

Template: 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 Sheffield
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher education institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	TBC
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/ethics-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Sue Hartley Email address: S.Hartley@sheffield.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: Lindsay Unwin Email address: l.v.unwin@sheffield.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

Policies and systems

To govern the diverse research undertaken by the University, the following processes and systems are in place:

Policy / system	Purpose	Maintainer
Code of Ethics	Overarching framework of ethics and conduct	University Secretary's Office
Staff Code of Conduct [internal]	Behavioural expectations of staff, embodying our values	HR
Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy [internal]	Policy on how the University prevents and responds to allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination and victimisation	HR
Student Code of Conduct [internal]	Behavioural expectations of students	Student & Academic Services
Definition of research excellence	Emphasises the importance of process and behaviours in producing excellence, as well as inputs and outputs	Research, Partnerships & Innovation
Good Research & Innovation Practices policy	Overarching expectations for all research and innovation activities, including expectations for research data management and clinical trials transparency.	Research, Partnerships & Innovation
Research Ethics Policy	Principles for research involving human participants, personal data and human tissue and approval procedure, with ethical review of projects devolved to schools.	Senate University Research Ethics Committee

<u>Research Ethics online application system</u> [Internal]	Managing ethical review procedures, including checking mandatory training requirements in information and data protection.	Research, Partnerships & Innovation
<u>Preventing Harm in Research & Innovation (Safeguarding)</u>	Prevention of harm to all individuals involved with or affected by our research and innovation activities	Research, Partnerships & Innovation
<u>Security-sensitive research policy</u>	As part of our Prevent duty, ensures the welfare of researchers in sensitive or extremism-related areas and to protect legitimate research from misinterpretation.	Research, Partnerships & Innovation
<u>Research Governance Procedure</u> [internal]	Ensures research in health and social care is sponsored in line with the <u>UK policy framework for health & social care research</u> , including arrangements for <u>human interventional studies</u> .	<u>Research Governance Sub-Committee</u>
<u>Ethical Policy on the Use of Animals in Research</u>	Commits researchers to meeting or exceeding legal standards for animal husbandry, care and use of animals, where no alternative is available.	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
<u>myPublications</u> [internal]	Online repository for managing research outputs, impact activities and professional activities, including synchronisation with <u>ORCiD</u> .	Research, Partnerships & Innovation
<u>White Rose Research Online</u> and <u>ETheses Online</u>	Institutional open access repositories for publications and theses.	Library
<u>DMPOnline</u>	Facilitates the creation and editing of data management plans	Library

<u>Online Research Data at Sheffield (ORDA)</u>	Online repository for managing and sharing research data.	<u>Open Research Advisory Group</u> [Internal]
<u>Research Storage Service</u> [internal] and <u>Secure Data Service</u> [internal]	Provides secure and accessible storage of research data, including sensitive or high-compliance data (including ISO.IEC 27001:2022 and NHS Data Protection Security Toolkit certification).	IT Services

Communications and engagement

- Our [induction web pages](#) [internal] for new staff include practical information and support relevant to researchers, including a [Research Staff Induction Pack](#) [internal], which signposts key policies relating to responsible research and research integrity.
- Our central [research ethics & integrity webpages](#) [internal], provide details of who is responsible for research integrity within the University and who can be contacted with queries or concerns. In addition, a tool is available to help staff, students or external individuals identify the routes available to them for raising a concern.
- The [Senate University Research Ethics Committee](#) (UREC), a Committee of the Senate, communicates updates and developments relating to research ethics to a network of Principal Ethics Contacts based in schools, and Faculty representatives on the UREC are encouraged and supported to facilitate discussions and network building within their Faculties. The Committee also runs an annual funding programme for staff or PGR students to run small projects promoting research ethics. Three staff-led projects have been funded during 2024/25.
- Our Internal Communications team run regular campaigns to highlight new and existing requirements for research, including staff and student newsletters, internal web pages and events.
- The University has signed the [Concordat on Openness in Animal Research](#) and as part of that we host public facing [webpages](#) to include case studies and report the number of animals we use each year to support our research activity.

Culture, development and leadership

- Since 2020, we have had a University-level '[Research Practice Lead](#)' leadership role, focussed on continual research improvement and robustness of research findings, by supporting academic-led initiatives, including [research on research](#) ("meta-science") which can inform research quality.
- A [Steering Board for Research Culture](#) was created in 2021/22 comprising representatives from across the research community. Reporting to Senate

Research & Innovation Committee, the board oversees activities to maintain and develop a positive research culture (see [Research Culture Action Plan](#) and [Position Statement](#) [internal], including the strategic allocation of Research England's Enhancing Research Culture fund. This has funded a range of strategic activities and over 60 projects emerging from researchers and research-associated staff.

