

Research Integrity Annual Statement

1st Aug 2021- 31st July 2022

Background

In July 2012, Universities UK published “*The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*”, a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. HEFCE, NIHR, RCUK and Wellcome were included among its signatories and, subsequently, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) fully endorsed the Concordat. A revised and strengthened concordat was published in October 2019, to meet the recommendations of the Science and Technology Select Committee of the House of Commons, which concluded that the language of the Concordat should be tightened, so that compliance could be more easily assessed.

The Concordat lists the core elements of research integrity as: honesty; rigour; transparency and open communication; care and respect; and accountability. There are five commitments for researchers, employers and funders to uphold. Part of the Concordat's 5th commitment requires that the University should produce a short annual statement, which must be presented to their own governing body, and subsequently be made publicly available, ordinarily through the institution's website. This annual statement must include:

1. a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues;
2. a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
3. a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, which will include data on the number of investigations. If no formal investigation has been undertaken, this should also be noted;
4. a statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring; and
5. a statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct.

To improve accountability and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity, this statement will be made publicly available and a link to the statement will be sent to the secretariat of the signatories to the Concordat. The University of Surrey's statements are published at

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/research/excellence/integrity-and-governance>.

Statement for 2021/2022

1. Introduction

At the University, we are committed to delivering the principles set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and strive to incorporate these into our everyday research culture. We recognise that we cannot become complacent and must continue to place research integrity at the centre of our research endeavours. To this end, we are committed to implementing the requirements of the new version of the Concordat, which was released on the 25th October 2019.

2. Research Culture and Integrity

Research integrity thrives in a positive research culture and the University of Surrey is committed to enhancing the environment in which research integrity is maintained.

2.1. UUK report on the 2021 Concordat to Support Research Integrity annual statement

In March 2022, Universities UK released the report on the 2021 Concordat to Support Research Integrity annual statement. The report was reviewed by Emily Farran (Academic Lead Research Culture and Integrity), Julie Merriman-Jones (Head of Research Integrity and Governance) and Christine Daoutis (Open Research Manager) to map our progress in Research Integrity against the sector, and to determine future actions. The review found that University of Surrey was performing very well measured against many of the recommendations in the report. Key outcomes of the review formed a small list of actions. Completed actions are presented below with reference to recommendations detailed in the UUK report. These concern: A) Concordat to Support Research Integrity Annual Statement; and B) Research Integrity Practice more generally.

A. UUK Report recommended actions for Concordat to Support Research Integrity Annual Statement

- i. As with the other concordats, the signatories should include an expectation that the annual statement is signed off by the governing body of the research organisation.

Action: No change required; the statement is submitted annually for recommendation of approval in the following order by: Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC); University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC); and Senate.

- ii. Statements should clearly note when the governing body approved the statement or include this in the email when reporting to the signatories.

Action: In the footer of the annual statement, we now include the meeting dates of RIGC, URIC and Senate that the annual statement was reviewed and approved.

- iii. Content should aim to provide an update on activity rather than repeat policies that are already in place. Updates on policies that have been changed or are under review are encouraged.

Action: No change required; the current practice provides updates on activity and changes, including new changes to policies.

- iv. If the annual statement is written in the form of a webpage, it would be useful to have a copy of previous annuals statements to demonstrate how updated material has been used to meet the commitments of the concordat.

Action: No change required; all previous and new annual statements are displayed on our website:

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/research/excellence/research-integrity-and-governance>

- v. Statements should be openly accessible, and the design of research integrity webpages should be clear. Where possible, institutions should provide links to previous annual statements as points of reference for past activity and changes over time.

Action: No change required; all previous and new annual statements are displayed on our website:

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/research/excellence/research-integrity-and-governance>

B. Changes to Research Integrity Practice

- i. Reporting of research integrity issues and misconduct

The previous annual statements have reported on the number of formal investigations conducted within the year, which is low.

