

# Research Integrity Annual Statement 2024-2025

## 1.0 Key Information

Organisation Name	University of Lancashire
Organisation Type	Higher Education
Date statement approved by governing body	18/06/2025 [Academic Board]
Institutes research integrity web address	<a href="https://www.lancashire.ac.uk/research/integrity">https://www.lancashire.ac.uk/research/integrity</a>
Named Senior Member of staff	Professor Duncan Sayer Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Governance Sub-Committee <a href="mailto:OfficerForEthics@lancashire.ac.uk">OfficerForEthics@lancashire.ac.uk</a>
Named Point of contact	Emma Neil Head of Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit: <a href="mailto:OfficerForEthics@lancashire.ac.uk">OfficerForEthics@lancashire.ac.uk</a>

## 2.0 Introduction

The University of Lancashire is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity which was first published in July 2012 and revised and strengthened in October 2019. The principles and commitments include:

- Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

In compliance with the Concordat, the University is publishing a Statement on Research Integrity on an annual basis. This statement covers the period of September 2024 – August

2025 and has been prepared for the University's Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Ethics Committee to summarise how the University of Lancashire ensures compliance with the terms of the Concordat and meets the expectations outlined within this for both research institutions and individual researchers.

## 2.0 Summary of Activities to Promote Research Integrity and Positive Research Culture

### 2.1 Policies and Procedures

The University sets out its commitment to research integrity in the [Code of Conduct for Research](#), further Strengthened by the [Ethical Principles](#) document which are reviewed annually by the Ethics, Approval or any amendments are made by the Academic Board via the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee.

The University [Policy for Misconduct in Research](#) outlines the process to be followed for investigation of allegations of research misconduct. Details of these policies are disseminated through the academic staff induction and the research student induction, as well as the training programme run throughout the year.

In addition to these policies, other documents are available below:

- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Information Security Policy](#)
- [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) - available via the Staff Intranet
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#) - available via the Staff Intranet
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [Human Participant Research Data Management Policy Statement](#)- available via the Staff Intranet
- [Open Access Policy](#)
- [Responsible Research Metrics Policy](#)

### 2.2 Training and Development

A programme of training in relation to research integrity and ethics is managed through the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit in the Research and Knowledge Exchange Service (RKES) which is further supported by the University mandatory training programme and other training provided by the RKES service. Ethics Committees at School and University level also reflect on case studies to identify and disseminate good practice at all levels.

The following training is available in research integrity and ethics:

- An Introduction to Research Ethics - staff and research students
- Research Integrity and Ethics at the University- academics and research students
- Lay Reviewer Training - Ethics committee members

- Chair and Reviewer Training – Ethics committee members
- Procedures for Ethics Applications – staff and students
- Research Supervisor Workshop: Ethics and Integrity - staff
- Research with Human Tissue (*in addition to this session staff and PGR students involved in research on human samples are also asked to complete the Medical Research Council's Research and Human Tissue Legislation online module and assessment*).
- Two bespoke online research ethics training modules (Ethics in 45 minutes and Ethics for Researchers) developed by Professor Doris Schroeder and Dr Kate Chatfield from the University's Centre for Professional Ethics.

The University remains a member of UKRIO (UK Research Integrity Office), has had a subscription since 2015. The regular programme of webinars and events are publicised to staff and students, as are the resources available through UKRIO. Members of the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit regularly attend these webinars and disseminates best practice to colleagues.

In terms of additional training provided by RKES, the University is also a signatory of the Researcher Development Concordat and the Impacts and Outputs Unit have developed a Personal and Professional Development Programme for Research and Knowledge Exchange to complement the Academic Research and Enterprise Induction Programme.

The Graduate Research School have a dedicated Personal and Professional Development Programme for Post Graduate Research students to provide an overview and full details of all workshops and developmental opportunities available each year including workshops on research methods, research governance and professional conduct.

