

# Annual statement on research integrity

## Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
<b>1A. Name of organisation</b>	University of Surrey
<b>1B. Type of organisation:</b>  higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education
<b>1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)</b>	
<b>1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)</b>	<a href="#">Research integrity and governance   University of Surrey</a>
<b>1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity</b>	Name: Elizabeth Bailey
	Email address: <a href="mailto:e.bailey@surrey.ac.uk">e.bailey@surrey.ac.uk</a>
<b>1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity</b>	Name: Marie Bovell
	Email address: <a href="mailto:m.bovell@surrey.ac.uk">m.bovell@surrey.ac.uk</a>

## 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

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 of October 2019.

The University has introduced four integrity-related training modules from the external provider Epigeum. The four modules are available to all staff and students and are actively promoted during Ethics and Governance Review application advice sessions. The training is also detailed in the “New to Surrey” staff intranet pages, uptake and feedback is being actively reviewed.

Subject specific internal training presentation to researchers of the standards and behaviours expected are delivered (in-person and on-line) to schools, doctoral college and Faculties covering ethics, governance, research integrity together with the process for submitting a research application with supporting documentation to either the University Ethics Committee or NHS Research Ethics Committee (REC). them

Delivering regular internal monthly mandatory Human Tissue training on line. Monitoring and maintaining training records of internal and mandatory external training to ensure all researchers are compliant and the training is in date. Notifying researchers when to renew training.

#### Human Tissue Research Operations Group (HTROG)

The University license was updated in September 2022. The Designated Individual chairs the HTROG committee. Named 'Persons Designate' for each satellite site conduct audits according to a schedule. As a result of the audits a number of compliance issues were identified and have been addressed. Work continues to transfer paper sample tracking records to an online system. The committee oversees research with samples held under the HTA license and under HRA clinical trial approvals.

The committee met on 12 Sept 2023, 9 Nov 2023, 14 Feb 2024 and 22nd April 2024. The Licence holder changed to Prof Lisa Collins, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation.

## External engagement/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 Task Force Open Science within CESAER, a European initiative which has a strong voice in the discussion and implementation of open science.

Surrey is part of a consortium of 18 universities (September 2021) – members of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN)– who received significant funding from the Research England Development Fund. This national Open Research Programme has progressed in the following ways:

- We now have institutional pages on the UKRN website:  
<https://www.ukrn.org/partner-institutions/>
- An audit of training activities at all UKRN member institutions, including Surrey, was conducted with a view to identify strengths, existing expertise as well as gaps in training provision across its members. UKRN used this data to determine the set of ‘train the trainer’ courses to offer.
- At Surrey, we now have a collated list of ‘trainers’ and are offering free train-the-trainer courses across the UK. Topics include pre-registration of studies/registered reports, open and FAIR data, preprints and open access publishing.
- The first train the trainer course took place in June 2023, the first training “Transparency and Reproducibility in Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences” September 2023.
- Academic Lead Research Culture and Integrity represented Surrey at the British Neuroscience Association by giving a presentation entitled “Open Research at the University of Surrey” in November 2022.
- Academic Lead Research Culture and Integrity 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.
- Open Research Manager is currently collaborating with CESAER members on a white paper on recommended measures to lift specific barriers to Open Research.

## 2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

The team at the University of Surrey responsible for supporting integrity, ethics and governance (formally RIGO) has expanded and is now referred to as Assurance. covering all aspects of integrity, ethics and governance, including trusted research, costing assurance, due diligence and clinical assurance

alongside support for ethics and integrity.

The Assurance ethics team held regular project meetings to support the transition from the existing research application system which ceased on 12th July 2024 to Infonetica web-based on-line research application system. Ethics Research Management (RM) was launched 1st August 2024. This is a web-based platform for managing research ethics and governance applications and will provide an on-line application submission process to streamline research applications to the University Ethics Committee for review. This new system will generate email updates at each stage of the research and provide a more transparent process for researcher, supervisors and the institution. EthicsRM will also provide detailed data sets that can be utilised across the institution with the aim of enabling better outcomes in research culture and practice.

Training guidance on the new system is provided via SharePoint links with user guides together with short videos available for researchers, supervisors and reviewers. Further supported with informal on-line drop-in training sessions. Additional tailored training sessions will be provided at the start of the academic year. This collegiate approach maintains a research environment that encourages research integrity.

The University Ethics Committee (UEC) is an independent voluntary group made up of academic and other university staff, post-graduate students and members of the public. The UEC conduct ethical review of research involving human subjects or data. The reviews are carried out remotely and assigned dependent on experience and/or expertise i.e. 1 low, medium 2 and 3 high.