These annual statements have not previously identified the number of allegations received, investigated and processed under the 'Code of Practice of Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct'. This often involves an 'informal screening panel' to review the evidence and determine if a formal investigation is warranted.

ii. Research Integrity (RI) Training

Using the enhancing research culture funding from RE, we have purchased RI training modules from Epigeum. These will be available to our community from October 2022, with communications targeted at PGRs in the first instance.

iii. Open Research Training

Open Research training is currently available (detailed in 'training' below)

References to research integrity are made in Open Research training where appropriate. An aim is to strengthen these links between Open Research and research integrity as part of our review of the Open Research module. This also includes other training such as: reference to the Concordat across Open Research documents, Open Research checklist; discussion of research integrity as part of the transparency and 'closed as necessary' aspects of Open Research training; signposting to new Epigeum RI training (see point iii).

iv. Concordat Commitment to Research Culture

Under the Concordat commitment to research culture, information about the narrative CV resume for researchers has been added to the Open Research pages of the website (<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/library/open-research/resume-researchers-and-innovation-narrative-cv-approach>)

3. Actions and activities to strengthen understanding and support application in relation to research integrity issues

During 2021/22, the University has undertaken the following actions and activities to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity issues (per Point 1 above).

3.1. Revisions/Changes to Existing Policies/Guides

- The **Ethics Guide** was launched in September 2022 which covers both academic research and research conducted in teaching environments

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-12/ethics-for-teaching-and-research-policy.pdf>

3.2. Training/Awareness

- Researcher Development & Employability (Doctoral College)

Researcher Development & Employability (RDE) collaborative work with RIGO in development of a bespoke PGR training workshop continues.

- The Research Integrity and Governance Office (RIGO) delivered virtual ethics and governance training during the academic year.

3.2.1. The University's Open Research Unit continues to provide training sessions and workshops covering: "Open Research: Research Data Management and Open Data" and "Open Research: Data Management Plans"

3.2.2. The Open Research team continues to provide the training either via the Doctoral College programme or scheduled directly with the faculties:

- Introduction to Open Research: as open as possible, as closed as necessary;
- Open access to research publications;
- Open Research web pages have been revised and updated;

- Increasing the visibility of your research;
- Open licences; and
- Introduction to research metrics.

3.2.3. Training on conducting research with human samples. Members of RIGO continue to provide mandatory face to face and virtual training on 'The Use of Human Tissue in Research' on an *ad hoc* basis.

3.2.4. During 2021/22, members of RIGO attended:

- Navigating China's data privacy laws;
- UKRIO Research Integrity in Practice
- HRA conference – 'Make it Public'

3.3. External Memberships

The University keeps abreast of developments in research integrity through its membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), Understanding Animal Research (UAR) and the Association for Research Administrators (ARMA). The University also attends the UKRI Stakeholder days and liaises with UKRI on a regular basis to have up-to-date information regarding research council requirements.

The University is a member of Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA).

The University is a member of Task Force Open Science within CESAER, a European initiative which has a strong voice in the discussion and implementation of open science.

3.4. Committees and Working Groups supporting research integrity

Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC)

The Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC) is responsible for ensuring that research activity at the University is carried out to the highest standards of rigour and integrity and to provide strategic direction on the development, implementation, and evaluation of research policies to be compliant with the Concordat. The RIGC is a sub-committee of the University Research & Innovation Committee (URIC) and was chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation during this time, meeting on 8th Sept 2021, 24th November 2021, 2 March 2022 and 13th May 2022.

Open Research Working Group (ORWG)

Surrey Open Research Working Group (ORWG) is an action-oriented team of researchers and professional services. Aligned with the University of Surrey Open Research strategy and Action plan, the group's central aim is to advance Open Research practice across the University, with the goal of making the processes and products of research at the University of Surrey as transparent, accessible and reproducible as possible. The ORWG meets every 6 weeks and is alternately chaired Emily Farran (Academic Lead Research Culture and Integrity and Christine Daoutis (Open Research Manager) [Strategy](#)

The Open Research strategic goals and action plan were launched (March 2022). The strategic goals are aligned to the University's refreshed strategy and provide a framework for the action plan. The action plan was developed in line with those of several other Universities; these are shared publicly to demonstrate Open Research activity in the institution.

