

University of Suffolk-Annual statement on research integrity

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Suffolk
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	04 July 2023
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	<u>Research Governance University of Suffolk (uos.ac.uk)</u>
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Emma Bond Pro Vice Chancellor Research
	Email address: e.bond@uos.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	Mrs Andreea Tocca Head of Research Development
	Email address: a.tocca@uos.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

The University of Suffolk is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity in its research, and places ethics and integrity at the heart of its decision making. University of Suffolk upholds the commitments outlined in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and is committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat by providing a framework in support for good research conduct and its governance. Preparing and publishing our annual statement on research integrity demonstrates our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of research.

The University of Suffolk Research Ethics Committee is responsible for advising Research and Enterprise Committee on the development, implementation and review of institutional procedures and guidelines relating to ethical issues arising from teaching, research, and other related institutional activities. The role of this interdisciplinary Committee is to be proactive in relation to emerging issues of institutional, national, or international significance. The Committee oversees research integrity across the University, including monitoring compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Research Ethics Committee (chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research) members are the Research Institute Directors, Head of Research Development, Head of Research Management and one Lay member. The committee's composition reflects a diverse range of perspectives and expertise, which is essential for ensuring comprehensive and well-informed decision-making.

The University has clear research ethics related policies and framework in place regarding research integrity. By establishing such policies, the University demonstrates its commitment to upholding ethical standards and promoting responsible research conduct. Information about University policies and procedures is provided to new staff and students as part of their formal induction programme. Information about new policies is communicated to the research community via a range of different platforms including 1-2-1 research inductions, 1-2-1 meetings with staff with significant responsibility for research, internal communications, researcher development programs, research newsletters, university-wide announcements, as well as Schools and course program handbooks. Individual training needs are identified through annual appraisal processes and discussions between staff and line managers and students and their supervisors. The policies are readily available to the university staff and students through the University's intranet (Intranet Research Pages). This accessibility ensures that staff and students can easily access and refer to the guidelines and requirements pertaining to research integrity. This approach ensures that research integrity is consistently communicated and embedded across the institution. By utilizing the annual appraisal process, the University of Suffolk ensures that individual learning needs are identified and incorporated into training and development plans. This enables staff, researchers, and students to enhance their skills and knowledge in research integrity areas relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

The outcome of the Internal Audit conducted in 2022 was Good Assurance. One of the audit's objectives was to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements in place to govern research projects. This included various aspects such as approval processes, due diligence, contract management, handling allegations of research misconduct, and adherence to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The findings and recommendations from the internal audit support the ongoing enhancement of research integrity and the university's commitment to upholding the principles outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

A copy of the Annual Statement on Research Integrity is also published on the University's Research Integrity webpage. Relevant third-party organisations (such as funders, journals, professional and regulatory bodies) will also be informed of any allegations which proceed to a formal investigation.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

It is the University commitment that all researchers should receive appropriate research training and research development opportunities to enable them to conduct research to the highest standards.

A new Research Hub-Training, tools and resources webpage has been created in 2022 to bring together internal and external resources to support research integrity and ethics in one place. The University's Research pages dedicated to the Research Ethics and Research Governance provide access to supporting documents that can assist staff and students in navigating the ethical review process. These documents include guidelines, templates, checklists, and other resources that provide guidance on ethical considerations and requirements.

The University of Suffolk has also become a subscribing member of the [UK Research Integrity Office \(UKRIO\)](#). UKRIO's comprehensive guidance documents, toolkits, and resources are widely disseminated to the university staff via Newsletters, 1-2-1 research inductions, Researcher Development Programme, and the Research Resources Hub. As a subscribing member, the University of Suffolk has benefited from UKRIO's expertise and insights in policy development and implementation, ensuring alignment with national best practices.

Since June 2022, research integrity training has been compulsory for all University staff on research contracts, ECRs, academic staff on learning, teaching and research contracts and all staff submitting funding research applications (academic or professional services). Online research integrity training has been licensed from the Epigeum. This initiative provides evidence of comprehensive, consistent training in responsible conduct and best practices, and support us as an organisation in incorporating the latest research developments and guidelines. 83% of the staff with responsibility for research has completed the training between June 2022 to May 2023. Information about the Research Integrity Epigeum training is included within our Research pages, and it is also signposted via newsletters and University wide announcements.