- A Research Integrity Steering Group was launched in 2023/24, reporting to Senate Research & Innovation Committee. This group of researchers and research supporters is tasked with providing oversight and discussing and recommending ways in which research integrity can be supported.
- A priority area for research culture at UoS is 'enabling rigorous, open and responsible research'. A new [Office for Open Research and Scholarship](#) was established in 2024, a cross-University partnership working to accelerate the realisation of an embedded open research culture, with a number of new initiatives launched under its aegis, all aimed at promoting more openness (see also Section 2b).
- Mandatory training for all postgraduate research students on research ethics and integrity, delivered at Faculty level, aims to encourage PGRs to critically reflect upon their own actions and behaviours and their interactions with others involved in their research, and to heighten their ethical sensitivity and reasoning.
- We have purchased an online research integrity course aimed at postgraduate research students and post-doctoral researchers, which includes assessment functionality. The University has also purchased an on-line research integrity self-assessment exercise aimed at more established academics. The course and self-assessment exercise are promoted to staff and PGR students across the University in a variety of ways, including via new staff induction packs, and the University's central ethics and integrity webpages.
- The UREC provides regular training sessions for those who undertake the review of ethics applications. Other information sessions and online resources, including videos and recorded presentations, are available for particular training needs.
- We have mandatory training for all researchers to ensure that the requirements of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 are met, supported by a network of 'Information Champions'.
- Other centrally-run workshops for researchers are held on a needs basis, addressing relevant topical research integrity issues including Information Security, Research Data Management, Licensing and Copyright and Trusted Research.
- PGR students are supported through a wide variety of sessions provided through the Doctoral Development Programme, and events organised via the Doctoral Focal Awards and Landscape Awards, with supporting digital materials.
- The University Library provides a range of advisory, training, and guidance services for staff and students, utilising the skills and experience of specialist

staff covering specialist systems, scholarly communications, publishing, licensing and copyright.

- On open research, best practice is shared with and between the research community via the regular seminars, monthly Open Research Conversation events and an Open Research Prize.
- The Research Practice Lead and the University Library's Scholarly Communications team organise an annual OpenFest event with colleagues from across the University presenting and discussing best practice in open research. Since 2023 this has been run in collaboration with colleagues at Sheffield Hallam University, to bring a wider range of perspectives into discussions.
- The University subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office, providing staff and students with access to a range of events and resources to support research ethics and integrity.

Monitoring and reporting

- Data relating to the ethics applications reviewed by each school is gathered annually for consideration by the UREC. In addition, each school is required to submit a short update report on an annual basis, to provide details on how they have implemented the ethics review procedure in the past year, to share good practices, and to highlight concerns or support needs.
- The UREC visits each academic school every five years; this visit includes an audit of ethics documentation relating to reviews conducted in the school and a discussion regarding the ways in which the school raises awareness of the Research Ethics Policy.
- UREC annually audits the ethics arrangements for one or more ESRC-funded projects which have received University ethics approval, in line with the requirements of the ESRC. The process involves a detailed check of the ethics documentation and a meeting between the researcher(s) and a sub-group of UREC, to ensure that the research is proceeding in line with the terms of the ethics approval and the University's Ethics Policy. Audit reports are then provided to UREC for consideration.
- UREC annually considers a summary report on ethics breach investigations completed in the previous year, in order that any trends or other issues can be identified and appropriate action taken.
- UREC reports to the Senate on each of its meetings and Senate in turn shares its meeting minutes with the Council.
- A monitoring and reporting process is in place to ensure oversight of University-sponsored health and social care studies, and to ensure the University's policy relating to clinical trials transparency is followed for University-sponsored studies.
- An annual report is submitted to the University's Research Governance Sub-Committee to provide an overview of studies which have undergone the Research Governance Procedure in the previous year, and to report on University-sponsored studies.
- The Research Governance Sub-Committee reports to the Senate Research & Innovation Committee on each of its meetings.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

- In September 2025 the University's [Good Research & Innovation Practices policy](#) was updated following a complete rewrite and consultation process, covering new areas of research practice and making the policy's contents more concise, more accessible and more useful to researchers.
- A Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Task & Finish Group was set up in 2024/25, to examine the opportunities, challenges and risks of how generative AI may be used in research and to provide supportive guidance for researchers to responsibly make use of these technologies. [GenAI principles for research and innovation](#) have now been developed and publicised, including a decision tool, and two worked through case examples.
- The Research Integrity Steering Group has made recommendations on:
 - Training on research integrity for staff, with facilitated discussions on disciplinary-relevant topics;
 - Raising concerns around research integrity, providing a less adversarial route for raising concerns than the current research misconduct procedure;
 - How to measure and evidence research integrity, with preliminary suggestions of indicators and topics chosen pending decisions on the REF.

