

# University of Leeds: Annual Statement on Research Integrity

## 2023/24

### Section 1: Key contact information

| Question  | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>1A. Name of organisation</b>   | University of Leeds   |
| <b>1B. Type of organisation:</b><br><br>higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state) | Higher education institution  |
| <b>1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)</b>   | The Senate (13 November 2024)   |
| <b>1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)</b>  | <a href="https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-integrity">https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-integrity</a> |
| <b>1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity</b>   | <b>Name: Professor Nick Plant</b><br>(Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation)              |
|   | Email address: <a href="mailto:n.plant@leeds.ac.uk">n.plant@leeds.ac.uk</a>                         |
| <b>1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity</b>  | <b>Name: Catherine Cho</b><br>(Head of Governance Support)  |
|   | Email address: <a href="mailto:c.l.l.cho@adm.leeds.ac.uk">c.l.l.cho@adm.leeds.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*

We aim to conduct research at Leeds according to the [University values](#) of collaboration, compassion, inclusivity and integrity. The University takes responsibility for ensuring that our researchers have rigorously considered ethical implications and conduct their research to the highest standards of integrity.

**Policies and Systems:** The University of Leeds has a comprehensive range of policies and systems, listed below, that govern research integrity and ensure our commitment to the core values set out within the Concordat.

#### **Key policies and statements that govern research integrity:**

- [Policy Statement on Professional Integrity in Research](#)
- [Research Ethics Policy](#) (This policy is currently under review).
- [University Publications Policy](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework \(2023-2025\)](#)
- [Dignity and Mutual Respect Policy](#)
- [Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers](#)
- [Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidance for Taught Students](#)
- [Guidance to Staff on the Use of Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Protocol for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research](#) (This policy is under review).
- [Postgraduate Researcher Academic Misconduct Procedure](#).
- [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#).
- [Code of Conduct on Professional Behaviour and Relationships](#)
- [Code of Practice on Whistleblowing](#) (This policy is currently under review).
- [Open Research Statement](#)
- [Anti-Bribery Policy](#)
- [Export Controls Policy](#)
- [Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults](#) (This policy is currently under review).

- [Policy for the Storage and Use of Human Tissue](#)

**Data Protection policies:**

- [Data Protection Code of Practice](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)

A summary diagram of the University committee structure is available [here](#). The key leadership groups for research integrity are: Council, Ethics and Values Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Research and Innovation Board, University Research Ethics Committee, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board, and Trusted Research, Export Controls and Sanctions Committee.

The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) has delegated responsibility for oversight of the review of ethics applications to Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs) and, within the Faculty of Medicine and Health, to School Research Ethics Committees.

Through Research Regulatory Compliance, the Sponsor Office and Quality Assurance Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products (CTIMP) Team promote a positive research culture based on its research governance procedures. Collectively, they support the standards, regulations, and principles that ensure the quality of research and protect the public and applies to everyone involved in research, which includes University investigators and managers, participants of research and the public.

### **Communications and Engagement**

- The [University Strategy \(2020-2030\)](#) sets out a blueprint for a values-driven university that harnesses expertise in research and education to help shape a better future for humanity, working through collaboration to tackle inequalities, benefit society and drive change. An introduction to the [values and responsibilities at the University](#) is part of the induction checklist for all new staff.
- For PGRs, there is a [Doctoral College Handbook](#) hosted on the website (also known as the PGR Handbook), which provides detailed information and guidance on all aspects of research degrees, including research ethics, data management and academic integrity. All PGRs are expected to have research integrity discussions with their supervisory team within the first 3 months of study and provision built into individual training plans, with all new PGRs expected to complete the [PGR Academic Integrity Essentials and Research Integrity Training](#) courses within the first six months of study. Progress against the training plan is monitored and reviewed regularly, including within the formal transfer examination. From 2023/24, an induction checklist has been included in the PGR Handbook, which includes links to further information on [Research Practice](#), the mandatory [Research Integrity and Research Ethics Online Training](#) and the [UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).

