University of Leeds: Annual Statement on Research Integrity

2024/25

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Leeds
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)	The Council (27 November 2025)
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Nick Plant (Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation) Email address: n.plant@leeds.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: Catherine Cho (Head of Corporate Governance) Email address: c.l.l.cho@adm.leeds.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains 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:

- Research Ethics Policy (This policy is currently under review)
- Freedom of Expression Policy
- University Research Outputs Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework (2023-2025)
- Equality and Inclusion Policies
- Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers
- Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidance for Taught Students
- Guidance to Staff on the Use of Artificial Intelligence
- Policy Statement on Professional Integrity in Research
- 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 Practice on Whistleblowing (This policy is currently under review).
- Open Research Statement

- Responsible Metrics in the Assessment of Research
- The Declaration on Research Assessment
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Export Controls Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Financial Sanctions 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
- Standard Operating Procedures for Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products

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).

The Research Regulatory Compliance Team provides governance for health and social care research as defined within the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care, including clinical trials of Investigational Medical Products (IMPs) and research projects involving the collection of human tissue.

The research activity, including tissue banking, taking place under the Human Tissue research licence falls under the responsibility of the Designated Individual named on the Human Tissue Act (HTA) research licence and is activity underpinned by the HTA joint governance structures between the University of Leeds and Leeds Teaching Hospital.

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. In summer 2025, the Strategy underwent a mid-term strategy review. An implementation plan has been developed setting out what the University community needs to do during the next five years in order to realise its strategic priorities. An introduction to the values and responsibilities at the University is part of the induction checklist for all new staff.

- PGRs can access comprehensive information online, which provides detailed guidance on research degrees, including research ethics, data management, academic integrity and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Within the first three months, PGRs are expected to discuss research integrity with their supervisory team, with training incorporated into their individual plans. New PGRs expected to complete the PGR Academic Integrity Essentials and Research Integrity Training within six months. Progress is regularly reviewed, including during the formal transfer examination.
- The University runs regular Research Culture Cafés as part of our ongoing work to promote a positive and inclusive research environment. 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 community.
- Since launching in November 2022, our Research Culture Uncovered podcast has had over 17,300 downloads across 107 countries. Episodes cover topics such as open research, ethics, impact and responsible research practices, with a 2025 interview with the UK Research Integrity Office CEO now the third most popular (254 downloads). In 2024, the team won the Vitae Research Culture Impact Through Researcher Development Award for its innovative contribution to research culture.
- Dedicated and externally accessible Research Integrity and Research Ethics webpages are maintained by our Research and Innovation Service (RIS) and Governance and Compliance Teams 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.
- The University of Leeds is committed to the Trusted Research agenda, which promotes secure and ethical international collaboration. Trusted Research helps safeguard academic freedom, reputations, and compliance with UK export controls and national security legislation. The Trusted Research team within Research and Innovation Services (RIS) provides tailored guidance on secure international collaboration, the National Security and Investment Act, Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, and export controls—particularly relevant to high-risk research areas such as STEM. Researchers are supported through scenario-based resources, case studies, and direct engagement with the Trusted Research team, who help assess risks related to sensitive data, overseas partnerships, and dual-use technologies. These efforts are aligned with national guidance from the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), ensuring researchers are equipped to collaborate responsibly in a global context. For external audiences, further information is available on the Trusted Research page of the RIS website. Internal colleagues can access detailed guidance, support materials, and case studies via the University's intranet Trusted Research responsibilities, actions and support page.
- Active networks of researchers engaged in promoting open research include the Leeds UK Reproducibility Network and the Open Research Hub. Their role 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. The

growing community of more than 200 researchers and professional staff from all career levels, serves as an interactive notice board that enables different stakeholders to collaborate around open research initiatives. These include the Research Culture Uncovered podcast and the ReproducibiliTea journal club, Open Research Champions and UKRN Train the Trainer. The Open Lunch webinar series, now in its sixth season, is open to the wider community and a recognised brand across the sector. Increasing collaboration with the Knowledge Equity Network to promote a positive research culture at a global scale. While ReproducibiliTea has been on hold since the previous organising team stepped down, two post-doctoral researchers are in the process of developing a new series of talks for 2026. Research integrity is a key theme embedded within our Researcher Development Concordat Implementation Plan 2025-2028 with specific actions including within the Environment and Culture and Professional and Career Development principles. 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 University is a signatory to the NCCPE's Manifesto for Public Engagement and delivers a wide range of external engagement and widening participation programmes. Our Be Curious initiative exemplifies this commitment, promoting lifelong learning, inclusivity, and meaningful connections between the public and research. All activities are underpinned by a shared ethical practice, reflecting our social responsibility to build trust in research, remain accountable to the public as funders, and make research accessible to diverse audiences.
- 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. The University has a dedicated team (5.8 FTE) for Research Culture activity at the institution, which embeds research culture in every aspect of research excellence, the reviewing and addressing of research misconduct, and research integrity. Our Research Culture Strategy 2023-2028 has 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

