

# Annual statement on research integrity 2023-24

If you have any questions about this template, please contact:  
[Rlsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:Rlsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk).

## Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Newcastle University
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)	Approved by Senate 07/01/2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	<a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity/">www.ncl.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity/</a>
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Matthew Grenby Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation
	Email address: <a href="mailto:matthew.grenby@ncl.ac.uk">matthew.grenby@ncl.ac.uk</a>
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: Louise Jones <i>Research Integrity and Governance Manager</i>
	Email address: <a href="mailto:research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk">research.integrity@ncl.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

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- Policies and systems
- Communications and engagement
- Culture, development and leadership
- Monitoring and reporting

### **Policies and systems**

The following institutional policies and procedures are designed to promote a culture of research integrity at Newcastle University and enable researchers to understand and act according to expected standards and behaviours:

- [Animal Research Policy](#)
- [Attribution of Authorship Guidelines](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Code of Good Practice in Research](#)
- [Declarations of External Interests Policy](#)
- [Ethical Review Process](#)
- [Framework for Preventing Harm in Research and Innovation Activities](#)
- [Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech](#)
- [Grievance Policy](#)
- [Informed Consent Guidelines](#)
- [Open Access Policy Statement](#)
- [Open Research Institutional Position Statement](#)
- [Participation of Volunteers in Research Projects](#)
- [Personal Relationships at Work Policy](#)
- [Policy on Ownership, Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property](#)
- [Research Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Research Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy and Code of Good Practice](#)
- [Research Publications and Copyright Policy](#)
- [Research Ethics Policy](#)
- [Student Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)

### **Communications and engagement**

Information about institutional policies and procedures is provided to new students and colleagues as part of their formal induction programme, this includes the University's Code of Good Practice in Research. Details of research and research-related policies are available to view online on the University's [research governance](#) and [Student Policies, Procedures and Regulations webpages](#). Colleagues may also access information about people-oriented policies and procedures via the University's internal webpages.

The research community is encouraged to contribute towards the review of existing policies and the development of new policies and guidance. A recent example of this is the request for volunteers from across professional services and academic colleagues, to evaluate our existing research integrity e-learning provision alongside a pilot version of an alternative online offering. Feedback will be used to inform decision making regarding the future provision of research integrity training. Information about new policies is also communicated to the research community via various platforms including staff meetings, newsletters and email communications at University, Faculty and Academic Unit levels.

## Culture, development and leadership

### *Research leadership*

The named person with formal responsibility for research integrity at Newcastle University is the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Academic leadership in this area is also provided by the Dean of Research Culture and Strategy and the newly appointed Associate Dean of Good Research Practice. The three Faculty Deans of Research and Innovation and Academic Unit Directors of Research are also responsible for research integrity within their local areas. From a governance perspective, accountability for research integrity sits with University Research and Innovation Committee, which is Chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation.

The University operates a shared model of responsibility for Research Integrity through support from Professional Service colleagues. This includes the Research Integrity and Governance Manager and Research Integrity Project Officer in the central Research and Innovation service, alongside the three Heads of Faculty Research, technical staff working in research facilities and colleagues in the University Library and Organisational Development teams. The Research Integrity and Governance Manager also acts as the first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation. This information is publicly available on the University's [Research Integrity webpage](#).

### *Research culture*

Newcastle's first institutional [Research Culture Action Plan](#) was launched in October 2022, comprising 5 main 'pillars' of activity or experiences that are central to a positive and inclusive research environment:

- 1) Have the time, space and opportunities to be creative and enjoy discovering new things.
- 2) Be supported in your career aspirations and decision-making, as well as your continuing personal and professional development.
- 3) Feel part of an inclusive, supportive and safe research environment, where you and your ideas can flourish.
- 4) Be encouraged to embrace best practices and new ways of working to improve the quality and reach of research, either your own or that of others.
- 5) Be recognised and valued for your diverse contributions to research.