- The University runs a regular series of [Research Culture Cafés](#) and has a [Research Culture Uncovered podcast series](#) as part of our ongoing work to promote a positive and inclusive research environment at Leeds. Our Culture Cafés are run as small group discussions with a facilitator to share the challenges, examples of best practice and ideas openly with our Research Culture Community. We have so far run 4 cafés on the topic of Research Integrity. The fortnightly podcast series is themed into seasons, each focussing on a different area of research culture. Since the launch in November 2022, the podcast has received a great response with good levels of engagement and over 8,500 downloads across 75 countries. Research Integrity has been included in seasons 3 (Open Research), 4 (Research Impact) and 6 (Research Culture and Concordats). In September 2024, the team behind the Research Culture Uncovered Podcast, were confirmed winners of the ‘Research Culture Impact Through Researcher Development Award’ at the 2024 Vitae International Researcher Development Conference. This award celebrates the podcast’s impactful and innovative work within the researcher development community, emphasising the importance of enhancing research culture.
- Dedicated and externally accessible [Research Integrity](#) and [Research Ethics](#) webpages are maintained by our Research and Innovation Service (RIS) and Secretariat respectively, which signpost relevant policies and provide further guidance, including the University’s [Policy Statement on Professional Integrity in Research](#) and the [Research Ethics Policy](#).
- RIS also has a Trusted Research Environment Team who maintain a dedicated [Trusted Research](#) webpage where guidance on safeguarding international collaborations, export controls and the [National Security and Investment Act](#) is available.
- Active networks of researchers engaged in promoting open research through initiatives such as the Leeds [ReproducibiliTea journal club](#) and [Open Lunches webinar series](#). The main goal of [ReproducibiliTea journal club](#) is to promote, facilitate and deepen the conversation about open research across all fields of study represented at Leeds, from Medieval History to Data Science. It is open to people at all career stages, including support staff, professional and managerial staff. The journal club is early-career research led and with an interdisciplinary focus, with organisers of the club ranging from medical sciences to linguistics. To date, over 30 Leeds ReproducibiliTea sessions have been conducted, several of which have featured external speakers from a range of open research initiatives such as the [Framework for Open and Reproducible Research Training \(FORRT\)](#) and [The Turing Way](#).
- Research integrity is a key theme embedded within our [Researcher Development Concordat Implementation Plan](#) with 5 actions against the Environment and Culture principle, and 2 against the Professional and Career Development principle. It is also a core element in the [UKCGE Good Supervisory Practice Framework](#) used in our supervisor development programmes.
- Changes to funder terms and conditions, including those relating to ethical, legal and research integrity issues are communicated by the Research

Operations team to the network of Faculty Research and Innovation Offices, to inform relevant colleagues. Where appropriate, changed terms and conditions are reviewed by the Contracts team in RIS to ensure compliance.

- The Knowledge Exchange Framework, which launched in 2021, aims to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funding for knowledge exchange and to further a culture of continuous improvement in universities. The benchmarking activity which the KEF provides enables universities to better understand and improve their performance, as well as provide businesses and other users with more information to help them access our world-class knowledge and expertise. The KEF results highlight the quality and relevance of the technologies and innovations developed by University of Leeds researchers, and our expertise in translating and applying knowledge and ideas externally.
- The University has multiple teams that deliver diverse external engagement and widening participation programmes, activities, and events. It is a signatory to the NCCPE's Manifesto for Public Engagement. Be Curious activities are an example of this engagement, which stand for lifelong learning, inclusivity, and the connection between the public and research. These activities are underpinned by a shared ethical engagement practice as part of our social responsibility to increase trust in research, being accountable to the public as research funders, and making research understandable and relatable to a wide audience.
- Through Nexus, Leeds has also developed a vibrant community for entrepreneurs, businesses and innovators to come together with university researchers, professional partners and emerging student and graduate talent. These valuable collaborations deliver commercial impact and generate economic growth for Leeds and beyond, as well as making Leeds one of the country's leading universities for working with local firms and big businesses.

### **Culture, Development and Leadership**

At the University of Leeds, we believe all members of our research community have a role to play in developing and promoting a positive and inclusive research culture. In 2023, we published our Research Culture Strategy and action plan with four strategic objectives:

- We will value diverse forms of research activity
- We will embed EDI principles in research practices
- We will enable Open Research practices
- We will mutually support and develop research teams

Under each of these objectives sit a number of distinct projects. The Research Culture Steering Group provides oversight for the strategy. Progress and direction of the action plan comes from the Research Culture Strategy Working Group.