The Chair and Deputies for the University Ethics Committee have worked closely with Assurance (formerly RIGO) in providing bespoke support to researchers where required, for example a review of ethical process for low-risk applications. Several Schools/Departments across the University have developed Standard Study Protocols (SSPs), these are pre-approved low-risk areas of research with large (student) cohorts, who fulfil agreed research criteria. This process reduces the volume of numerous smaller and similar proposals going through ethical assessment on an individual basis.

In respect of Reviewer training, during University Ethics Committee meetings held on 9 November 2023 and Feb 2024 May 2024, members were able to feed back into best practice for reviewing applications and amendments, with refresher information given. A recruitment drive for UEC members took place and new committee members being inducted in December 2023 and undertook training using Epigeum modules.

The Senior Research Officer (Culture & Integrity) attended the Virt2ue Train the Trainer course in June 2024 and will be delivering an internal two-day training course on Research at the start of the new academic year to facilitate training in

Research Integrity.

## **2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments**

The implementation of EthicsRM for submission of research applications has provided a more efficient and transparent process for approving research applications, together with a clear reporting facility, to monitor and audit.

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) and NASPA Chairs have contributed to discussions related to the new UKRI policy and the newly formed Association of Veterinary Ethics Committee as well as various animal forums such as the RSPCA and NC3Rs.

The AWERB and NASPA Chairs have implemented changes to the animal ethics and governance review questions and processes to better reflect the broad scope of animal-based activities performed by university members. This change was particularly timely given the recent release of the new UKRI Policy on Research and Innovation Involving Animals, where there is a shift in focus to include invertebrates as well as vertebrates in ethical review considerations.

These changes were reflected in ethics application forms, with the intention in Spring 2025 to move to EthicsRM, to streamline workflow and improve end user experience and be in line with the UEC application submissions.

New Academic Leads for Research Culture, Integrity and Governance and Research Culture, People and Environment, are due to be appointed. These posts will report directly to the PVC RI.

The University has reviewed and refreshed the Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC), a sub-committee of the University's Research and Innovation Committee (URIC). This will complement a new sub-committee of URIC; People, Culture and Environment Committee.

To support Trusted Research, a new procedure for collaborating with sensitive jurisdictions in the 17 areas of the economy has been developed, to manage international partnerships in all regions, whilst also managing the associated risks to UK national security, the University, its staff, and students.

A Trusted Research SharePoint site has been developed to provide guidance and training materials supporting the presentations, training and drop-in clinics for academics and professional services.

## 2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

The Open Research strategic goals and action plan (launched March 2022) continues to guide our planning. The strategic goals are aligned to the University's 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. Goals and actions are discussed at regular Open Research working group meetings, an action-oriented team of researchers and professional services, with the aims of advancing Open Research practice across the University and making the processes and products of research at the University of Surrey as transparent, accessible and reproducible as possible.

The Open Research website is regularly updated with further information and guidance tailored to funders' requirements and Open Research initiatives. Updates have been made to Open access, Events and Open Research case studies pages, with seven new Open Research case studies added this year. Guidance on the website is 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. A link to the Open Research website is now included on all three Faculty SharePoint sites. The Doctoral College have now linked to the Open Research handbook and Open Research module as part of the 6-monthly PGR review forms.

The 'Open Research in practice' module, launched October 2021, 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. The Open Research module was updated during the 2022-23 academic year.

Undergraduate internships. The Doctoral College is running undergraduate internships over July and August 2024. Priority was given to internships which featured an element of Open Research.

## Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

### **3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct**

The Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct was introduced in 2015. 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. This was last reviewed and updated in Sept 2023.

An appeals process was included in July 2024, to bring the University of Surrey in line with other institutions.

Awareness of the research misconduct process and how to report events or raise queries is included within the Ethics and Governance presentations. Research Integrity is also covered within the on-line Epigeum training is available to all staff and students and is actively promoted by the Doctoral College and at all Assurance Training events.

The Code of Practice has been scheduled for review later this year 2024, following the Concordat update and collaborating with other stakeholders HR and the Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulations.

<b>3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken</b>				
<b>Type of allegation</b>	<b>Number of allegations</b>			
	<b>Number of allegations reported to the organisation</b>	<b>Number of formal investigations</b>	<b>Number upheld in part after formal investigation</b>	<b>Number upheld in full after formal investigation</b>
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism	1			
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	7	None	N/A	N/A
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)				
<i>Other*</i>	18	None	N/A	N/A
<b>Total:</b>				

**\*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.**

One case in the 2022-2023 period is still on-going, this went to Formal Panel and the Respondent is now pursuing an Appeal.  
 Lab reports on Human Tissue samples - covering near misses with equipment failure (10) and internal audit - non traceable old samples (3), samples received without MTA - quarantined (1)  
 Researchers reported suspicious activity re-incentives (2), questionnaire completed by BOT - revealed during analysis (1).