- **Open Access publishing:** to ensure the open and timely dissemination of Surrey research, more than 15 [transitional agreements](#) were reviewed in 2021-2022, of which 10 out of them were signed or renewed. These agreements support immediate Open Access to research publications; transition to fairer and more transparent Open Access publishing; and compliance with funders' policies.
- **Infrastructure** The Open Research repository has been further developed to meet Open Access technical requirements and ensure compliance with the new UKRI Open Access policy.

- **Open Research website** went through a major refresh to include more up-to-date information and guidance tailored to funders' requirements and Open Research initiatives. New pages were created on a range of Open Research practices, contact/support information, and further resources. This is a major project delivered collaboratively between the Library, the Research Culture and Integrity team, Marketing and researchers. The website also includes a new [Open Research handbook](#): a guide to all Open Research weblinks available at Surrey. Crucially, guidance on the website is now more clearly linked to other aspects of research integrity, including transparency in the research process and awareness of and compliance with legal and governance aspects, including data protection and intellectual property.
- **Training sessions.** The Open Research team has delivered over 20 presentations and briefings have been delivered on Open Research (Open Access, research data, open licences; new UKRI policy) to raise awareness about changes and its implications, including OA publishing options. Training is delivered as part of an 'Open Research programme or by invitation to School/Department meetings.
- **Communications** are also included in regular reports to Faculty research committees and in Faculty newsletters. Open Access Week (October 2021) communications can be found at [Open Research news page](#). The theme was 'Learn, Practise, Engage with Open Research'. Members of our community also showcased Surrey's growing Open Research community as a PLOS blog [Surrey's growing Open Research community as a PLOS blog](#). This year, communication campaigns focussed on (a) the **UKRI Open Access Policy**. Researchers were made aware of the new UKRI Open Access Policy and associated Surrey guidance via emails, newsletters, briefings and presentations at School meetings. Resources include the infographic and journal list on the [Open Research website](#). The guidance tells researchers what to do before submission, on submission and on acceptance, to ensure compliance with Open Access, including compliance with the next REF; (b) **promoting ORCID**: messages to register or connect ORCID id have been embedded in Pivot RP communications, Faculty Librarians communications, appraisal guidance and on an individual basis.
- **The Open Research module and action plan** were launched to the wider Surrey research community (October 2021) as part of Open Access week. The '[Open Research in practice](#)' module is an online course introducing various aspects of open practice in research. The aim of the module is to encourage and support researchers in considering and adopting open practices suitable to their research area; and to continue applying these practices beyond taking the module. Again, the importance of openness working alongside transparency and integrity in research is highlighted throughout the course.
- **The Inaugural University of Surrey Annual Open Research Lecture** took place in April 2022. Attended by close to 150 people, the Open Research lecture was given by Dr Karen Salt, Deputy Director, R&D Culture and Environment, UKRI. The event also included an Open Research poster session. Thirty posters were presented by our community. A further highlight was a round table discussion with Dr Karen Salt (UKRI), Professor Marcus Munafò (Head of UK Reproducibility Network), Dr Marton Ribary (Winner of 2021 Open Research Award, Surrey) and Grace Gottlieb (Head of Research Policy, UCL).
- **The Surrey Reproducibility Society conference** took place in May 2022. This successful conference had the theme of: "Making Open Research Truly Open".
- **Undergraduate internships.** The Doctoral College ran 17 undergraduate internships over July and August 2022. A priority was given to internships which featured an element of Open Research.
- **External Engagement** - Surrey is part of a consortium of 18 universities (September 2021) – members of the [UK Reproducibility Network](#) (UKRN) – who have received [significant funding](#) from the Research England Development Fund. Surrey contributed to UKRN responses to: [Science and Technology Committee's inquiry into reproducibility in research](#). One of these has since been published: Stewart, A. J., Farran, E. K., Grange, J. A., Macleod, M., Munafò, M., Newton, P., & Shanks, D. R. (2021). Improving research

quality: the view from the UK Reproducibility Network institutional leads for research improvement. *BMC Research Notes*, 14(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-021-05883-3>