## Training and Development Opportunities

- E-learning modules for research integrity, research ethics and academic integrity are open to all staff and students (via the University Virtual Learning Environment: Minerva).
- There is a dedicated Researcher Development and Culture Team committed to developing the skills and confidence that enable researchers to thrive, with a wide range of opportunities for professional and personal development.
- The Library offers support, training and guidance on a variety of relevant topics including open research practices, data management planning, responsible research metrics and safeguarding research data.
- Our Research Computing team and IT Training Unit run a variety of specialist training in topics including bioinformatics, version control with GitHub, R programming, Python and reproducible scientific code development.
- The University of Leeds is a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and hosts an annual Concordat Awareness Month: A chance for all staff to find out more about the support and opportunities available to researchers, (prospective) research managers, and the wider academic community.
- A University-Wide Mentoring Scheme is available to all staff at Leeds.

## Additional Information

- The Employee Engagement Survey (originally run in February 2023) is a key mechanism to gather feedback on the institution's research culture and a number of institutional-level actions have been integrated into the University's Research Culture strategy, including career development opportunities, responsible research assessment, reward and recognition and workload. While the survey is due to be repeated in Spring 2025, an Engagement Pulse Survey was conducted in June 2024 to check on the progress being made, following implementation of an institutional action plan. The headline results of the Pulse Survey show improvements in a number of key areas but also provide valuable feedback on where ongoing work and focus are required.
- The Research Culture Pulse Surveys play a vital role in the work to create a positive and inclusive research culture and help us better understand how our current culture is experienced, the confidence the research community has in the University to improve the culture, and to help identify the areas most in need of improvement. The surveys cover six themes, each aligned to our Research Culture priorities: valuing and recognising diverse forms of research activity; embedding EDI principles in research practices; enabling open research practices; mutually supporting and developing research teams; research integrity and concordats; commitments and engagement. The surveys are designed to be short and easy to complete, taking no more than 5 minutes. Each survey is repeated to help evaluate and monitor progress.
- The Research Regulatory Compliance Team supports externally regulated research through its research governance, which aims to improve research quality by ensuring that research is conducted to high standards; protect participants by safeguarding the people who participate in research; prevent

misconduct by helping to prevent poor performance and misconduct; promote good practice by encouraging good practice and reducing adverse incidents and learn from mistakes by ensuring that lessons are learned from any mistakes that occur.

- The Knowledge Equity Network is a major global initiative. The inaugural summit took place at the University of Leeds in November 2022 to determine the focus of the Declaration on Knowledge Equity. The Network launched in April 2023 and to date there are 319 individuals, 42 organisations and 22 Higher Education Institutions that have signed and committed to the Declaration, from 61 countries. The goal of the Network is to tackle global challenges through opening access to ground-breaking research and research-led, challenge-focused education. It is a collaborative community of engaged leaders, policymakers, HEIs, funders and experts which continues to grow and work towards the common goal of driving down inequalities through the sharing of knowledge.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

- Research misconduct allegations are treated seriously and handled directly via the University Secretary and Registrar (as described in section 3). The Senate and Council (where the respondent is a member of staff) are informed of the outcome of any formal investigation, and information is published in the University's Integrated Annual Report as part of the section on 'Maintaining Standards'.
- Each FREC submits an annual report to UREC, which includes an overview of the number of research ethics applications received. During the 2023-24 academic year, the FRECs received a total of 1261 new research ethics applications, of which 445 were considered via the proportionate model for lower risk projects. (In 2022/23, there were 900 new research ethics applications, including 165 proportionate reviews).
- Faculties report on research culture challenges and develop action plans as part of the annual Integrated Planning Exercise. This work remains ongoing.
- Development needs for staff are identified via the annual Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS), which aims to support and develop staff to achieve both career development objectives and performance improvements which are consistent with current and future institutional objectives and service developments. SRDS is used to generate tailored training plans for all colleagues.
- The University maintains a database of completion of mandatory training in Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Data Protection, Professional Behaviour and Relationships and Equality and Inclusion.
- For PGRs, engagement with research ethics and data management are reviewed as part of the progress review milestones, including the first formal progress report (at 6 months), the transfer stage (12 months) and annual progress reviews (annually thereafter). Confirmation of ethical review is

required as part of the examination process and a data management plan is required by transfer stage.