The implementation of the University's [Research Culture Action Plan](#) is supported by the Research Culture Development Group, which reports into University Research and Innovation Committee. This Group is led by the Dean of Research Culture and Strategy and includes the Research Culture Manager, a dedicated Project Manager and relevant activity leads. The following Top-Priority Projects were identified for 2024:

- **Behaviour Matters:** Develop a preventative approach to tackling bullying, harassment and all forms of discriminatory and inappropriate behaviour.
- **Releasing Quality Time:** Increase colleagues' ability to create, protect and use quality time for their research and research-related activities.
- **Open Research:** Increase institutional capacity to develop and deliver training in open research through engagement with the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) Open Research Programme.
- **The Research Space:** Creating an inclusive online portal that centralises access to research skills development, fosters community collaboration across disciplines, and supports careers.
- **Reimagining Leadership:** Wellcome funded project that aims to improve, recognise and

reward leadership practices that build psychologically safe and inclusive research environments.

### ***Researcher development***

As a signatory of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, Newcastle has a longstanding commitment to support the professional development of colleagues and students engaging in research at the University and the Technician's Commitment – of which Newcastle University was a founding signatory.

Individual learning needs are identified through annual appraisal processes for colleagues and discussions between Postgraduate Research and their supervisors. This information is then used to inform training and development plans. To address these training needs, Newcastle University provides a wide range of internal training, tools and resources to support the development of good research practices. Including:

- Research Integrity e-learning programme – introductory level programme, which can be accessed online by colleagues and students.
- Open Research workshops – delivered both online and in person as part of the UKRN Open Research programme.
- Introduction to Ethics Policy and Procedure – online presentation slides that can be downloaded and used as local training tool. A Research Ethics e-learning programme is also in the process of being developed to support the research community.
- Online Ethics Toolkit – guidance on potentially high-risk activities.
- Faculty Postgraduate Researcher Development Programmes – each of the three Faculties provide a programme of training for PhD students, including introductory level workshops on research integrity, ethics and data management.
- PhD Supervisor training - a quarterly workshop on 'Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance' was initially offered as part of a pilot scheme. These principles have subsequently been embedded in the introductory workshop on 'What makes a Good Supervisor?' which forms part of the University's new mandatory PhD Supervisor training programme.
- Smart Support Programme – aimed at Professional Service colleagues. The rolling programme includes workshops on Research Integrity, Open Research and Trusted Research.
- Skills workshops: covering statistical skills, working with animals and developing research data management plans.
- Methods Hub: provides information and resources on different research methodologies. The Methods Hub also regularly runs events to promote the discussion of best practice and engagement in interdisciplinary research activities.
- Good Academic Practice Hub: guidance and support on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism is available from the University Library. Dedicated one-to-one sessions are also available.
- Research Project Leads Programme: a series of sessions aimed at upskilling new research leads. Includes topics on good research practice and research culture.

Through institutional membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), the University also provides access to a wide range of external resources to support research integrity such as webinars, guidance documents, case studies and workshops. Ad hoc training on a range of topics including Research Integrity, Research Ethics, Trusted Research, Open Research and Research Data Management is also available on request.

Full details of internal and external guidance and development opportunities are summarised on the [training, tools and resources](#) section of the University's [Research Integrity web page](#).

### Monitoring and reporting

The University maintains a central record of participation in formal staff training. Although participation is not currently mandatory, uptake of the research integrity e-learning is also recorded via the Epigeum member portal.

University Research Ethics Committee conducts an annual audit of ethics applications to provide assurance to Senate and Council that research activities at Newcastle are conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

Confidential records of research misconduct proceedings are also maintained by the University for monitoring and reporting purposes. Anonymised data on the number and type of research misconduct is presented to University Research and Innovation Committee, Senate and Council on an annual basis. To promote openness and transparency, a copy of the University's Annual Statement on Research Integrity is published on the University's [Research Integrity webpage](#). In accordance with the University's [Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct](#), relevant third-party organisations (such as funders, journals, professional and regulatory bodies) are also informed of any allegations which proceed to a formal investigation.

