Annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: riconcordat@ukcori.org.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Salford
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	3/12/2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	www.salford.ac.uk/research/research-culture/research-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Simon Green, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise
	Email address: S.O.Green@salford.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: Rachael Gibson, Research Governance Manager
	Email address: research-governance@salford.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 a high standard of research integrity and promotes positive research culture.

The University of Salford is committed to excellent research with integrity. We promote individual researcher accountability for good research practice, underpinned by policies and processes that foster a culture of transparency, respect, honesty and rigour. The Research & Knowledge Exchange Directorate is dedicated to facilitating high standards of research integrity and a positive research culture.

Research culture at the University of Salford is understood as the ecosystem in which research and innovation happens. It includes the ways in which we collaborate, communicate and interact, as well as the behaviours, expectations, attitudes and values that shape how our research is developed, conducted, disseminated and used.

Throughout 2024-25, the University of Salford has consulted with its research community to establish a Research Culture Action Plan. This aligns with the newly launched University Strategy and the Research & Knowledge Exchange Delivery Plan, as well as the culture review of 2022 and the Research Bureaucracy review of 2023-24 (a review of the actions from which was prepared for Senate at the end of 2024-25). Objectives have been determined as part of the Action Plan to build on the foundations of our existing culture and to put measurable steps in place to realise the benefits and spaces for continued improvement. Ownership for these objectives sits across professional services and academics, emphasising the collective responsibility.

Our approach for successful researcher development is through building connections and communities. Through community building, we encourage peer-to-peer learning and promote a positive research culture that empowers researchers to achieve their full potential. Regular, targeted opportunities are provided to our researchers, and all are offered group and 1:1 meetings with the Researcher Development Team to support their professional development. Additionally, in the Research Culture Action Plan, we have committed to ensuring

that researcher support needs are tailored.

The University was one of the first UK universities to participate in the Vitae HR in Excellence Research Award. The first award was received in 2010 and is undertaking its 15-year review in 2025. Our key achievements to date include substantial advancements in fostering research staff development, as detailed in our action plan. Many of our accomplishments centre on collaborating externally with other universities in our region so that we collectively address support needs for Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

Our staff and student research integrity training programme starts with Level 7 postgraduate researchers and extends to all academic staff. Our standard research governance training offer covers introductions to:

- Research ethics, using a case-study approach; this approach has been found to better embed understanding, suit multidisciplinary audiences and be adaptable for wider research integrity training matters such as research security and GDPR. This training is designed for postgraduate researchers, early career researchers and those returning to research

- Ethical and responsible use of AI in Research. Going forward, this will be supplemented in 2025 for student learners by the Library Research Team's e-learning course

- Research compliance, including research security, research data, discipline-specific requirements

After trialling the UKRIO Introduction to Research Integrity e-learning programme to positive reception, in 2025-26, the programme will be extended further to include a selection of delegates from across the research community, professional services and members of our Academic Ethics & Research Integrity Subcommittee.

The University has a suite of research governance policies and procedures: the Research Code of Practice, the Academic Ethics Policy, the Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure and the National Security in Research Policy. These are supported by the following institutional policies: Academic Misconduct, Student Conduct, Safeguarding, Health & Society, Whistleblowing and the University Ethics Framework. The research governance policies remain available on both the internal and external University websites, and they are embedded in the induction programmes for all staff, postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and PGR supervisors. These policies outline the University's commitment to ensure its researchers are acting under best practice of ethical, legal and professional obligations and

standards. The policies, complemented by guidance on internal webpages and within training, outline where and how our researchers, and the staff supporting them, can seek advice at every stage of the research journey. Monitoring and reporting are jointly undertaken by the Research Governance Team and the Research Governance Working Group, a working group of the Academic Ethics & Research Integrity Committee. From 2025-26 this will extend to the wider teams of Research Culture, Development & Environment and Research Operations.

Monitoring takes the form of:

- Annual review to ensure policies and processes remain fit for purpose

- Review of lessons learned from adverse event reports

- Review of conduct allegations and investigations

- Ongoing discussion and reporting into the committees and sub-committees of Senate

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.

The Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure saw a major redevelopment through the Research Governance Working Group, a working group of the Senate committee Research, Enterprise & Innovation (REIC). The changes have been designed to allow for the assessment of allegations of research misconduct against PGRs through an accepted University definition of 'research misconduct' and to align to changes in the equivalent procedure published by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). The changes are intended to result in a clearer and fairer policy and procedure for handling allegations of misconduct in research for our colleagues and PGRs.