Up until July 2025, four distinct, targeted projects sat underneath these objectives. These projects have now been embedded into business as usual both within the Research Culture team (for example, the positive action development initiative targeted at research staff at grades 8 and 9 who have certain protected characteristics) or in specialist teams across the University (e.g. the Open Research team). The Research Culture team also deliver training for researchers on how to embed EDI principles in research design and practice to ensure research integrity (e.g. diversifying tissue samples in medical research to ensure research findings have greater integrity and are more applicable in the real world). The Research Culture Steering Group provides oversight for the strategy and for research culture spending.

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). As subscribers to UKRIO, the Introduction to Research Integrity, a four-module e-learning course, is also available.
- There is a dedicated Researcher Development and Research Culture team committed to enhancing research culture at Leeds while also 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 run a variety of specialist training in topics including bioinformatics, version control with GitHub, R programming, Python and reproducible scientific code development.
- The University Fellows Development Community supports the professional and career development of our Fellowship holders, providing continued support throughout their award and preparing them for the next steps.

Additional Information

- The Research Culture Pulse Surveys have previously played a vital role in monitoring and evaluating how the Research Culture team embed a positive and inclusive research culture across the institution. This includes understanding the confidence the research community has in the University to improve the culture, and to help identify the areas most in need of improvement. As of 2025, the Research Culture Pulse Surveys have been paused, but Research Culture questions have been embedded in the Employee Engagement Survey. In February 2025, a total of 2,411 colleagues responded to the research culture questions. These results not only provide valuable comparison with the two rounds of Research Culture Pulse Surveys undertaken between late 2023 and early 2025 but

also strengthen confidence in the reliability of the pulse survey findings. The 2025 survey indicates encouraging progress. 62% of colleagues agreed that their contributions to research culture are valued, compared with 41% in November 2023, while 53% viewed the overall culture as healthy and supportive, up from 33% over the same period. 47% agreed that research culture is a priority in their school or department, broadly consistent with 46% in late 2023. Nevertheless, challenges remain. Only 24% felt that all research roles are equally valued, and 20% that all research outputs are valued equally. These areas will require continued focus. The results are informing the University's Research Culture Strategy and the ongoing institutional action plan, ensuring that strengthening research culture remains central to promoting the highest standards of research integrity.

- The Research Regulatory Compliance Team supports externally regulated research through its research governance, audit and site monitoring activity 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 and established the Declaration on Knowledge Equity, which captures the collective commitment and aspiration to reduce inequality by increasing access to knowledge. The Network launched in April 2023 and to date there are 411 individuals, 49 organisations and 28 Higher Education Institutions that have signed and committed to the Declaration, from 69 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. Over the past year, our partner institutions, VU Amsterdam and the University of Salford, have also hosted Knowledge Equity Symposia, marking their signing of the Declaration and reaffirming their ongoing commitment to its principles and the network.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Research misconduct allegations are treated seriously and handled directly via the office of the University Secretary and Registrar in accordance with the Protocol for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research (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. The University Audit and Risk Committee receives an annual report which includes

details of cases dealt with through the Protocol and the Whistleblowing Code of Practice.

- Faculties report on research culture challenges and develop action plans as part of the annual Integrated Planning Exercise.
- 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 intended 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.
- Each FREC submits an annual report to UREC, which includes an overview of the number of research ethics applications received. During the 2024-25 academic year, the FRECs received a total of 1375 new research ethics applications, of which 418 were considered via the proportionate model for lower risk projects. (In 2023/24, there were 1261 new research ethics applications, including 445 proportionate reviews).
- For PGRs, research ethics and data management are reviewed at key milestones: the first progress report (6 months), transfer stage (12 months), and annual reviews thereafter. Ethical approval must be confirmed before examination, and a data management plan is required by the 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. For clinical trials involving medicines and LTHT regulatory and delivery risks are reported to the UoL and LTHT Joint Governance Committee.