## 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. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

### Development of research policies, guidance and procedures

The University's external research governance web pages have been reviewed and updated to ensure that content is more accessible, and signposting is clearer to further guidance and support. Over the last year, the following guidance has also been created to support the research community:

- [Framework for Preventing Harm \(Safeguarding\) in Research](#)
- [Responsible Research Innovation toolkit](#)
- [Institutional Position Statement on Defence and Security sector activities](#)
- [University Statement on External Research Projects](#)

### Investments in staff resources

Two new posts have been appointed in the last twelve months to support research integrity:

- A full time fixed-term [Research Integrity Project Officer](#) in April 2024. This is a new post that works alongside the Research Integrity and Governance Manager, driving forward a range of

research integrity related projects.

- A part time fixed-term Associate Dean of Good Research Practice in July 2024. This is a new post that works alongside the Dean for Research Culture and Strategy. The Associate Dean has taken over the role of UKRN Institutional Lead and will be focusing on Research Integrity, Open Research and the Responsible use of Research Metrics.

### **Training/guidance**

Due to the success of previous training sessions, the increase in the promotion of available in person training and additional staff resource, there has been a significant increase in the amount of in person training delivered. Examples of which include:

- Open research training- 5 new workshops on core open research practices have been delivered as part of an ongoing programme of training. During 2023-24, Open Research has also been embedded in training for PhD students and their Supervisors.
- Research Integrity training – the Research Integrity Project Officer attended an initial ‘train the trainer’ workshop developed by UKRN in June 2024. Following which, internal workshops are scheduled to take place in September / October 2024.
- PhD Supervisor training - research integrity content embedded in an initial ‘*What makes a good PhD Supervisor?*’ workshop, which forms part of the University’s new mandatory PhD Supervisor programme.
- Smart Support Programme: a session on general ‘*Good Research Practice*’ aimed at Professional Service colleagues was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Eight participants attended from across Academic Services and the three Faculties. Moving forward, a new format is being explored which will include both recorded webinars and interactive sessions on Research Integrity and Trusted Research.
- Research Ethics e-learning programme: the University has invested £4k in working with an external supplier to develop a bespoke online training programme for research colleagues and students to raise awareness of the University’s Research Ethics Policy and ethical review process.
- Research Leads Programme: a session on ‘*Good Research Practice*’ was held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024, which 19 participants attended out of a cohort of 24. A further session will be held for the next cohort in June 2025.
- Network events - the Research Integrity Project Officer attended a technical staff network (NUTechNet) event on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to discuss current activities and future plans. An ethics workshop was also delivered as part of the Researchers Empowering Newcastle University (RENU) network event on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

### **Other initiatives**

- Open Research Awards: a third annual event was held in July 2024 to promote and share good practices in open research.
- ReproducibiliTea Journal Club: 7 monthly sessions were held during 2023-24 to facilitate peer discussions varying topics related to open research and reproducibility. These activities have been led by the UKRN Local Network Lead at Newcastle University and the Open Research Training and Development Officer. Two new joint Local Network Leads have been appointed during the Summer who will lead activities during 2024-25.
- An in-depth evaluation of the University’s Research Integrity e-learning programme is currently in progress, alongside increased promotion of the current e-learning to increase uptake. Improved monitoring has also been put in place.
- Promoting the use of ORCID IDs to promote researcher online profiles and encourage future collaborations. The University is also looking into the integration of ORCID IDs with various

university systems

- A Responsible use of Research Metrics implementation plan was approved by University Research and Innovation Committee in January 2024, which sets out how Newcastle University will improve alignment with the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). The associated Responsible Use of Research Metrics Special Interest Group (SIG) has held meetings every 2 months during the reporting period.
- AI in Research and Education communities of practice channels set up online to encourage knowledge sharing. An AI in Research Working Group was established and is due to hold its first meeting in September 2024. The aims of the group are to develop university guidance and principles on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in facilitating research, to share case studies on the use of AI in research at Newcastle University and ensure good research practice within this rapidly evolving landscape.

