



Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2025-26 University Research Integrity Committee

Background

The refreshed Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in April 2025 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 with 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)	29/10/2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	<u>Research Integrity</u>
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Dr Coral Hanson
	Email address: <u>c.hanson@napier.ac.uk</u>
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: Grainne Barkess (Head of Research Environment and Services)
	Email address: <u>G.Barkess@napier.ac.uk</u>



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 conducting research at the University must adhere; this was last updated in June 2026.

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 external representation. The University Research Integrity Committee met three times in the academic year 2025/26: 07 October 2025, 13 January 2026 and 24 April 2026, 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. There is also an Animal Welfare Ethics Review Body, which provides ethical oversight and advice on research involving animals. The AWERB reviews proposed research to ensure that animal use is scientifically justified, appropriate welfare safeguards are in place, and relevant ethical and regulatory requirements are met, including those under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), where applicable. 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. In the School of Health and Social Care, postgraduate ethics applications are dealt with by the school research integrity committee.

The University offers training in research integrity via the UKRIO online training module, as well as ad-hoc training sessions offered throughout the year. School research ethics leads also deliver training and consultations for both staff and students as required. 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 2025-26 include:

Use of Worktribe for Ethics Review, Data Management Plans and Audits

The use of Worktribe for the submission and review of ethics applications and data management plans is now well established for all staff and post graduate research students. During the past year, the University has implemented an end of study report that is automatically sent to a researcher at the end date of their ethics opinion. This was piloted early in the 2025/26 academic year and has now been rolled out across the University. The report requires researchers to state whether they recruited participants (if applicable) to target and if not, why not; and if there were any problems with the research and/or the ethics application process. This will improve auditing of research activities. We have also developed and piloted an audit report for all externally funded studies to ensure that data management plans and ethics opinions are in place where required. This will be used prospectively during 2026-27 to remind researchers about timescales for ethics and ensure robust data management practices.

Strengthening of Research Integrity Conversations for Postgraduate Research Students

To ensure that research integrity is discussed during the determination of degree review, a specific statement that students are aware of and have considered research integrity in relation to their work must be completed during the review.

Training

As a member of UKRIO, we offer research students and staff access to UKRIO's online training in ethics and research integrity. In addition, information about UKRIO webinars is integrated into the researcher development programme available to staff and students. This allows access to topics such as AI in research integrity, social media and research, science communications, and trusted research.

Six members of staff from School Research Integrity Committees attended UKRIO Research Misconduct Seminar and the University plans to implement training using the UKRIO Investigating breaches of research integrity facilitation toolkit for other members of committees and appropriate other staff during the 2026-27 academic year.

The University offered five online training research integrity training sessions for post graduate research supervisors, delivered by an external provider (James Parry). These were attended by 48 active supervisors. This training will be repeated internally during the 2026-27 academic year.

The University Research Integrity Committee Convenor attended the Restore Research Misconduct Event in Edinburgh in May 2026 and during the coming year the University will consider mechanisms to better support those involved in research misconduct cases.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments



Work on research integrity training for staff and postgraduate research students is progressing. Training for research integrity has been delivered by external University partners and during the 2026-27 academic year, the University intends to roll out further research integrity training internally using external materials.

The University is planning to reduce the number of schools from five to three, and this will require a review of School Research Integrity Committee structures. This review will develop as the structure for the new schools becomes more established and will be an opportunity to consider workload allocation for convenors of school-level research integrity committees that is appropriate to the number of ethics applications that will be received under the new structure.

Areas for future development in the coming academic year include developing a more consistent approach across schools for ethics reviews via training, improved review formats, and audit of reviews. We will also focus on developing a better understanding of the time taken for reviews, and reasons for any difference between schools or types of application.

We will also further develop our auditing processes and support systems to ensure that all funded and postgraduate research projects have robust data management plans and timely ethical opinions.

AI in research continues to be an emerging topic and in collaboration with the Doctoral College further support will be provided to students and staff.



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 June 2026) 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. This procedure has been updated in light of the UKRIO Detailed template procedure for investigating breaches of research integrity during the 2025-26 academic year and is currently progressing through University review. The updated procedure is far more detailed and includes the addition of a section on questionable research practices. There are three stages to the procedure. Stage 1 is an initial review of any concern raised to determine if there is a potential case to answer or whether it should be dealt with under another procedure. Stage 2 is an initial investigation to determine if there is a need to progress to a full investigation, whether the concern can be dealt with using informal measures or whether there is no case to answer. Stage 3 is a full investigation to review all evidence and determine whether the concerns are upheld in full, upheld in part or not upheld as research misconduct. There is an appeals process. Diagrams and flow charts will be provided to help with understanding.

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 UKRIO research integrity training, available to all staff and research degree students.

There were six concerns about research misconduct reported in the academic year 2025-2026. This is a large increase from one in the previous year and may be reflective of increased awareness of research integrity issues within the University. One concern was upheld in full and one in part after a formal investigation.



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	2	1	1	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	3	0		
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
<i>Other*</i>				
Total:	6	2	1	1