- The UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research defines how staff are accountable for ensuring that research is conducted in accordance with the appropriate standards. The framework ensures that research is conducted within acceptable levels of risk.

## **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.*

### **Summary of changes made during the review period (1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024)**

- Since joining the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) in 2023 the University of Leeds joined the UKRN Open Research Programme (ORP) as an Affiliate member in February 2024. The Programme aims to accelerate the uptake of high-quality open research practices, with the University of Leeds acting as case study institution for the Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) project. As an affiliate member, Leeds also benefits from the Train the Trainer programme which has been launched with 20 individual courses including Research Integrity. As part of its commitment to UKRN, the University has recruited another Open Research Advisor, who is working with the UKRN Institutional Lead to coordinate Train the Trainer and OR4, as well as leading on launching the Open Research Champions Network at the University.
- The task and finish groups commissioned by University's Open Research Group that were designed to help realise the 'enabling open research practice' theme of the Research Culture Strategy and focussed respectively on data storage and classification to support open research and open research training provision and resources, are due to conclude and produce final reports by the end of 2024. The findings of the data storage and classification group will inform infrastructure and governance, enabling researchers to manage research data with appropriate safeguards. The Open Research Hub will be launched in November 2024 as a comprehensive resource to support researchers to practice open research and research integrity.
- From 2023/24, a new process agreed by Graduate Board and the Progression and Examinations Group for the screening of PGR assessed work was introduced, to ensure a consistent application and approach to the use of Turnitin for PGR assessed work across the University. As part of the submission process, all PGRs must complete a declaration of academic integrity which includes confirmation that the work may be screened to verify the absence of plagiarised work.

- From 2023/24, a PGR Proof-Reading Policy and Guidance was introduced by Graduate Board which clearly defines the acceptable support that PGRs may receive with the proof-reading of their thesis. It also includes a position statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence tools for PGR work.
- For PGRs, an enhanced range of academic integrity training units were developed and released in April 2024. These cover working with others, collaboration, acknowledging others, re-use of your own work in your thesis and viva examination expectations. These have been released as the PGR academic integrity “advanced” tutorial and complement the existing PGR academic integrity “essentials” tutorial which covers topics such as note-taking, referencing and citations and avoiding plagiarism. The Essentials tutorial is currently undergoing a refresh to include more dynamic content, including in-course questions and videos. These units are embedded into all PGR induction activity and PGRs and Supervisors are asked to include the Essentials and Advanced tutorials in the training plan agreed at the start of their studies. The Essentials tutorial must be completed within the first 6 months of studies, with the Advanced tutorial completed by the transfer stage.
- In the summer, the Doctoral College’s Examinations Team and the Research Ethics Team jointly reviewed all the ethics review questions in the PGR progress milestones to make them more robust and to help Schools identify and resolve outstanding actions with ethics review much earlier than the examination stage. The updated questions, as well as prompts for students to complete the Research Integrity, Research Ethics and Academic Integrity e-learning modules, will be included in GRAD as part of ongoing enhancement activity (following a request to the external supplier to incorporate these).
- In September 2023, the University published its Guidance to Staff on the use of Artificial Intelligence which is a first step to help colleagues think through the issues related to the outputs of AI tools and how to approach teaching, assessment and research. The guidance also extends to external lecturers, assessors and PGRs who have a temporary or part-time staff role.
- In January 2024, the University published its first iteration of Generative AI Guidance for Taught Students, co-produced by the Working Group on AI in Student Education (WAISE) in consultation with representatives from our student community.
- In August 2024, the University published its first iteration of Generative AI Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers. The guidance for PGRs was adapted from that noted above, in collaboration with student education and research focused AI working Groups, and in consultation with Graduate Board. The guidance for PGRs has been aligned, where relevant and appropriate, to that for taught students but has been developed with the specific expectations at PGR level in mind, to guide PGRs and Supervisors on when and how Generative AI can be used during a research degree, and the expectations and assessment criteria for research degree awards. It provides guidance around ethics considerations, data security and the importance of acknowledging the use of AI in PGR academic work, including publications and other outputs which may be used in a thesis submission. This replaces the previous interim position statement on the use of Generative AI tools for PGRs. The PGR Proof-reading

policy and guidance has been refreshed alongside the development of the new guidance on Generative AI tools.