### ***External engagement***

Newcastle University colleagues have also actively participated in a range of external activities as part of our commitment to share knowledge and develop communities of practice:

- Attendance at the UKCORI Research Integrity Indicators workshop in London on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- CONNECT funding application submitted to promote sharing of good practice between Newcastle University, Cambridge University and The Babraham Institute- approved 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.
- Institutional participation in the REF People, Culture and Environment pilot.
- Multiple colleagues registered to attend the Warwick University Research Culture Conference in September 2024.
- We continue to be active members of UKRN responding to requests for information and piloting initiatives such as the ReproducibiliTea Journal Club.
- Attended the annual UKRIO conference and participated in a trial of their new research integrity e-learning programme.

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

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

### ***Reflections on progress***

Progress has been made in several areas which were identified as actions in the university's 2022/23 Annual Research Integrity Statement. Including:

- The Behaviour Matters project has progressed well with a Project Manager in place and the first major milestone due to be reached in October 2024 with the creation of a Sexual Misconduct video. The focus for 2025 will be on other aspects of behaviour such as recognising and tackling hate crime. The project team is also working towards developing a behaviour framework for all University colleagues with input from the research community.



- Reimagining Leadership (£1m Wellcome Trust Project): The purpose of this project is to build enhanced leadership capacity to enable psychologically safe and inclusive research environments. Staff recruitment for the project is now complete, including a project administrator. Recruitment for a Participatory Action Research (PAR) group has begun with the first PAR group retreat planned for October 2024.
- Ethics Workflow System: following the approval of a business case to upgrade the University's current ethics system, a Steering Group has been established to help select the most appropriate system for Newcastle University. A number of system demos have been scheduled for Autumn Term 2024 as part of the procurement process.
- Researchers Empowering Newcastle University (RENU): a researcher-led cross-Faculty network has been established with institutional funding provided for local network events. In addition to an MS Teams site, an annual conference and regular coffee mornings have been held during the reporting period. As well as a RENU event in July 2024 which included a signposting session on research ethics at Newcastle University.
- Research policy development: additional policies/guidance have been developed to reflect the changing landscape in research and to address prevalent issues. This includes the Framework for Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research, a Responsible Research Innovation toolkit and an Institutional Position Statement on Defence and Security sector activities.

The following actions were delayed due to operational reasons:

- The University's Code of Good Practice in Research is due to be reviewed and updated in full. However, the current version has recently been updated to include references to the use of Generative AI in research pending the development of additional guidance.
- The establishment of the AI in Research Working Group was delayed due to the Summer break and re-scheduled to commence in September 2024. The planned outcomes include updates to the Code of Good Practice in Research, development of a set of principles for using AI in Research, updated internal web pages for colleagues to refer to and effective communication of these changes.
- The launch of an online Research Space platform to provide a 'one stop shop' for researcher training, development and networking opportunities has been delayed to Spring Term 2025.
- Research Culture Week did not go ahead in 2024 based on feedback from the research community. It was decided that the resource was better used elsewhere within the Research Culture Action Plan.

### ***Plans for future developments***

- Continuation of engagement with the UKRN Open Research programme via the Annual Open Research Awards 2025, open research training and the ReproducibiliTea Journal club. An Open Research Champions network will also be rolled out in Autumn Term 2024. The aim of which is to recruit Champions from across all three Faculties to promote the open research agenda in local areas and provide discipline specific support.
- A series of focus groups are planned with academics, Postgraduate Research students and



Professional Services colleagues to provide feedback on what they want and need from research integrity e-learning and in-person training. The results will be used to inform the development of a report to University Research and Innovation Committee in Autumn Term 2024 on the provision of future training.