The specific training in research integrity and ethics is underpinned by a mandatory training programme (5 modules) for staff members which is managed by the People Team. The following modules are mandatory; any anomalies in completion of the mandatory training programme are managed through the Dean of Schools and Director of Services and the appraisal process.

- Information Governance
- Safeguarding Essentials
- Safety, Health and Environment
- Security and Emergency
- Diversity in the Workplace

For some roles in the University, staff are asked to complete additional training. Role-specific training includes:

- Bribery Act Training
- Anti-Fraud Training
- Unconscious Bias

- Prevent
- Lone Worker

### **2.3 External Memberships**

To ensure that the University keeps abreast of best practice in matters related to the Concordat and research integrity, it is a member of a number of external bodies including:

- UK Research Integrity Office
- Association for Research Managers and Administrators
- Laboratory Animal Science Association
- Understanding Animal Research

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

The University is committed to fostering a positive research culture, where all those working on or supporting research can thrive to deliver the best research, within a culture which encourages the highest standards of rigour and integrity. Those in leadership positions which can include Deans, Research and Knowledge Exchange Institute Leads, Associate Deans for Research and Knowledge Exchange have a responsibility to raise awareness of research integrity and foster a collaborative research culture.

The University encouraging research training and career development, as a signatory of the Researcher Development Concordat and a holder of the HR Excellence in Research Award, the university has established a research operations training group, which works to co-ordinate research training opportunities across the institution, making them visible and accessible to researchers. The University is following best practice in supporting researchers and the wider research culture agenda.

The allocation of QR funding from Research England specifically for research culture has provided the opportunity for a number of projects and activities to be taken forward including Early, Mid-Career and Postgraduate Researcher publishing support and writing days to enhance research culture, Equality Diversity and Inclusion: Developing a Portfolio of Good Practice, supporting a systematic, collaborative and impactful research policy workshop.

The University is also continuing to develop the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED) approach across the research project lifecycle, building on the Research and Knowledge Exchange for All (RKE4ALL) a framework for inclusivity in Research and Knowledge Exchange seeks to support the inclusive design and delivery of research by addressing structural inequalities within the research system and integrating EDI considerations to promote research excellence.

## **2.5 Committee and Working Groups Supporting Research Integrity**

A strong commitment to research integrity is embedded within the University's institutional systems. This includes well-established committee structures that provides transparency and accountability on all matters of research ethics, integrity and governance

### **Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee (RKEEC)**

The committee is responsible on behalf of the Academic Board for overseeing the development, implementation and monitoring of University strategies relevant to research, knowledge exchange and ethics. This committee, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) and membership includes Academic representations from Schools and representation from the Professional Services Units.

### **Research and Knowledge Exchange Governance Sub-Committee**

The committee has delegated authority by RKEEC to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's governance systems and related policies. The committee, chaired by the Universities Named Person at the University responsible for research integrity.

The following groups support the committee on matters relating to research integrity and ethics, and provide updates on matters of national or local significance:

- Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)
- Central Ethics Review Panels: HEALTH, SCIENCE and BAHSS (Business, Arts, Humanities and Social Science).
- Human Tissue Oversight Committee
- Sponsorship
- School Ethics (School representatives report on the number of undergraduate and postgraduate taught projects they review).

### **University Central Ethics Review Panels, AWERB and HTOC**

All research involving human participants, their data or tissue and animals requires ethical approval. The University has processes in place for ethical review and approval, supported by a dedicated and knowledgeable pool of ethical panel members and lay members. The Central Ethics Review Panels predominately support the review of staff and postgraduate research students, and Schools have in place their own processes to review undergraduate and postgraduate taught student projects.

The University will maintain oversight of the conduct of researchers through its Governance Framework (Figure 1) which is based upon a committee structure which reports to the Academic Board.