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 2024 – 31 August 2025)

- Since joining the UKRN Open Research Programme in early 2024, the University of Leeds has continued to strengthen its role as a core member of the UK open research community through key initiatives such as the Train the Trainer programme. Alongside this, the University has established the Leeds UKRN and

launched the Open Research Hub and Open Research Champions Network in November 2024, to foster dialogue, collaboration and practical support for embedding open research practices. As a case study institution for the Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) project, Leeds continues to pilot frameworks that inform sector-wide embedding of open and responsible research into HR processes. These activities not only enhance research culture locally but also directly contribute to Leeds's Research Culture Strategic Plan and strengthen institutional unit-level PCE statements for REF2029

- In December 2024, the University of Leeds established the Data Access and Retention Group (DARG) as a formal sub-group of the Information Governance Oversight Group. DARG serves as the official mechanism for reviewing, approving or rejecting access requests to controlled-level data within the University's Research Data Repository, as well as for assessing more complex data deposit requests. The Group's overall aim is to ensure good practice in data governance, to reduce risks, increase transparency and facilitate open research.
- The Data Storage and Classification Task and Finish Group commissioned by the University of Leeds Open Research Group has concluded its work. In March 2025, the Group published a Research Information Management Guide which aims to provide researchers with clear guidance on appropriate data handling practices for data classification tiers. It is designed to help reduce the risk of data loss and unauthorised access of data.
- In May 2025, the Libraries Research Data Service published a set of principles to guide decision-making around data deposit requests. These principles were endorsed by the Data Access and Retention Group and are intended to ensure that deposits align with ethical, legal and institutional requirements.
- In response to the changing geo-political climate and the increased scrutiny universities are under to consider future partnerships from an ethical perspective, the University's new Ethical Decision-making Framework for Research was approved by the Ethics and Values Committee in June 2025. The Framework supports staff to make ethical, evidence-based decisions on which partnerships to pursue and includes a score-based approach to determine the level of risk. The Framework ensures increased consistency and equity in the decision-making but also supports greater self-assessment and empowers researchers to mitigate the ethical risks and be accountable for the research. This Framework sits alongside the Ethical Decision-Making Framework, which was approved in February 2024, and sets out a model for ethical decision making that is aligned to our University values.
- The Research Ethics training modules on Minerva have been updated and now include new content to support Phoenix ethics applications, autoethnography and case studies to enhance learning.
- Reminders for completion of research and academic integrity training are now embedded into key PGR progression points, including the First Formal Progress Report (month six), transfer stage (12 months), and at the Annual Progress Review (APR).
- A new process has been introduced to monitor completion of the PGR Academic Essentials Unit within the first six months of registration, with quarterly follow-up prompts to ensure compliance. An escalation process for non-completion – to

PGR Academic School Leads – is currently in development, alongside a similar monitoring process for the Advanced module.

- Introduced this academic year, UKRIO now run an annual ethics reviewer training session for staff involved in research ethics review at the University of Leeds.
- As part of our commitment to secure and responsible research practices, the University of Leeds has adopted the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework (TREF) developed by the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA). TREF provides a structured approach to identifying and mitigating security risks in international research collaborations, particularly in areas vulnerable to misuse or subject to export controls. In alignment with this framework, we have introduced a new international visitor policy to strengthen oversight of external engagement. Additionally, we are working closely with the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (FEPS) to identify and assess all sensitive research activities - a key recommendation from the TREF. These measures enhance our ability to protect academic freedom while ensuring compliance with national security obligations.
- By January 2025, the new online research ethics application and review system, Phoenix, had been rolled out successfully to all Faculties. The improved user experience, as well as growing institutional awareness of the system, has led to an increase in the number of applications submitted.
- The Faculty Research Ethics Committee Chairs' Forum has been reconvened and met a number of times during 2024/25 to provide peer support, share and discuss best practice, consider standardised/harmonised ways of working, exchange views and reflect on progress and plans for future developments.

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

- 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 new Concordat to Support Research Integrity.
- Progress to date has been encouraging in the Trusted Research arena. The adoption of Trusted Research Excellence Framework has helped embed a more consistent and proactive approach to research security across faculties. The international visitor policy has already improved visibility and accountability in hosting arrangements, and our collaboration with FEPS will lead to a clearer understanding of where sensitive research resides and how it can be protected. These developments mark an important step forward in strengthening our

institutional resilience and ensuring our research continues to thrive within a secure and ethical framework.