- Emily Farran, Academic Lead Research Culture and Integrity, represented Surrey at two UKRI events. In October 2021, Emily co-chaired a session with UKRI on [“Opportunities and challenges in improving research quality by drawing on lessons across sectors and disciplines”](#) at the 2021 UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships Conference. Emily also was part of a panel discussion at the UKRI [Enhancing Research Culture](#) event, 16th November 2021.
- Emily Farran and Emma Francis are representatives at the UKRI [alternative uses group \(AUG\)](#)
- The University continues to be a member of Task Force Open Science within CESAER, a European initiative which has a strong voice in the discussion and implementation of Open Research. Christine Daoutis is currently collaborating with CESAER members on a white paper on recommended measures to lift specific barriers to Open Research.
- For a blog of our Open Research achievements for 2021 see: <https://openresearchsurrey.wordpress.com/2021/12/21/the-twelve-gifts-of-open-research/>

University Ethics Committee (UEC)

- **Ethics Process Review** – The School of Hospitality and Tourism and Events Management has led on the first Standard Study Protocol (SSP) being approved and signed off. SSPs are singular overarching protocol applications which remove the need for numerous smaller and similar proposals going through ethical assessment on an individual basis. These are to be used in low-risk areas of research with large cohorts.
- **Researcher training** – The Chair of the University Ethics Committee has delivered several virtual ethics training sessions to specific groups/departments of researchers during the academic year.
- **Committee training** – The University Ethics Committee members (65) attended up to three virtual group training sessions in reviewing applications and amendments during the year, in October 2020, January 2021 and July 2021. New committee members were given virtual induction training at various sessions throughout the year.

Research Data Governance and Operations Group (RDGOG)

The University continues to work on creating and improving facilities and guidance for Data Protection compliance in research. The Research Data Governance and Operations Group (RDGOG) had been introduced to better align processes around research data management across the University. This includes joint working across several professional services teams, including the Information Governance Unit, the Library's Open Research team, Data InfoSec Steering Committee (DISC) and the Research Integrity and Governance Office (RIGO).

Human Tissue Research Operations Group (HTROG)

- HTROG oversees all human tissue research activity across the University.
- HTROG assists the Designated Individual (DI) in ensuring that the University is compliant with the 47 licensing standards required for Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Research Licence for the storage of relevant material held by the University of Surrey.
- HTROG helps ensure that all human samples (relevant material under the Human Tissue Act 2004) are either held under the authority of the HTA Licence, Health Research Authority (HRA) via favourable ethical opinion by NHS Research Ethics Committee (REC) or are exempt from either HTA or HRA licensing or approval, respectively.
- HTROG oversees that, for all human samples used for research purposes, the appropriate consent has been obtained.

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

- A new Chair of the University's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) was appointed, and their term started in February 2022.
- The new AWERB Chair is pushing forward contributing to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK.
- A new Chair for the AWERB non-ASPA subcommittee (NASPA) was appointed, and their term started in October 2021.

4. Research Misconduct

4.1. The University provides assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation (Point 2).

The [Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct](#) was introduced in 2015 and last updated in April 2019. The Code was developed with the involvement of several stakeholders, including the University of Surrey Students Union, academic representatives from the University, UKRIO and the Legal and Secretariat team.

The Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct underwent an internal audit and the report presented in August 2021. The key findings were:

- The 'Code of Practice for Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct' needs to be updated and refreshed, and other procedures should be updated to include research guidelines;
- Improved training is required for research practitioners to ensure they are suitably knowledgeable to perform research projects with the University's required integrity and ethical compliance;
- Processes for receiving issues of research misconduct could be improved, by changes that would encourage complainants to come forward.

The update will bring about a closer working relationship with Human Resources and the provision of follow up support, via mentoring or other support systems. An appeals process will be specified to bring the University of Surrey in line with other institutions.