- The University's inaugural Digital Summit was held on 24 and 25 June as an internally facing, inclusive event aimed at all University staff and students. The theme of 'AI and Me' provided a unique lens on the challenges and opportunities associated with embracing AI for digital transformation and explored how the University can enhance: our ways of working; education and student experience; and research and innovation capabilities.
- The new online research ethics application and review system (Phoenix) continues to be rolled out and is now used by four Faculty Research Ethics Committees (Arts, Humanities and Cultures; Biological Sciences; Business, Education, Social Sciences and Scholarship/Pedagogic Research; Engineering and Physical Sciences) as well as the Schools of Healthcare and Medicine.
- A new Research Ethics website, hosted by the Secretariat, was launched in December 2023 to coincide with the wider roll-out of Phoenix. This provides detailed guidance on applying for research ethics approval, relevant policies and protocols and information on the Faculty Research Ethics Committees.
- The University has joined the national trial of UKRIO's Introduction to Research Integrity online training course, which complements our internal Research Integrity and Research Ethics online training courses. The training is recommended for all staff and students who engage in, or support research activity at the University.
- The University's ethical decision-making framework, which provides further guidance to support ethical-decision making where the University is considering collaborating with, or accepting donations from, certain individuals, organisations or sectors was approved by the Ethics and Values Committee in February 2024. Further guidance on decision-making in relation to defence, environmental sustainability, AI and international partnerships is under preparation.
- Work is ongoing to reflect best practice and to drive effective policies in relation to the government's Trusted Research agenda. We have been proactive and engaged in general information and awareness campaigns in the form of Trusted Research guidance, including information on export controls and the National Security and Investment Act, available on the RIS website. Export Controls training has been provided to faculty research committees, school staff, Research Operations and RIS teams. In terms of governance and policies, Senate ratified an Export Controls policy at the beginning of 2023 and an Export Controls Steering Committee has been set-up.

## **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

- As part of the ongoing Phoenix roll-out, the Research Ethics Team has continued to work in collaboration with FREC Chairs and members, as well as other University Teams, including Information Governance and the Library, to update and refine the online form. Work is ongoing to prepare the Schools of Dentistry and Psychology for their move to Phoenix by the end of November 2024. Comprehensive training on the use of Phoenix is routinely delivered by the Team, including in person training/support for (new) reviewers and the provision of online guidance documents. Detailed guidance is available for applicants, who are also encouraged to contact the Team for assistance with their application if/when required. This is supported by the new Research Ethics website.
- Refreshed research ethics audits in the Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Cultures and Engineering and Physical Sciences, as well as in the Schools of Healthcare and Medicine, were piloted over the summer. Reviewers and researchers involved in the pilot audits have had the opportunity to feedback on the process and a 'Lessons Learnt' paper will be considered at the November 2024 meeting of UREC to highlight best practice and add value to the audit process as it eventually recommences across all Schools and Faculties.
- The Terms of Reference for UREC have been reviewed to ensure that the Committee remains aligned with and operates effectively within the new governance framework, especially as its relationship with the Ethics and Values Committee develops. These now include reference to the ethical decision-making framework, research relating to scholarship and taught student projects, as well as potential ethical and reputational risk.
- The first meeting of the University's Regulatory Network was held in December 2023. The Network provides an opportunity for those colleagues involved in the delivery of regulatory activities to come together and reflect and aims to enhance collaborative activity, provide collegial support and raise the profile of regulatory activity. The event in December highlighted in particular the University's work on compliance.
- The Export Controls Steering Committee widened its remit to include Trusted Research, and it is now called the Trusted Research, Export Controls and Sanctions Committee. A new Trusted Research and Export Controls Operations Group was formed and is now meeting regularly with representation across multiple areas of the University including IT, Procurement, Communications, Doctoral College, Admission, Secretariat, International Office and Commercialisation. The aim of this group is to ensure Leeds's policies, systems and processes align with the benchmark published by the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) named the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework. The University was also subject to its first Export Controls inspection at the beginning of 2024 by the Export Control Joint Unit. The inspectors were content that the University had in place systems and procedures to ensure compliance with export controls. They had commended the level of knowledge and the robust processes the University had in place to assist in compliance with UK