These recommendations will be taken forward in 2025-26.

- In September 2024, the University launched the new Office for Open Research and Scholarship. Led by the Library, the Office for Open Research and Scholarship is a cross-University partnership between the academic Research Practice Lead, the academic-led Open Research Working Group, and colleagues in Research Partnerships and Innovation, and Research IT. Building on the University's commitment to open research in the [University statement on Open Research](#), the creation of the Office for Open Research and Scholarship affirms the high priority Sheffield places on open research and scholarship and the University's intention to transform practices. It works in liaison with the University's five Faculties to strategically enhance and develop the University's support, guidance, policy, and platforms for open research and scholarship. By accelerating the realisation of an open research culture, the Office will enhance the quality, integrity, and public benefit of Sheffield's research. The flagship initiatives launched in 2024, many of which were supported by Enhancing Research Culture funding, include:
 - The [Data Stewards Network](#) was launched to bring together and increase the visibility and recognition of data stewards across the University; the launch of the Network has initiated work to develop research data stewardship as a defined and recognised Research Technical Professional role at the University. Data stewards benefit from

networking opportunities, training, and support, and the Network Hub webpages collate useful materials for data stewards, including member profiles, resources, training opportunities, relevant policy information, and information about data steward roles.

- The [Editors and Publishers Network](#) has been launched to provide networking and support for those with editorial or publishing roles, as well as those interested in finding out more about these activities. The aim of the Network is to better support University of Sheffield editors and to further develop our support and services for publication practices, and so operates at the intersection of open research and research integrity.
- Work has begun to increase the use of the Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT) in Sheffield research publications and outputs to recognise all research- and research-enabling staff for their contributions to research. This work has so far included the creation of new University web-based [guidance on using CRediT](#), and a co-production workshop with Technicians to test the suitability of CRediT to attribute Technical contributions to research and to generate 'real-life' examples to supplement the new web-based guidance.
- The [Doctoral Publishing Prize 2024](#) enabled 3 recent PhD graduates from the University of Sheffield to explore opportunities to develop their thesis into an open access book published by White Rose University Press. The Prize awards a £250 cash prize, plus manuscript development and editorial support throughout the peer review process from WRUP if the prize-winning manuscripts are accepted for publication.
- The [Open Research Prize 2025](#) celebrated and showcased University of Sheffield researchers committed to making their research discoverable and reusable. This year, we particularly encouraged applications of non-traditional research outputs and open research initiatives in disciplines that are typically underrepresented in open research/ open science conversations. The Open Research Prize panel of judges were particularly pleased that this year's winning entry for the team prize was from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and also included a member of professional services, highlighting the key contributions of research-enabling staff to open research efforts.
- The Office for Open Research also supports the [Open Research Champions](#): volunteers from across disciplines who advocate locally for open research practices, and promote a culture of transparency, collaboration, and accessibility in research. In 2025, the Open Research Champions were able to apply to a small-grants scheme to lead initiatives on two themes: understanding 'reproducibility' in different disciplines; and non-text or 'non-traditional' research outputs. Activities included a cross-School roundtable event on supporting equitable publishing models in the arts and humanities, and Library-led focus groups to foster dialogue around the value and implementation of open research practices and support services.

- The Library developed new training in the areas of open research and research integrity, collaborating with the academic Research Software Engineering team to create a modular FAIR²4RS (FAIR and Reproducible Research Software) training programme, and collaborating with the academic-led Participatory Research Network to develop new training and a ‘plain English’ explanatory guide to copyright and licensing/rights for research participants. The Library also developed new guidance on research data and GenAI, copyright and GenAI, and ‘[Generative Artificial Intelligence and your rights as an author](#)’ guidance for authors.
- The University Library, Research, Partnerships and Innovation and IT Services continue to collaborate on and contribute to the cross-team Open Research Training Portal, which brings together all the research data management and Open Research training opportunities from different parts of the University in one place.
- Following the introduction of an enhanced programme of workshops during the 2023/24 academic year for those who undertake ethical review, the format of both the online and in-person workshops has been reviewed and updated in response to feedback, ready for the 2025/26 programme. A more interactive format has been developed for the online workshops. The in-person workshops have been reduced in length, with a greater focus on discussion aspects, and presentations being provided in recorded format prior to the session.
- Launch of both the Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Intimate Personal Relationships Policy, and revision of the Personal Relationships Policy (see section 2c).

