



Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2022-23 University Research Integrity Committee

Background

The revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in October 2019 and is a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and governance. The Concordat's fifth commitment requires a Research Integrity Annual Statement that:

1. Provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
2. Provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
3. Provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

Section 1: Key contact information

1A. Name of organisation	Edinburgh Napier University
1B. Type of organisation	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	28/08/23
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	<u>Research Integrity (napier.ac.uk)</u> https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/research-innovation-office/research-integrity/Pages/research-integrity.aspx
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Dr Rory MacLean
	Email address: r.maclean@napier.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: Jenna Heatlie
	Email address: J.Heatlie@napier.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

ENU operates a Code of Practice on Research Integrity, which defines the research principles and practices to which all students and staff at the University must adhere; this was last updated in April 2022.

ENU is committed to providing an environment that recognises and supports research excellence. Research should be conducted to the highest levels of integrity, including appropriate research design and frameworks, to ensure that findings are robust and defensible. Researchers should also adhere to the highest level of research ethics, in line with requirements set out by national and international regulatory bodies.

All staff and students should be familiar with the Universities Policies and procedures that govern the research process.

The University Research Integrity Committee oversees development of university-wide practices and policies on research integrity matters, and includes representation from all academic schools, as well as from other University departments, including the Department for Learning & Teaching Enhancement; Health & Safety; Information Services; and Research, Innovation & Enterprise; and lay representation. The University Research Integrity Committee met three times in the academic year 2022/23: 4 October 2022, 17 January 2023 and 25 April 2023, and reports to the University Research & Innovation Committee.

Each School has its own Research Integrity Committee and Convenor to deal with research integrity matters at local level, primarily the approval of ethics applications; the Department for Learning & Teaching Enhancement also has a committee to review pedagogy research ethics applications. The work of each school committee is reported to the University Research Integrity Committee, including information on the number of applications submitted in total, as well as numbers approved, rejected, or referred, and any issues/areas for further discussion at university level. If a school committee has an application which is deemed to be very high risk, or for which a decision cannot be made (e.g., due to lack of expertise), this can be escalated to the University Research Integrity Committee for consideration.

Staff and postgraduate research students submit ethics applications via the online Worktribe system, which are then reviewed by members of the appropriate research integrity committee. Undergraduate and taught postgraduate student ethics applications are usually dealt with at a local, programme level, with outcomes being reported to the relevant school research integrity committee.



The University offers training in research integrity via an in-house online training module, as well as ad hoc training sessions offered throughout the year. Postgraduate research students have a dedicated programme of Researcher Development training events, which includes sessions on research integrity matters.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Some of the main developments related to research integrity over academic year 2022-23 include:

Social Media Policy

A guidance document on research integrity in research involving social media was prepared and is available on the [University Research Integrity website](#).

Updated Participant Information & Consent form templates

New templates for participant information sheets and consent forms were developed. Key changes include guidance over modifying language to suit the intended audience, and enhanced clarity around data protection issues.

Training

In addition to the regular training on offer, a dedicated workshop by UK RIO was offered in June 2023 to staff involved in the review of ethics applications.

Academic Mentoring Programme

In June 2023, the Academic Mentoring Programme launched. This is available to academic and research colleagues to support them in their career development. This is supported through a self-service approach via a platform called Mentornet giving autonomy over mentor selection.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This year saw a number of new convenors take over leadership of school-level research integrity committees. The convenors will continue to be supported in their development in their roles and to ensure consistency in approach across the University.

Workload continues to be a major issue in the timely review of ethics applications. There is also an inconsistent approach across the University to workload allocation for convenors of school-level research integrity committees; this has been raised at the University Research & Innovation Committee. The School of Applied Sciences has implemented a new approach to promote timely ethics review, which has been very successful; the convenor will be asked to share their experiences with other convenors.



Other areas for future development in the coming academic year include enhancing the approach to audit/review of ethics applications, as well as considering the implications of AI in relation to research misconduct. A further focus for the next academic year will be to review online survey tools available to researchers across ENU.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

The University Code of Practice on Research Integrity (last approved 2022) outlines the policies and processes related to research misconduct, including a clear statement that researchers should report any suspected research misconduct to the appropriate authorities.

The University has a Research Misconduct Policy and Investigation Procedure (last approved 2021), which provides further detail on how claims of research misconduct are handled. Any allegations of research misconduct go through a preliminary pre-screening process to determine if the claim has substance and/or cannot be discounted entirely. If this is the case, a screening panel is convened, who will conduct a thorough investigation. Depending on the outcome of the screening panel's investigation, the case may subsequently be referred to the appropriate University committee (e.g., University Academic Conduct Committee) or HR.

Other University policies relevant to research misconduct include the University Research Safeguarding Framework, the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle-blowing) Policy, and the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure (Preventing bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation).

The University also offers training on research misconduct issues via its Moodle Research Integrity training course, available to all staff.

There was a single case of research misconduct reported in academic year 2022-23, which was upheld. Key lessons learned from this case include continuity in supervision for postgraduate research students, and further clarity around self-plagiarism and plagiarism for postgraduate research students, particularly at induction and at review points.



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				
Falsification				
Plagiarism	1	1	0	1
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)				
<i>Other*</i>				
Total:	0	0	0	1