- Delivery of the institutional Responsible use of Research Metrics Action Plan. Including encouraging academic colleagues to join the Responsible Metrics SIG and exploring the feasibility of the University becoming an institutional signatory of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).
- Develop an institutional Research Integrity Strategy and associated action plan based on the proposed metrics identified in the recent UKCORI report on Enablers and Inhibitors of Research Integrity.

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

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

### Releasing quality time and research retreats project

UKRIO's Code of Good Practice for Research acknowledges that *"time pressure and workload issues have a significant impact on good research culture and can open the door to questionable research practices that may lead to research misconduct."*

Protecting time for research was identified as one of the priority actions areas in the University's Research Culture Action Plan in 2022-23. Following feedback from the initial pilot project, the scope of the 'Releasing Quality Time and Research Retreats' project was expanded to include various research-related activities beyond writing, becoming the Research Retreat Pilot Project in 2023-24. The open application process allowed applicants to specify their needs in terms of location, attendees, retreat focus and facilitation requirements. The project was popular and resulted in 26 retreats hosting over 290 attendees from all three Faculties and research-related job roles. The retreats were highly valued for enhancing research culture, providing focused time, and fostering community. Feedback emphasized the importance of venue choice, catering, and flexibility to meet diverse needs.

The positive feedback from these retreats underscores their value to the research community, highlighting the benefits of providing structured time away from regular routines. While academic writing is a major output, these experiences also enabled focussed research-related activity, peer support and community building. This approach aligns with the Research Culture Team's commitment to maintaining an open dialogue with Newcastle's research community and to actively respond to its evolving needs.

Dedicated organisation can save time for colleagues and PGRs wanting to access this type of activity, with the provision of venue, catering and transportation reducing barriers to access and enabling attendees to feel valued. Future retreats should be as inclusive as possible, offering flexibility, varied

structure, and consider the availability and personal circumstances of attendees.

Applications are now open for the 2024-25 retreats and an event is planned for December 2024 on promoting other ways to protect time for research activities.

## Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

Please provide:

- A brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).
- Information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).
- Anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

The University's Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct were updated in April 2023 to incorporate developments in good practice and funder policies. They are due to be reviewed in 2026.

Where possible, colleagues are encouraged to raise any concerns with the individual, their Line Manager or the appropriate Head of Academic Unit in the first instance. Alternatively, concerns can also be raised with the Research Integrity and Governance Manager. If an informal resolution is not possible, formal complaints should be submitted in writing using the Reporting Allegations of Misconduct Form and submitted by email to: [research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk) alongside any supporting evidence. Although complainants are expected to put their name to any allegation they make, any information provided will be treated confidentially. Anonymous allegations will be considered at the discretion of the University.

Any allegations relating to the research undertaken by University students will be investigated via the separate Student Academic Misconduct Procedure, which was updated in 2024. Concerns regarding the conduct of University colleagues may also be raised in confidence via the University's Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing).

***Anonymised lessons learnt from formal investigations of research misconduct.***

No formal allegations relating to research students were received during the reporting period, whereas three formal allegations relating to University colleagues were received. The University's Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct has been developed in accordance with funder and professional guidelines and consists of a number of informal and formal stages. Two allegations were dismissed at the Receipt and Initial Assessment stage (Stage One) as they did not meet the definition of research misconduct. A third allegation was dismissed following the Preliminary Screening stage (Stage Two). Therefore none of the allegations received proceeded to a formal investigation (Stage Three). One appeal was requested, although the Appeal Panel did not overturn the original findings.

The learning from all three cases has been used to support continuous improvement, alongside informal enquiries regarding authorship practices. For example, there has been further development of guidance and template forms to support the appeal process. Further research integrity training sessions have also been held across the University, focussed on managing authorship disputes and difficult conversations.

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

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

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	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	1	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<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.</b>				
N/A				

Report completed by Stacey Wagstaff (Research Integrity Project Officer) and Louise Jones (Research Integrity and Governance Manager) 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024.