4.2. The University Statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including data on the number of investigations (Point 3)

During the period of 01/08/2021 to 31/07/22, the University received thirteen allegations for consideration, as listed in the table below, but none of these resulted in a screening panel investigation, hence no formal investigations were undertaken. Annexe 1 shows the number of completed formal investigations over the last three years.

| Type of allegation/complaint/integrity issue | Screening panel required | Outcome |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Post-graduate research project involving human participants undertaken without required ethics and governance approval. | No | Data withdrawn Advice and guidance |
| Complaints from members of the public on a university ethics approved research project, claiming the research subject was unethical. | No | Study closed Advice and guidance |
| Post-graduate research project involving human participants not submitted for ethics and governance approval as indicated after completing the Self-Assessment of Governance and Ethic questions. | No | Advice and guidance |

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| Undergraduate research projects incorrectly advised that ethical and governance approval was not required. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Post-graduate research project involving human participants not submitted for ethics and governance approval as indicated after completing the Self-Assessment of Governance and Ethic questions. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Staff research study – consent not sought before using data for other purposes; did not seek ethical or governance approval. | No | Retrospective approval not given Advice and guidance |
| Undergraduate research project was not submitted for ethics and governance approval. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Staff member completed the Self-Assessment of Governance and Ethic questions incorrectly and did not submit research study for appropriate ethics and governance review. Study had not commenced. | No | Submission made for university ethics committee approval Advice and guidance |
| Post-graduate research study, approved by the university ethics committee, used an advertisement for recruitment not submitted as part of the application, hence not reviewed or approved. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Post-graduate research project not submitted for governance-only approval as indicated after completing the Self-Assessment of Governance and Ethic questions. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Post-graduate research project not submitted for ethics and governance approval as indicated after completing the Self-Assessment of Governance and Ethic questions. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Under-graduate research project not submitted for governance only approval as indicated after completing the Self-Assessment of Governance and Ethic questions. | No | Advice and guidance |
| Staff research project, NHS REC approved study – received complaint from a participant reporting that details of other participants were available on App being used to book study visits. | No | The App was amended. |

4.3. The University Statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring (Point 4)

The University has not had any formal investigations this year but is committed to identifying and implementing improvements to reduce the risk of research misconduct.

The University takes a proactive stance to act upon misconduct cases to find the root cause, help eliminate any repeat occurrences and learn lessons for the future.

4.4. The University Statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (Point 5)

The University has a Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct which includes clear principles and mechanisms to ensure that any investigations are conducted in a fair, thorough, objective, and timely manner. All allegations received are treated with confidentiality. Any allegations concerning University staff can be reported at Faculty level by contacting the Faculty's Associate Dean Research and Innovation (ADRI), or by directly contacting the RIGO Team. Any allegations concerning postgraduate research students can be

reported by contacting the Director of the Doctoral College, or directly to the RIGO Team. As per the University's Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct, all those raising concerns in good faith will be protected, supported, and not penalised, in line with the University's Public Interest Disclosure Policy. Additionally, the University has a "Report and Support" webpage and framework primarily aimed at students but available for all staff to report instances of abuse, bullying, harassment, hate crime and sexual misconduct.

Professor David Sampson, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation

**Professor Bran Nicol, Interim Chair RIGC, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (FASS)
(appointed Interim RIGC Chair after 31 July 2022)**

**Professor Paul Townsend, Interim Chair URIC, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (FHMS)
(appointed Chair URIC after 31 July 2022)**

Governing Body Approvals:

- **Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC) – approved 7 September 2022;**
- **University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) – approved 4 October 2022;
Chair's approval for amendments 19 October 2022;**
- **Senate – approved 24 October 2022**
- **University Council – approved 24 November 2022**

Annexe 1. Research Integrity Statement 1st August 2021 - 31st July 2022

The table below is based on the former RCUK assurance questions as a model – and recommended that doing so could be considered as good practice.

This table shows that by academic year, the number of formal investigations completed and of those, the number which were upheld (either in whole or in part)

- *Figures are provided for the past 3 completed academic years with year 1 representing the most recently completed year = 2022; year 2 = 2021; year 3 = 2020.*
- *“Formal investigation” is as described in the [RCUK Policy and Guidelines](#)*
- *The date is when the formal investigation was completed*
- *Investigations should be split by Research Council, and by type (as defined in the [integrity section of the UKRI webpage](#))*

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|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MRC | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NERC | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| STFC | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | March 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total (last 3 years) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (2020) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |