

UWS Annual Statement on Research Integrity for the academic year 2022-2023

This annual statement detailing the activities that enhance, develop, and strengthen research integrity has been prepared by the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) in accordance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The statement is approved annually by the Court of the University and is received through the University's Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee for assurance purposes. It is also shared with the University Senate for assurance purposes.

This statement along with all previously published Annual Statements can be found [here](#).

This annual statement covers the period 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023.

Section 1: Key Contact Information

Name of Organisation	University of the West of Scotland
Type of Organisation	Higher Education Institution
Date approved by Governing Body	<i>Expected date: 27 November 2023</i>
Web address of organisation's research integrity page.	Academic Integrity & Ethics (uws.ac.uk)
Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity.	Prof Milan Radosavljevic, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Engagement)
	Email: milan.radosavljevic@uws.ac.uk
Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity.	Helen Kennedy, Head of Research
	Email: helen.kennedy@uws.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 the West of Scotland (UWS) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of research excellence and integrity. This statement sets out the actions and initiatives undertaken at UWS to further enhance and sustain integrity in research during the academic year 2022-2023.

UWS fully upholds the principles outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK, October 2019) and this statement outlines our progress towards these principles: honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication,

care and respect, accountability.

The University's research integrity framework is overseen by the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee which reports to the University Senate and oversees all matters of research integrity and ethics on behalf for the University. These committees remained in place during academic year 2022-23 although the membership was slightly revised.

The Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee reconstituted the former School Ethics Committees to become School Academic Integrity and Ethics Committees from 1 August 2023. The new School committees have a revised remit and terms of reference to incorporate additional responsibility to support the development and enhancement of the research integrity framework.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Engagement), Professor Milan Radosavljevic, leads the University's endeavours in the continuous improvement of the policy, procedures, guidance, and practice in relation to research integrity. He is Chair of the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee, Chair of the University Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee, a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive and a standing member of the Senate of the University.

The policy framework to support all research and innovation activities, including support for matters of research integrity is described in the UWS Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Innovation Policy Statement. This policy statement was introduced in 2018 as part of an overall review of all University policies at that time. The Policy Statement sets out the UWS approach to fostering a positive research culture and compliance with legislation in the conduct of our research and research related activities. During academic year 2022-2023 a refreshed equality impact assessment of the statement following minor updates was undertaken.

An annual review of the UWS [Academic Freedom Statement](#) including equality impact assessment was undertaken by the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee. Academic integrity means a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values¹: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. These fundamental values are expected of both staff and students. No changes were made to the existing statement.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review.

¹ [Fundamental Values \(academicintegrity.org\)](https://academicintegrity.org/) | a

During the academic year 2022-23 the new policy, procedures and guidance was approved, as follows, to support and strengthen the institutional research integrity framework.

- [Export Control and Sanctions Procedure](#)
- [Research Data Management Procedure](#)
- [Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Procedure](#)
- [Trusted Research Guidance](#)

An annual review of the Academic Freedom Statement including equality impact assessment was undertaken by the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee. No changes were made to the existing statement.

Within the current University Code of Ethics, there is a formal commitment for schools to ensure that every member and assessor on the School Ethics Committee receives systematic training in ethics. Guidance on research integrity and ethics for undergraduate and post graduate taught students is managed at the programme level. Postgraduate Research Students and Staff continue to be a range of online training modules and resources on research integrity and ethics.

The UWS Trusted Research campaign was a key development during the reporting period. Trusted Research aims to secure the integrity of the system of international research collaboration, which is vital to the continued success of the UK's research and innovation sector. In line with the guidance provided by the UK's Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI), a training seminar and individual meetings with research groups were launched in June 2023 to:

- Outline the potential risks to UK research and innovation.
- Help researchers, UK universities and industry partners to have confidence in international collaboration and make informed decisions around those potential risks.
- Explain how to protect research and staff from potential theft, misuse or exploitation.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Throughout this period both the Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee and the University Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee (UAIEC) members, have been challenged by the Chair to evaluate existing policy support, training and guidance, and, through the establishment of short-life working groups, tasked to review sources of guidance and good practice available to the research sector. Both committees were established during previous academic year.

The review of current procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct has developed into a commitment to create a comprehensive new

Code of Good Research Conduct and Research Ethics. Designed to replace the existing Code of Ethics, the new Code will provide a framework and guidelines for good practice in research, the framework for the ethical review process, guidance on situations involving misconduct, training and development and equality, inclusivity and diversity. The Code will align with the commitments contained within the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and operate in conjunction with other University policy, procedures and guidance.

Embedded in the new Code will be a commitment to review and continuously develop research integrity and ethics training for researchers at all career stages.

A review of leadership at School level has created a matrix of new posts and roles supporting research and innovation. These developments across the four UWS Schools include the appointment of eleven academic staff to the new roles of Associate Leads (People, Culture and Environment). These roles will be pivotal in preparations for the next Research Excellence Framework assessment (REF) as they are tasked to help realise our ambition to offer a collaborative, supportive and safe research environment.

These Associate Leads have joined the UWS REF People, Culture and Environment Sub-Group. In recognition that building an inclusive and supportive research culture will be a dynamic process, the groups focus for the academic year is the development of the UWS Research Culture Action Plan. 2023-2024 will be the discovery phase where this group, supported by the Research Services Department, conducts extensive consultations with researchers, technicians, professional service colleagues and other stakeholders to develop a UWS Research Culture Action Plan supporting a range of themes, including responsible research and innovation.

Support for individual researchers has been augmented through the appointment of a Contracts Manager in the Research Services department who can advise in legal matters relating to research integrity and Trusted Research. Research collaboration due diligence procedures are scheduled for review and updating in the next academic year, building on the work completed during this period and outlined above in section 2B, to ensure that individual researchers have access to resources and support to gauge the level of risk with their international collaborations.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct.

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

The [Policies, Procedures & Guidance | UWS | University of the West of Scotland](#) web page contains approved policies, procedures and guidelines. Published

documents are always the most recent version and are applicable to the current academic year (unless otherwise stated).

The University believes that staff, students and members of the public should feel able to raise legitimate concerns without fear. The Procedures for Raising Concerns documents the established procedures through which concerns can be raised and acted on. This includes staff grievances, complaints by students and members of the public, fraud, bribery, corruption and other serious concerns (Public Interest disclosures), external disclosures and research misconduct.

Formal procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct or malpractice cover three stages –

Stage 1: Preliminary Investigation

Stage 2: Formal Investigation

Stage 3: Appeal process

The University expectations in relation to student behaviour are set out in the University Senate Regulatory Framework: The Code of Discipline for Students and the Student Experience Policy Statement. Allegations against students (including postgraduate research students) of plagiarism or other research misconduct will be dealt with according to the Procedure for Student Discipline and the Student Academic Integrity Procedure.

Allegations of research misconduct against staff will be dealt with under the Complaints Handling Procedure. Where, during investigation of a complaint, it is determined that a disciplinary investigation is required then this will be undertaken in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure.

Individuals are encouraged to try to resolve complaints through the informal procedure where appropriate. Mediation by a trained person, either internally or from an external source, will be considered, where appropriate, as part of the informal procedure.

The procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct are under review in conjunction with the development of the new UWS Code of Good Research Conduct and Research Ethics.

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

Research misconduct is reported through the Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee by each School and the Deputy Chair of the Academic Integrity Committee for cross-university cases.

UWS procedure includes a screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed.

A total of 9 allegations relating to student misconduct relating to failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations were reported to UWS during academic year 2022-23.

Following the stage1 preliminary investigation process, no formal investigations were undertaken because of these allegations.