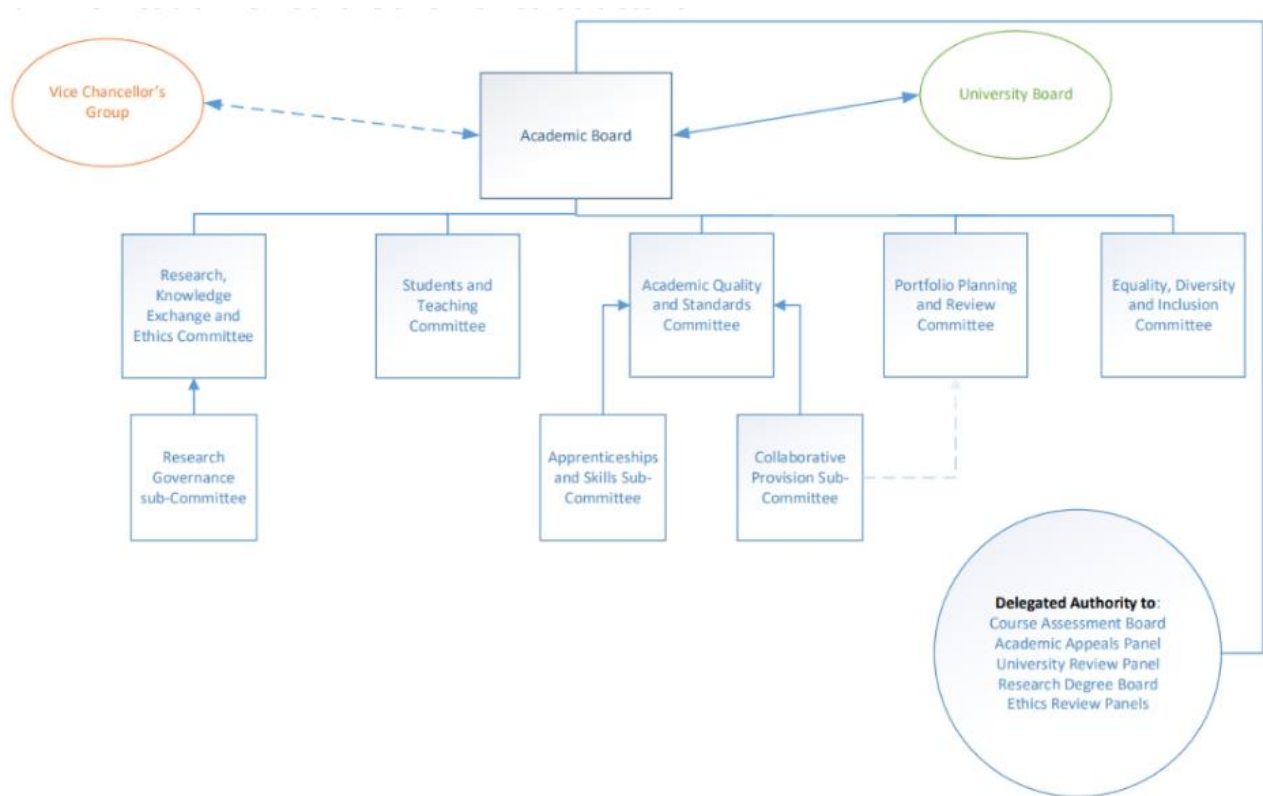


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the Governance Framework at the University.

### 3.0 Changes and Developments during the period under review

The University is continually looking to review its systems and processes and has progressed this work in regard to the governance of human tissue: with the revision of the training delivered to all those carrying our research involving human tissue; training package developed for Persons Designated and revision to Standard Operating Procedures. In addition, to the above activity, the Human Tissue Oversight Committee conducted a full premises audit in January 2025, to provide assurances to the governance committee that the University is working in compliance with the Human Tissue Act.