export controls. The Counter Party Risk Group continues to convene to strengthen due diligence processes across the different areas.

- The Trusted Research Environment team presented at this year's Higher Education Export Control Association (HEECA) on how to prepare and manage for an Export Control inspection. Guidance on how to manage records for all controlled technology, goods and software has been shared with HEECA secretariat for further distribution across the UK HE sector.

#### **Future Developments for 2024/25 Academic Year**

- The University has continued its membership with UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and will work with them to review and update research integrity policies, processes and training resources ensuring we remain aligned with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.
- Following agreement at UREC in April, the Research Ethics Policy will be updated. A scoping review of current gaps and areas of concern was undertaken in the spring with some potential solutions identified, and it has now been agreed that a Task and Finish Group, with experienced representatives from each of the five FRECs should be set-up to formally review and recommend amendments to the existing policy.
- In order to reflect the updates to the UREC Terms of Reference, the Terms of Reference for the Faculty (and School) Research Ethics Committees will also be reviewed to ensure that they set out more clearly the purpose of the committees, including oversight and monitoring, in addition to the provision of guidance and direction on key/complex issues referred to them.
- A risk-based approach to the ethical approval of research studies involving Artificial Intelligence is being considered by the Working Group on Artificial Intelligence Technology in Research and is expected to be implemented in the 2024/25 academic year.
- In order to ensure that the University continues to meet its internal and external compliance requirements; demonstrates research integrity aligned with our values; and delivers operational good practice, phase one of a Deep Dive into Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance, as requested by the Regulatory Oversight Group in March, has now identified a number of proposed actions for prioritisation, including updating policy and supporting documentation on research misconduct.
- Guidance on the scope of permitted Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and educational research is being developed and a draft proposal was shared at the Student Education Conference in January for comments and feedback. The final version is expected to be submitted for consideration and endorsement in the next academic year.

#### **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.

### **Research Culture Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028**

- Following two years of intense consultation, the University launched its strategy and action plan for improving our research culture. About a hundred colleagues who've been instrumental in shaping the strategy came together for a celebration day on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to mark the occasion.
- Research culture describes the environment in which research and innovation happens, and how that environment impacts all those involved. The overarching aim of our Research Culture strategy is to enable more of our colleagues to produce leading research inclusively, equitably, openly and supportively.
- We will focus our efforts on four strategic objectives (SO) that have been determined by consultation across our research community; different disciplines, career stages, backgrounds, and job families, via our inclusive research culture cafes, committee discussions, and an in-depth external analysis of a 2021 University-wide survey.
  - **SO1** We will value diverse forms of research activity
  - **SO2** We will embed EDI principles in research practices
  - **SO3** We will enable Open Research practices
  - **SO4** We will mutually support and develop research teams
- Alongside the strategy we have received funding from Research England through until 2025 to develop projects focused on "Enhancing Research Culture". Since 2022, we have run an annual open call for projects across the University, addressing at least one of the 4 strategic areas. This call is open to everyone who enables research culture. Each year we fund roughly 13 projects totalling £280,000.
- In addition to our open call, we run biannual Research Culture Awards (2022, 2024) that celebrate pre-existing initiatives at the University that enhance and support Research Culture, including the diverse roles all staff at Leeds play in developing a positive research culture at the University.
- In March 2024, we also launched our Research EDI Fund (REDI), which delivers targeted support to researchers at grades 8 and 9 who are women, disabled, are from a minoritised ethnic group, and/or who have EDI as a specific remit of their role. This funding supports activities for these researchers that improve their potential for promotion. This is in recognition of the fact that researchers from these protected groups are under-represented within senior leadership at the University.