- Over the past year, the Trusted Research team has expanded its engagement at both national and international levels, strengthening the University's position in the research security landscape. Nationally, we have become active contributors to key sector groups including the Higher Education Export Control Association (HEECA), the Russell Group Trusted Research Group, and the NPSA Trusted Research Forum. We have also participated in events hosted by Universities UK (UUK) and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA), which have provided valuable opportunities to share insights and align our practices with sector-wide developments. HEECA has supported our understanding of export control compliance in the context of academic research. Internationally, our involvement in the European Export Control and Academic Research Organisations (EECARO) conferences has enabled us to learn from peer institutions across Europe. These engagements have offered valuable perspectives on how research security is being embedded into university governance and operations abroad. EECARO brings together academic and regulatory communities to discuss export controls, dual-use technologies, and institutional responses to emerging risks. This growing network of collaboration has informed our own policy development and helped shape our approach to safeguarding research integrity in a global context.
- Following the pilot in summer 2024, a wider programme of research ethics audits was rolled out in 2024/2025 and included schools in four out of the five Faculty Research Ethics Committees. It is expected that audits will be carried out across all FRECs from January 2026 and further training will be provided. The audit framework has been updated following the lessons learned from the pilot and written guidance for auditees is currently being developed. Research ethics approval letters are also being updated to help raise awareness amongst researchers of the possibility of their study being selected for audit.

Future Developments for 2025/26 Academic Year

- The Research Ethics Policy Task and Finish Group's first meeting was held in September 2024. Its discussions have been steered by the scoping review of activity carried out last year and gaps in the current policy have been identified with suggestions provided to address these. Recommendations for supplementary guidance to support the main policy have also been outlined with the expectation that a concise policy will be considered at the November 2025 meeting of UREC and guidance covering individual areas of activity will be finalised later on in the year.
- A Task and Finish group exploring institutional support mechanisms for researchers conducting emotionally challenging research will be set up in 2025/26 following the successful launch of a peer-to-peer support network for such researchers. Co-organised by the Research Culture team and LSSI, the T&F group will include researchers and research professionals who are able to review and

make recommendations for institutional policies and processes to ensure researchers conducting emotionally challenging research are adequately supported.

- It is expected that the risk-based approach to the ethical approval of research studies involving Artificial Intelligence, which was being considered by the now disbanded Working Group on Artificial Intelligence Technology in Research, will be submitted to the new Artificial Intelligence Steering Group for approval early in the 2025/2026 academic session.
- Foundational training on the use of generative AI is in development and scheduled for rollout to PGRs in early in the 2025/2026 academic session. The guidance for PGRs on the use of generative AI in research degree candidatures continues to be reviewed and updated in response to feedback and emerging issues.
- Looking ahead, the University is exploring several initiatives to further strengthen its trusted research and integrity framework. One key area of focus is the consolidation of due diligence processes across departments. Currently, various teams undertake checks independently, which can lead to duplication and inconsistency. By bringing this work together, we aim to establish a more coordinated, efficient, and best-practice approach to institutional due diligence. In parallel, we are examining how best to support research into defence-related programmes, in response to shifts in the national funding landscape. This includes ensuring that researchers engaging with defence funders are equipped with the right guidance, safeguards, and compliance mechanisms to navigate sensitive areas responsibly. These developments build on our adoption of the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework (TREF) and reflect our commitment to continuous improvement in research governance.
- The PGR academic misconduct procedures are currently under review, with implementation expected early in 2025/2026. The revised procedures will encompass a broader range of offences in assessed work – including fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation of data – with appropriate penalties. Cases involving published work or which include the supervisor will continue to be addressed under the Protocol for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research.
- Phase one of the Deep Dive into Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance, as requested by the Regulatory Oversight Group, is ongoing and currently focused on ensuring appropriate and effective resourcing structures within relevant teams in order that the University continues to meet its internal and external compliance requirements; demonstrates research integrity aligned with our values; and delivers operational good practice.
- To address potential challenges around authorship, new training has been developed to help researchers and professional staff understand the ethics of authorship, avoid disputes and how to manage issues fairly.
- In collaboration with UKRIO, the researcher development programme at Leeds has been expanded to include “Understanding Research Ethics” workshops for

PGRs, which will run regularly throughout the year as part of the QUEST programme.

