - for new ethics officers and panel members

418 staff and 604 research students enrolled to the Epigeum online module on research integrity, which is tailored to provide bespoke Nottingham content for Nottingham researchers across all career stages.

**Data Integrity:** Increased training and awareness of Data Integrity has been provided through training and awareness sessions to safeguarding the accuracy and completeness of information and processing methods for all new Graduate Researchers and academics. This includes Digital Research Week (23-27 April 2018), which included a General Data Protection Regulation Workshop and Data Security training.

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

Staff members of Five Schools have reported to have been undertaking research into research integrity or related fields such as research ethics.

- **Nottingham University Business School** is actively engaged in:
  - Social Media Research Ethics, based in the Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
  - Responsible Innovation, based in the International Centre for Corporate Social ResponsibilityRelated papers have been written, workshops delivered and key researchers are invited to speak at other institutions in this area.
- In the faculty of **Engineering** one staff member works on responsible innovation and research integrity with respect to appropriate technology projects in the Global South, particularly concerning household energy solutions and food security.
- 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. These researchers 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) REC processes, (v) openness and transparency in bioscience research; (vi) developing subject-specific research ethics training for PGR researchers. Other academics in the School who have 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.

Two staff members in the Centre for Bioethics have also published on the ethical and social issues raised by the use of animals in research. One article has been published in PLoS One in July 2016 and another one published in Food Ethics March 2018.

- A member of staff in the School of **Politics and International Relations** is involved in a number of initiatives to promote research transparency and is blogging on research reproducibility.

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

The University Research Committee 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 highlights any issues and makes 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 at an institution level 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*

The University has introduced a new governance structure and procedure for handling research integrity issues which is one of the outcomes of the review of the governance of research integrity and ethics as alluded to earlier in this report. Implementation of this new structure and procedure has enhanced the University's proficiency in handling research misconduct cases, and, consequently the number of cases on research misconduct reported and investigated have increased this year compared to the number of cases reported until last year.

The details of formal investigations reported this year are as below:

Between **1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018**, 4 formal investigations were conducted by the University. Of these 4 cases, one case was dismissed.

Between **1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018**, formal investigations were conducted by the University on 28 student cases. Of these 28 cases, 26 involved plagiarism and two involved collusion.

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 for example with professional bodies, or funding councils.*

Four schools and faculty of Engineering have reported to have either contributed to or be involved in external events and activities in support of research integrity. For example,

- In **Engineering** undergraduate Engineering courses are accredited by the relevant professional bodies and as part of this accreditation standards are met which include teaching on Research Integrity and Ethics for students.
- In the **School of English**, 3 members of staff are Fellows of the English Association; 7 are members of the AHRC peer review college; and a member of staff is a member of the ESRC's Strategic Advisory Network and until 2017-8 sat on the AHRC Council. 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; President of the D.H. Lawrence Society; Research Officer of TAPRA, the national Theatre and Performance Research Association for UK and Ireland; 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.

- In the **School of Geography**, several academic staff have senior editorial roles with journals and so encounter a range of ethical issues periodically which can usefully support their work for the University. Similarly staff also work with research councils, learned societies etc. which often involve issues of research ethics.
- In the **School of Veterinary Medicine and Science**, one of the member of staff has been collaborating with senior staff at 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 (LAVA), the Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA), the Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) 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.*

Seven schools have reported to have either collaboration, initiatives or memberships with external organisations in support of Research Integrity. Examples are:

- In the **School of Biosciences**, very specific workshops on Research Integrity that members of the School of Biosciences have been involved in include, internally: the Research Integrity workshop which was facilitated by UKRIO on Monday 18th September 2017 at Jubilee Campus. Externally: one of the staff members participated as an expert witness in a public dialogue on the use of genetic technologies commissioned and run by the Royal Society (Edinburgh, October 2017).
- In **Nottingham University Business School**, in September 2017, one of the staff members delivered a professional development workshop (PDW) at the British Academy of Management (BAM) annual conference on the topic of social media research ethics in management studies. This was then developed further and presented to an international community of researchers at the Academy of Management Specialized Conference on Big Data in April 2018 with the help of research collaborators at University of Bath, Loughborough University and University of Manchester. This staff members had also been an invited speaker on the same topic by Newcastle University Business School in May 2018.
- In the **School of Education**, staff and PGR students have reflected deeply on the ethical implications of their work and presented on this aspect of their activities at academic conferences in 2017-18.
- In the **faculty of Engineering**, one of the staff members attended a research integrity event in March 2018 run by the Royal Society entitled Research Integrity and Culture workshop.
- In the **School of English**, staff and students regularly participate in external events and activities and thus engage with the theory and practice of research integrity. Recent examples include: special events, including the public exhibition 'Viking: Rediscover the

'Legend' (2017-18); and on-going public engagement initiatives such as the Dementia Reading Group, the Community Reading Group, and the Literacy Support Project.

- In the School of **Health Sciences**, the School Research Ethics Officers gave a seminar on issues in research ethics relating specifically to qualitative projects to members of local HRA Research Ethics Committees in September 2017.
- In School of **Veterinary Medicine and Science**, one of the staff members has been involved in several external events, including as an invited speaker, which relate to the topic of animal research ethics and public engagement. Three conference presentations in Austria and London are reported in June 2018.

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

Five schools reported memberships or collaborations 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.
- In the School of **Health Sciences**, the School Ethics Officer is a member of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and this year has been involved in subgroups (GDPR and Research Data Management) working on the University response to the implementation of GDPR. In addition, individual staff hold positions which impact on research integrity, e.g. roles on editorial boards of journals, membership of funding bodies (NIHR, national charities) and membership of professional bodies (RCP, RCN, CSP, BPS, UKSBM).
- The School of **Life Sciences**, has close links with a number of societies which have provided guidance on the use of animals in research (British Physiological Society, British Pharmacological Society) and National Centre for the Replacement Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), which collectively have produced the ARRIVE guidelines on the use of animals in research.
- A member of **Veterinary Medicine and Science** has ongoing collaboration with Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) on 'Improving UK animal research governance: Delivering effective ethical review'.

## Conclusion

This annual statement to the Council presents the actions that the University has undertaken to sustain and further enhance research integrity and confirms compliance with the commitment 5 of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the research integrity requirements of the UKRI.

## **Action for the Council**

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