The University became a signatory to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation in November 2024. The University is committed to embedding environmental sustainability into all aspects of research and innovation practices and reducing the negative environmental impacts that arise. Members have the EIGU supported by the Technical Support Team within LIS have been supporting researchers in terms of adoption and practice of good safety procedures, ensuring researchers are working safely and complying with legislation, are following relevant risk assessments and ensuring the integrity of the facilities. EIGU have been visiting research laboratories throughout the academic year to ensure compliance of laboratory operations and providing acknowledgement of good practice and areas for action.

Other key activities during the last reporting period have focused on supporting researchers, raising awareness of research ethics, governance and research integrity processes. During the past year, a major review and update to the resources available to staff and students was undertaken and a new Research Ethics and Integrity Resource Area was launched. As part of this development work a series of new best practice guidance notes have been produced including guidance on payment methods for Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) and research participants, best practice guidance recording research participants demographic data, sex, gender and sexual orientation.

The EIGU have also been putting in place resources for ethics review panel members including guidance on key principles in reviewing and providing feedback on ethics submissions. To ensure the contribution of members of the ethics review panels is recognized and accepted as an important role a paper has been produced detailing recommended workload allocations. A training session was developed with panel members to discuss case studies to understand the common ethical challenges in artificial intelligence (AI), to help support members develop an understanding on how to review and evaluate ethical issues in AI.

#### **4.0 Reflections on progress and plans for future developments**

The UKRIO will be soon launching a new 'Introduction to Research Integrity' online course in Spring 2025. The University as a subscriber will have access to free places. This will allow students and staff at the University to have access to high-quality research integrity training. Research integrity training is often a mandatory requirement for receipt of grant funding and is a keyway to promote and safeguard positive research cultures and environments. EIGU will be working with Schools, Research and Knowledge Exchange Research Institutes and Professional Services to encourage wider uptake of this training.

To continue to develop resources and guidance to support researchers within the Research Ethics and Integrity resource area including:

A focus on providing additional resources to support researchers undertaking research involving the NHS including support with the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS), guidance to ensure projects meet the Health Research Authorities Participant Information Design and Review Principles, along with Participant Information Quality Standards.

To continue to provide guidance on the use of AI in Research in collaboration with others, a working group on AI in Research to meet on a regular basis to establish policies and guidance to support researchers in the use of AI.

To continue collaboration with researchers, to provide opportunities to develop new best practice guidance. The EIGU is currently being supported by a Professor of Social Policy



and Social Work to develop guidance on researcher wellbeing – to provide support for researchers working on emotionally challenging topics and support for ethics review panel members reviewing such applications.

To develop an authorship guidelines to outline the University’s expectations in terms of authorship and the process by which the University will handle authorship disputes.

## 4.0 Research Misconduct

The University Officer for Ethics and Integrity is a senior academic member of staff with significant experience of research and is responsible for working with the EIGU on key issues relating to Research Ethics and Integrity. The University Officer for Ethics and Integrity will also fulfil the role of the “Named Person” responsible for receiving allegations of research misconduct.

The University requires that all research projects undertaken under the auspices of the University observe a commitment to good research conduct. The University is committed to creating a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. The University [Policy for Misconduct in Research](#) includes various mechanisms to ensure any concerns about research misconduct can be raised with the Named Person confidentially, including the ability to raise concerns with the assistance of an intermediary such as a line manager, Trade Union representative, Guild advice service representative, or colleague. In addition, the Named Person will act as a confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspices of the University.

Details of how to raise concerns regarding research misconduct with the Named Person are clearly outlined on the external [research integrity webpage](#). The process of raising concerns and reassurances around confidentiality are also part of the research integrity training.

Mechanisms to implement and communicate lessons learned from investigations of research misconduct have been incorporated into the University [Policy for Misconduct in Research](#).

### 4.1 Number of Reported Allegations of Research Misconduct 2024-25

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	1			
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and	1			



professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (e.g. data, involvement, interests, qualifications, and/or publication history)	1			
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
Other*				
Total:	3			