

University of Reading: 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 Reading
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/ industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	30 June 2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.reading.ac.uk/research/research-environment/integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Parveen Yaqoob
	Email address: p.yaqoob@reading.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: Abbe Davy (Head of Quality Assurance in Research)
	Email address: a.j.davy@reading.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

Research integrity is a key element of our University Research Strategy, which was renewed in 2025, and sets out an ambition to *“lead the charge in open research, going beyond open access publishing to pioneer new models of accessibility, integrity and shared discovery.”* It indicates that research excellence is driven by originality and rigour and commits to upholding the highest standards of research integrity, ensuring that our work is ethical, rigorous and globally respected.

The annual statement this year has been written in the context of a refreshed Concordat to Support Research Integrity, published in April 2025.

While the key committee with oversight of matters relating to research integrity is the Committee for Open Research and Research Integrity (CORRI), other relevant committees include:

- i. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which meets 11 times per year and is comprised of 8 members of academic staff from Schools active in human research, a lay member and a member of staff from Governance. The UREC (i) assesses the ethical propriety of all research using human subjects, human samples or human personal data to be undertaken at the University, however funded; (ii) has the power to require modifications and the discretion to disallow research projects on ethical grounds; (iii) offers advice on ethical implications of proposed research and encourages high standards of behaviour with respect to University research involving human beings and (iv) monitors the progress of research projects submitted to it and has the discretion to terminate research on ethical grounds. Local ethics committees operate in Schools where there is a high proportion of research involving humans or animals; in these cases, there is significant interaction and communication between the School committee and the UREC. A Community of Practice of local ethics committees has also been established, led by the Head of Quality Assurance in Research.
- ii. The Animal Welfare Ethics Review Body (AWERB), which normally meets three times per year. In addition, separate meetings are held to approve project licences (new and amendments). The AWERB is comprised of academic staff from those Schools undertaking animal research, two lay

members, two named veterinary surgeons (large and small animals) and five named animal care and welfare officers. The meeting is Chaired by the University Licence Holder. The University maintains a publicly available website dedicated to the use of animals in research. Statistics on animal use are openly available on the site and are detailed by species ([Animal Research \(reading.ac.uk\)](https://www.reading.ac.uk/AnimalResearch))

It should be noted that the University's research governance structure will be revised for the academic year 2025-26 in an effort to streamline and reduce duplication. The CORRI will be dissolved and all matters relating to research integrity will be reported directly to the University Committee for Research and Innovation.

A number of key individuals and groups play specific roles in supporting research integrity as follows:

- Head of Quality Assurance in Research: maintains the [University Code of Good Practice in Research](#), is responsible for provision of QAR support and training for staff and postgraduate students and for monitoring of compliance with research ethics standards. Acts as Secretary to the University Research Ethics Committee and is a member of the CORRI.
- Director of the Research Engagement and Impact Office: acceptance of research funding awards on behalf of the University, ensuring researchers are aware of their obligations on grants and contracts and that research contracts entered into by the University are fair to all parties involved in collaborations. Leads on Trusted Research and related policy matters and is a member of the CORRI.
- Head of Governance: is the Secretary to the University's AWERB and the University's Audit Committee, as well as being a member of the CORRI; is responsible for managing processes in relation to student complaints/appeals/ academic misconduct/fitness to practice and study; is one of the recipients of whistleblowing reports.
- Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary: holder of the institutional Establishment Licence.
- Co-Chairs of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and chairs of local ethics committees: see 2.1i above.
- UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) institutional lead is a member of the CORRI and leads on a number of strategic initiatives on reproducibility, research integrity and research culture, both within the organisation and for the UKRN.
- A research communications team, which has responsibility for communicating all matters relating to open research and research integrity, both internally and externally.
- The Research Engagement Team provides Open Research services with the purpose of increasing the accessibility, transparency and re-usability of research produced at the University. Support is provided for Open Access publishing, effective management, preservation and sharing of research data, and responsible use of metrics. The team is instrumental in delivering the University's Open Research Action Plan and actively engages with the UKRN.

Policies relevant to the Concordat are listed in Appendix 1 (below), along with weblink addresses. The CORRI reviews the research integrity element of all policies over a 3-year cycle.

While research integrity is a core element of the University research strategy and the CORRI has strategic and operational oversight of research integrity, the allocation of ring-fenced QR funding from Research England specifically for research culture has enabled a number of projects and activities, including those around research culture, open research and research integrity.

The University is a member of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), an independent network of stakeholders in the UK dedicated to improvement in the quality, integrity and reproducibility of academic research. Each institutional partner has a senior academic representative as Institutional Lead (Professor Etienne Roesch for the University of Reading) and a local network lead. The academic leads liaise with grassroots networks of researchers and with UKRN stakeholders, including funders and publishers. The UKRN received UKRI RED funding for a five-year programme of work across the consortium to accelerate the uptake of high-quality open research practices and the many benefits to research quality, integrity and public trust that will result. As a core member of the consortium, the University is leading on several projects, mainly within the remit of the Open Research Programme funded by Research England.

The University collates anonymised information on allegations of research misconduct on an annual basis. Preparation of the annual statement is led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, but input is received from all members of the CORRI and there is further opportunity for input from the University Board for Research and Innovation, Senate and Council as part of the approval process. Preparation of the annual statement is informed by the UKRIO self-assessment framework for compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, a review of progress against our action plan and any new information or guidance which may be relevant, for example from research funders, the UKRI CORI or the UKRIO.

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.