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

- The Research Integrity Steering Group has proposed the following priorities for 2025-26:
 - Creating the conditions for honest errors to be openly admitted without undue detriment;
 - Good authorship and contributorship practices;
 - Watching briefs for:
 - The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and its effects on research integrity
 - Rewarding good research integrity practice
 - Evidence and indicators of research integrity.

- We will continue to implement the recommendations made by the Research Integrity Steering Group over the past year, including:
 - Introducing a new procedure, initially facilitated by Research, Partnerships & Innovation, to support researchers in raising concerns around research integrity, which can be used in situations where research misconduct is not suspected or where researchers would like independent support in resolving issues before they become misconduct.
 - HR and Research, Partnerships & Innovation will be reviewing the research misconduct procedure to ensure that the procedure has as few barriers as possible for raising genuine research misconduct issues, as well as making sure that cases relating to complex interpersonal issues are handled under the most appropriate University procedure.
 - Reviewing our current online provision of research integrity training, to consider alternative providers and ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students and staff.
 - Organising facilitated discussion sessions for staff researchers, on key topics of disciplinary relevance.
- Following the launch of the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy](#) in September 2024, a voluntary survey was launched to understand the prevalence of staff experiences of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, why they chose to report or not report incidents, and any barriers to reporting. The findings highlighted key areas for action e.g. further awareness raising of Report + Support, targeted work towards responding to anonymous reports and the need to embed tackling bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct with wider culture change and related work (i.e. development of the Harassment and sexual misconduct information hub).
- Following audit recommendations, the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy was updated in 2024 and launched early in the 2024/25 academic session. Steps to increase awareness of this policy and other routes to raising concerns (including the Report + Support platform) are being taken, including the addition of new questions in the bi-annual staff survey which is open to all staff, and regular features in all-staff communications.
- Work has been continuing during the 2024/25 academic year to review the University's partnership with Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and to agree a way forward for a joint research office to support clinical and translational research. Discussions have encompassed research governance and sponsorship and have highlighted some limitations to the University's current arrangements. An internal audit of the University's research governance arrangements for health and social care has identified similar issues. As a result, a Working Group has been constituted to put forward options and recommendations for a viable joint research office combining research support across Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and the University.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

- The University's Good Research & Innovation Practices policy sets out the principles governing all research and innovation activities at the University as well as expectations concerning good practices in specific research and/or innovation activities (e.g. authorship; collaboration). The policy also includes information about what constitutes unacceptable research and innovation practices.
- The University has an 'Investigating and Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure' which applies to allegations of research misconduct against staff members.
- For current students, concerns about research misconduct are handled under the University's Academic Misconduct policy. An additional procedure exists for investigating allegations of the use of unfair means or research misconduct relating to the award of a postgraduate research degree after an award has been made.
- A Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and the Investigating and Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct Policy advise those who report suspicions of potential research misconduct in line with the relevant policy, that they will not be penalised or suffer detriment by the University and that all associated complaints of victimisation of an individual will be treated seriously and may provide grounds for disciplinary or other appropriate action.
- The University's Staff Code of Conduct emphasises the importance of a shared responsibility towards building a supportive and inclusive community, in which all staff are treated with respect, and includes an expectation that staff report activities which are in breach of University regulations and challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- The Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy was launched in September 2024, and sits both alongside the Staff Code of Conduct, and within the University's Harassment and sexual misconduct information hub which acts as the University's single source of information in accordance with the Office for Students (OfS) Condition of Registration E6: Harassment and sexual misconduct (introduced on 1st August 2025).
- The University's central ethics and integrity web pages provide details of a first point of contact for receiving enquiries on matters concerning good research,

along with an online tool to help staff or students identify the routes available to them for raising a concern.

- An annual review of the University's arrangements for meeting the requirements of the Concordat is undertaken by the University's Senate Research and Innovation Committee, supported by Research, Partnerships & Innovation, as part of the preparation of this annual Statement for the University's Council.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Formal investigations completed during the period under review (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Ongoing investigations are not included.

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	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)	2			
<i>Other*</i>				
Total:	4	0	0	0

Note on the above table: The cases listed above were in scope of the University's 'Investigating and Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure' which applies to allegations of research misconduct against staff members. In addition to these cases, three further investigations have taken place in relation to current PhD students. One related to fabrication and falsification of data. The second related to plagiarism. The third related to fabrication, plagiarism and misrepresentation. The allegations in all three cases were upheld. Cases relating to taught students are not included in this report.