- The Terms of Reference for the Faculty Research Ethics Committees are currently being 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.
- For health and social care research involving the NHS significant national changes are scheduled for 2025. This includes the implementation of new Clinical Trial Regulations for CTIMP trials and an overhaul of the system for submitting studies for national ethical approval. University organisational procedures and training will need to be developed to support local compliance linked to these national changes.
- In the area of research tissue banking a new version of the IT system underpinning HTA compliance is being implemented. This system is linked to the joint licencing arrangement with the trust and involves significant work linked to both the planning and implementation.
- University of Leeds sponsorship of human clinical trials involving medical devices falling under the remit of the UK Medical Device Regulations has not yet been undertaken. Work will take place within the next academic year to plan for moving into this new regulatory space.

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.

Open Research Champions and the Open Research Hub

- Open Research is about making research more accessible, transparent and collaborative. At the University of Leeds, this is being advanced through two linked initiatives: the Open Research Champions, academic leaders who advocate for open practices in their schools, and the Open Research Hub, a website resource providing tools, training, and examples of good practice across the research lifecycle. Together, they provide both people and resources to embed open research across the University.
- The Champions, who are Directors of Research and Innovation, promote open access, open data, and wider engagement while tailoring advocacy to their disciplinary contexts. Their involvement has strengthened links between faculties and Library Research Services, ensuring support is both relevant and practical. The Hub complements this work as a central point of reference, signposting University services and external tools such as preprint servers, the Open Science Framework, and Octopus.

- Good practice has emerged through targeted advocacy. In the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, Champion Dr Penelope Goodman is co-leading a session on co-creation, participatory research, citizen science, and advisory boards as open research practices. In the School of Earth and Environment, Champion Professor Ben Murray is co-organising Open Research in SEE: Beyond Open Access, exploring open practices, Copernicus Publications, and Wikimedia. These examples highlight how Champions adapt open research to their schools' needs and demonstrate the benefits of embedding open practices.
- The impact of this combined model is clear: 39 Directors of Research and Innovation across seven faculties have been met with regarding engaging researchers in and advocating for open research; 220 members are active in the Leeds UK Reproducibility Network and Open Research Community, a University of Leeds community of practice that fosters dialogue and collaboration; and tailored training is being delivered through the UKRN Train-the-Trainer programme, which equips researchers to become trainers themselves and deliver discipline-specific workshops. By pairing academic advocates with a central online hub, Leeds is developing good practice in embedding open research as a sustainable, cross-disciplinary norm. (At Leeds, the first cohort of eight Open Research Training Leads has been recruited – seven have completed training, with two already delivering workshops to colleagues, and further sessions are in preparation. Recruitment for the second cohort is also now underway).

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 process for investigating allegations of research misconduct is the Protocol for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research (the Protocol) (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. It is expected that the revised Protocol will be approved and implemented in the 2025/2026 academic year.

- 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.
- 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 that fall outside the scope of the Protocol), so an impartial investigation can be conducted. It is expected that the revised Code of Practice will be approved and implemented early in the 2025/2026 academic year.

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

- Equality and Inclusion Policies
- 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. We previously developed a dedicated Pulse Survey covering research integrity, ethics and research misconduct, the information from which was used by the Research Culture Steering Group and related services to embed a supportive environment where concerns around research integrity could be raised and addressed. In response to the hiatus on the Pulse Surveys, the Research Culture team are redesigning the website to highlight the channels through which unprofessional behaviour can be flagged to the team. Engagement is a large part of this, and we have two full-time individuals within the team dedicated to engagement and embedding best practice across the institution. Additionally, the Research Culture team have co-led (with the Equality and Inclusion Unit) a project exploring unprofessional behaviours in research. The findings of this work have been escalated through various fora within the University and will be shared, along with recommendations, on an internal SharePoint page before the end of 2025.
- 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. There were 10 cases of academic misconduct identified in PGR assessed work during the last academic session (in section 2B). All but one occurred at the early, transfer stage. While this represents a slight increase compared to the previous year, the overall number remains proportionally low. This trend is considered indicative of improved engagement with academic integrity principles and the successful embedding of Turnitin screening processes, introduced in 2023/24.
- Although no cases under the Protocol required formal investigation, there appeared to be a need to ensure clarity around the proper attribution of authors of publications and the source of published data. The work underway to develop training on this matter (referenced in the section on Future Developments for 2025/26) will help to raise awareness and understanding of the issue.

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 about ongoing investigations should not be submitted. An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigations 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.

	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	10 (PGR)	10 (PGR)	1 (PGR)	9 (PGR)
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	2	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
Other	1 (related to the research practice used)	0	0	0
Total:	13	10	1	9#

One of the ten plagiarism cases is ongoing and has been referred to the Committee on Applications (after being upheld in a School-level meeting).