The decision was made for the Academic Ethics & Research Integrity Committee to become a sub-committee (AERIC to AERIsC) of the Research, Enterprise & Innovation Committee, a committee of Senate. This decision was made in an effort to reduce bureaucracy and create efficiencies in our institutional research governance structures. The changes allow the AERIsC to take ownership of delivering determined actions, with sign off and oversight from senior leaders in

the parent committee of REIC, ensuring it is held to account to deliver against the University and research strategies. Significantly, the changes also allowed for the Chair of REIC to nominate a Chair of AERIsC through the submission of expressions of interest, as opposed to being assigned by role. This created a development opportunity for academic staff and it was encouraging to see that the recruitment process attracted a strong pool of candidates.

At the start of the academic year, the University published its new Research Data Management Policy. Applying to the whole research community, the Policy sets out the University's expectations for good, safe and proportionate data deposit and management. It mandates the completion of a Data Management Plan (DMP) for all research projects (and promotes use of the Digital Curation Centre template). To make it easier for researchers to engage and reduce non-compliance, the DMP must be submitted with an ethics application. All submitted draft plans are reviewed on a monthly basis by the Open Research team in the Library. This method allows the Open Research team to identify development needs and good practice, as well as to monitor costs and barriers to open research, and better manage long-term data curation.

In the last annual statement, the Research & Knowledge Exchange Directorate had launched the Fellowship & Grants Training Academy. Three cohorts have now been successfully delivered and over 50% of the cohort have submitted at least one application for funding, with two accepted for major funding schemes. As part of the cohorts, Good Governance and Research Integrity form a training session, working with early career academics to develop their confidence and understanding of research ethics, good data management, the ethical and responsible use of AI and research governance compliance.

UKRN ReproducibiliTea Journal Clubs are informal groups to discuss journal articles which explore issues relating to transparency, reproducibility and openness in research. Following the launch of the Salford UKRN local network in June 2024, the Open Research team, in agreement with the UKRN local network lead, decided to set up a Salford ReproducibiliTea Journal Club. Sessions were attended by a variety of researchers and PGRs, many of whom were not in attendance at the local network launch. Discussions were varied and interesting with a diverse range of opinions. The Library Research Team made new connections with researchers interested in open research and reproducibility issues.

The Library Research team launched a Research Glossary, which includes commonly queried and used terms by the research community. It operates as an educational and inclusion tool for those who are new or returning to research.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

2023-24 Objective	2024-25 Action Taken
Review and Implement Updated Misconduct Policies	The Research Governance Review Group undertook a review and refresh of the Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure. This was undertaken over a full academic year and aligned to the UKRIO policy as well as to the updated internal Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure. The most significant change saw the process of postgraduate researcher allegations of research misconduct being routed through the specialist assessment procedure before being progressed for academic misconduct review. This has resulted in an increase in allegation numbers but also recognises the unique status of postgraduate researchers and their contributions to the research community outside of the scope of work submitted for assessment.
Integrity Champions	This is an action we placed on hold during the last reporting year and are considering reinitiation under the newly-formed AERIsC. The intention is to create development opportunities for ECRs and PGRs alike.
Continue to build on the launch of the UKRN Local Network	UKRN ReproducibiliTea Journal Club was launched and three sessions were run. We should continue to build on this engagement and success over the 2025-26 academic year.

Implement changes to the ethics review process in line with challenges identified in the Research Bureaucracy Review	Alongside the formal closure of the Infonetica Ethics RM project, the Infonetica Steering Group was set up. This Group includes representation from all ethics panels and administration across the University. Proposals for changes and developments to the application form and review process are brought the Group, presented/demonstrated, justified and then anonymously voted on. Agreed changes are then implemented quarterly. This ensures fairness and proportionality in approach to making changes and developments to a system that is used by everyone researching at the University.

Actions for 2025-26

- Align the University and its actions with the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity. This will be achieved, in part, through self-assessment against the UKRIO tool.

- To review the increase in cases of allegations of misconduct in research by postgraduate researchers and identify barriers to compliance and required support.

- Continue to build on the launch of the UKRN local network.

- To monitor improvements in understanding of research integrity after embedding the UKRIO Introduction to Research Integrity training.

- Implement a programme of "lunchtime sessions" for research ethics. This should include 30-minute sessions on a single topic (such as developing a consent form, complying with external ethics review requirements and undertaking a review of an ethics application).

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

Overall responsibility for research integrity and governance sits with the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research & Enterprise. The Research Governance Manager may be addressed as the first point of contact on research integrity matters, and this is communicated on internal and external University websites and in internal guidance. The Research Governance Manager is also the Named Person for reports of allegations of misconduct in research, with contact details available on the University's public and internal websites.

The Research Misconduct Policy details the University's expected standards for good research conduct and informs members of the University about the types of activity or behaviour that constitute research misconduct. The Research Misconduct Procedure outlines the agreed process for making and managing allegations of research misconduct, and details how such matters will be addressed by the University when research conduct falls short of the expected standard.

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

| 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	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	1	1	0	1
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	3	2	1	1
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or	1	0	0	0

publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Other*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total:	**8**	**3**	**1**	**2**
*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.				
Poor authorship practice.				