## 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.

### Organisation of Policies and Processes for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct

- The main policy for investigating allegations of misconduct is the Protocol for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research (which is currently under review). It sets out a framework for the investigation and resolution of allegations of misconduct. Once an allegation is submitted to the University Secretary and Registrar, three individuals (screeners) are assigned to consider the evidence and recommend the most appropriate course of action, this may include a full, formal investigation. The University Secretary and Registrar has overall responsibility for ensuring the integrity of misconduct allegations, resolving cases with appropriate actions and reporting outcomes to external bodies as required. This key protocol will be reviewed as part of the Deep Dive priorities.

- The Postgraduate Researcher Academic Misconduct Procedure is used to manage cases of plagiarism or examination misconduct in a transfer or thesis submission by PGRs. Cases at transfer and thesis are dealt with at School-level but may be referred to the Committee on Applications for second or serious offences. The Procedure has undergone a minor refresh for the start of the 2024/25 academic year to ensure it continues to align to the corresponding refresh of the procedures for taught students. Work submitted for the taught elements of research degrees are covered via the taught Academic Misconduct Procedure. Where the allegation relates to published work, it would fall within the above Protocol for investigating research misconduct.
- The University's Code of Practice on Whistleblowing (which is currently under review) is intended to encourage staff and students to report suspected wrongdoing (including professional malpractice, harassment and bullying), so an impartial investigation can be conducted.

The following policies are in place to handle other forms of misconduct:

- Policy on Dignity and Mutual Respect
- General University Disciplinary Regulations
- Student Complaints Procedure

### **Research Environment and Culture**

- We have well established pathways to gather feedback on our existing Research Culture, which includes an anonymous "Tell us more" form and regular Research Culture Café events. In addition, the launch of regular Pulse Surveys to all staff and PGRs to gauge colleagues' perceptions and experience of difference aspects of research culture. We have included a dedicated Pulse Survey covering research integrity, ethics and research misconduct. This information is already being used by the Research Culture Steering Group and related services to embed a supportive environment where concerns around research integrity can be raised and addressed.
- We regularly remind staff and students of our Report and Support system to report any incidents of concern and access specialist support from our Harassment and Misconduct Team. All incidents are taken very seriously, the reporting form can be submitted anonymously or there is an option to speak directly to an advisor. We also advocate and provide support for those supporting others.

### **Key Lessons**

The University will always seek, where possible, to learn lessons from any cases that have arisen to improve or enhance our processes.

- Over the last three academic years, allegations of research misconduct received by the University and the subsequent formal investigations, have all been related to plagiarism by PGRs. As detailed above (in section 2B), it is hoped that the declaration of academic integrity process, which all PGRs must complete, alongside the newer Turnitin screening process and the PGR Academic Integrity Essentials training, will help educate students and reduce the number of allegations.
- The need for University-level research ethics reviewer training has already been identified as a priority and, to help inform this work, all FREC members have been encouraged to complete a [Padlet](#) to share their views on the current guidance, support and training available and highlight their training 'wish list' and future topics. This will include further information and guidance relating to the use of data, Artificial Intelligence and aspects of Trusted Research that should be considered as part of research ethics reviews. The requirement for an induction process for incoming leaders, principal investigators and existing academic staff assuming new research ethics, integrity and governance responsibilities has also been identified as a key priority in the Phase 1 outcomes of the Deep Dive.

### 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  |  |                                 |  |  |
| Falsification  |  |                                 |  |  |
| Plagiarism   | 5  | 5                               | 0  | 4#   |
| 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>  |  |                                 |  |  |
| <b>Total:</b>  | 5  | 5                               | 0  | 4#   |
| <p><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></p> <p><i>[Please insert response if applicable]</i></p> |  |                                 |  |  |

- # One of the five cases is ongoing and has been referred to the Committee on Applications (after being upheld in a School-level meeting).
- Three allegations of research misconduct (all relating to misrepresentation of authorship of research publication) were received late in the summer and screening committees are being convened to consider whether these will need formal investigation. Data on these will be reported in next year's statement.