This year we established a Research Culture Programme Board, co-chaired by the Head of the Research and Innovation Directorate and the Associate PVC for the Doctoral and Researcher College. The co-chairs and membership represent both academic and professional services functions and all career stages, from PGR students to senior research leaders. The purpose of the Board is to drive the development of a positive research culture, using the SCOPE framework as a guide. Importantly, it will be assessing baseline indicators of research culture, using tools being developed specifically for the sector, so that we can evaluate progress against those indicators. This will not only inform our thinking, but will

provide us with narrative for the People, Culture and Environment element of our REF submission.

The second iteration of our Open Research Action Plan (ORAP) was published on the Staff Portal on 24 September 2024 and a detailed project board planner of activities was shared with CORRI. We are planning to update our open research statement (originally published in 2019) in line with UNESCO recommendations on open science.

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.

Last year we included the establishment of a Statistics Community of Practice as a case study. To date, this has been supported by a 0.5 FTE Director role, funded through the University's Research Culture allocation. Its purpose is to (i) audit and analyse the use of statistics in research, (ii) evaluate the needs of researchers with respect to statistics, (iii) evaluate data-intensive activities in professional services, including use and practice of statistics, and training and support needs, (iv) raise the profile of appropriate use of statistics in research through engagement events and (v) provide a platform for sharing good practice with respect to the use of statistics in research in the future. The Director has used evidence from survey work and sector insight to identify key areas requiring improvement and will shortly be proposing long-term solutions and an action plan for approval by CORRI. The Board will be overseeing the CEDARS survey, which contains specific questions about research integrity, and which will be run for all staff for the first time this year.

Work on research integrity training in collaboration with the UKRN is progressing and having identified the need for discipline-specific research integrity training, Professor Roesch ran a dedicated workshop for Heritage and Creativity researchers to explain what open research and research integrity mean for them. Training has also been delivered to external University partners, including colleagues from the Natural History Museum and Kew, and there is also interest from the British Museum. Development of online research integrity training has been delayed, but is planned to be completed by summer 2025.

Professor Etienne Roesch, a key member of CORRI, has been appointed Deputy Chair of the UKRN, which has led to some new opportunities, such as leadership of a project on recognising and rewarding open research and an associated maturity framework, self-assessment tool and practical guidance to support assessment of institutional maturity, planning and progress, illustrated with case studies from institutions that had participated in the project. Work with the UKRN will also assist with the definition of indicators to be used for the People, Culture and Environment section of REF 2029.

A review of projects previously considered for ethical permission, including those dating back to 2018, was undertaken during the last year. A clear effect of Covid-19 could be seen in the data for projects from 2019-2020, some ending in a lack of participants and with no publications. The highest number of research ethics

applications continued to be received for student research. Schools had strong processes and good reporting structures in place. An HTA facility inspection in October was satisfactory and compliance was confirmed.

Many institutions appear to have now adopted an AI policy. UKRI has also produced a policy, covering formulating applications, data security issues, IP issues of public domain, plagiarism etc. Colleagues on our AI CoP are considering what a UoR AI strategy might look like (including reviewing those elsewhere in the sector) – guidance, toolkits and awareness raising will then need to follow. A recent case was discussed and it was suggested that additional work was also needed around a publication policy to address where research integrity intersected with the trusted research agenda.

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

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 students: The University has specifically identified research misconduct as that arising in the course of research or its reporting, and which includes, but need not be limited to: (i) fabrication, falsification, misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement; (ii) plagiarism; (iii) failure to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to humans or animals used in research or the environment and for the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research. Research misconduct also includes any activity in research and/or scholarship and in its dissemination, which brings the name of the University into disrepute.

All allegations are handled as described in the [Academic Misconduct and Academic Integrity policy](#), enabling a rigorous, fair and transparent approach, in line with Commitment 4 of the Concordat and the UKRI Guidance for Research Organisation on the Investigation of Research Misconduct [UKRI-310322-GRP-Guidance2022.pdf]. A review of the Academic Misconduct process for students is ongoing.

For staff: Allegations of research misconduct against a member of staff are subject to the [University's Disciplinary Procedure](#). If there are grounds for formal action following an investigation, a disciplinary panel will be established and a disciplinary hearing held to determine whether a formal sanction should be applied. Where the allegation relates to research misconduct, the University will notify the research funding body where applicable. An external panel member may be appointed to assist with a formal investigation; this will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with advice from Legal Services.

At present, the University does not appoint an independent third party as part of the process, although lay members of Council may be involved in whistleblowing cases and Student Appeals Committees always have an independent member. External members for formal investigations are instead considered on a case-by-case basis.

A broad investigations training course has been designed, which is suitable for a range of roles and processes, and comprises a half-day in-person session with a series of case studies. This continues to be delivered three times a year and is reaching a broad range of colleagues.

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	3 (1 PGT, 2 UG, no PGR)	3		2
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:				

***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.**

This template is provided by UKRI

Appendix 1. Regulations, Policies and Procedures

Regulations, Policies and Procedures (see Governance Zone of University website)

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/about/governance/governance-zone.aspx>

- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Fraud
- Public Disclosure Agreement (Whistleblowing)
- Travel, Gifts and Expenses
- Conflict and Declarations of Interests
- Ethical Framework
- Animal Research Ethics
- Policy on the Acceptance of Research and Innovation Funding

Research Integrity

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/research/research-environment/integrity.aspx>

- University Code of Good Practice in Research
- University Research Ethics Committee Guidance Notes
- Responsible Use of Metrics in Research
- Openness in Animal Research

Information Compliance

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/imps/information-compliance-policies>

- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information
- Information Security Policy

Academic Misconduct (student)

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/policies-and-procedures/academic-misconduct>

Staff Disciplinary Procedure

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/human-resources/policies-and-procedures/resolving-problems-at-work/discipline-and-misconduct>