We have organised two face- to- face training workshops as part of the Research Development programme 2022-2023 attended by 23 staff members on research contracts, ECRs and academic staff on learning, teaching, and research contracts. The additional workshops were designed to help researchers understand and navigate the research ethics processes and procedures specific to the University of Suffolk.

The following policies and procedures for supporting and promoting research integrity have been updated, approved, and implemented in 2022/2023:

- Research Ethics Governance Framework version 3 dated October 2022
- Research Misconduct policy version 4 dated November 2022

The University Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved the statement during at the May 2023 meeting.

The statement was also noted at the Senate meeting in June 2023 and at the University's Executive Board meeting in July 2023. The review and approval process by the University Research Ethics Committee, Senate, and Executive Board demonstrates the commitment of the university to research integrity and its efforts to ensure transparency and compliance with ethical guidelines.

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

Progress has been made against all the activities mentioned in the University's 2021/22 Annual Research Integrity Statement. This indicates our commitment to improving research integrity and fostering a culture of responsible conduct within the institution.

Moving forward into the 2023/24 academic year, we have several plans for further developments:

- It is planned for all Chairs of the School Ethics committees to complete the ARMA Chair Training. This training would equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively oversee and lead ethical review processes within their respective schools.
- We will build on our existing research integrity training and the research development programme to address current and future needs related to research integrity and research governance. This will include workshops focusing on potentially high-risk and sensitive research areas. Workshops on Open Research will also be delivered, indicating a commitment to promoting open and transparent research practices.
- We are considering the establishment of a network of ECRs as Research Integrity Champions. These champions would promote good research practices within their respective Schools and Research Institutes.
- We are considering the implementation of a new online ethics application system that integrates the undergraduate, postgraduate taught, PGR and staff application forms. This system will facilitate easier submission, review, and tracking of ethical review applications.

These planned developments demonstrate our ongoing efforts to strengthen research integrity practices, provide appropriate training and support, and streamline ethical review processes. By implementing these initiatives, the University of Suffolk aims to foster a research environment that upholds the highest standards of integrity and promotes responsible and ethical research conduct.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct.

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

The University Research Misconduct policy (version October 2022) outlines the processes which should be followed when complaints of misconduct in academic research are brought against any student or member of staff whose research is liable to bring the University of Suffolk into disrepute. We are committed to promoting and supporting a culture of research integrity that discourages unacceptable behaviour by dealing seriously and sensitively with all allegations of research misconduct. The policy was approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (October 2022), Research Management Group (November 2022) Research and Enterprise Committee (November 2022) and Senate (March 2023).

The University's named contact for matters relating to research integrity and misconduct is the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research. Concerns relating to the integrity of research conducted under the auspices of the University may also be addressed to the Head of Research Development. Following the implementation of the updated policy and procedure, a dedicated webpage will be created to raise awareness of university expectations. We will continue to ensure that all staff, researchers, and students receive regular training to increase awareness and understanding of misconduct issues and reporting mechanisms.

By making information about the Research Misconduct policy readily available and offering advice and resources via the Research Resources Hub, Research Newsletters, University wide communications, 1-2-1 research induction and 1-2-1 meetings with staff with significant responsibility for research, the University of Suffolk demonstrates its commitment to maintaining research integrity and provides a supportive environment for researchers. These resources empower individuals to raise concerns and address any potential research misconduct, thus upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct.

We foster a supportive and inclusive research culture by providing a research mentoring programme for all staff on research contracts only and staff on learning, teaching, and research contracts and ECR support network. We encourage open dialogue and create an environment where individuals feel comfortable seeking advice and reporting concerns.

There have been no reported cases of allegations relating to research misconduct made against any staff and student at the University of Suffolk.

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

There have been no reported cases of allegations relating to research misconduct made against any staff and student at the University of Suffolk

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