

# Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2024/25

## Section 1: Key contact information

1A	Name of organisation	The University of Manchester
1B	Type of organisation	Higher Education
1C	Date statement approved by governing body	23 July 2025
1D	Web address of research integrity page	<a href="#">Research governance, ethics and integrity at The University of Manchester</a>
1E	Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Soren Holm
		<a href="mailto:Soren.Holm@manchester.ac.uk">Soren.Holm@manchester.ac.uk</a>
1F	First point of contact for information about research integrity	April Lockyer
		<a href="mailto:April.lockyer@manchester.ac.uk">April.lockyer@manchester.ac.uk</a>

## Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture

### 2A. Description of current systems and culture

- **Governance**

The Vice President for Research provides strategic leadership for the University's research activities and is supported by the Research Strategy Group (RSG) and Research Operations Group (ROG) which include the Associate Deans for Research representing each Faculty.

The University's Research Compliance Committee (RCC), chaired by the Vice President for Social Responsibility, is responsible for advising on policies and procedures that promote research integrity and good research conduct. RCC reports annually to the Board of Governors, which includes this statement of research integrity for approval.

The University has a Research Integrity Promotion Group (RIPG) that includes senior representation from all three faculties. RIPG is responsible for maintaining and delivering on the University's Research Integrity Promotion Plan.

The University has a Research Ethics Oversight Committee, chaired by the Academic Director for Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity, that sets ethical standards for research involving human participants including the development of policy and guidelines regarding best practice in this area.

- **Policies and Systems**

The University's standards of research integrity are set out in its [Code of Good Research Conduct](#) (Code of GRC). The Code of GRC is supported by policies and procedures that ensure the University complies with regulations and legislation that govern research. This includes the following policies:

- [Code of Practice for Investigating Concerns about the Conduct of Research](#)
- [Policy on the Ethical Involvement of Human Participants in Research](#)
- [Policy on the use of Animals in Research and Teaching Activities](#)
- [Policy on Compliance with the Human Tissue Act](#)
- [Policy for Compliance with The Medicines for Human Use \(Clinical Trials\) Regulations 2004 and subsequent amendments \(Investigational Medicinal Products\) and other Clinical Research](#)
- [Policy for compliance with the UK Medical Devices Regulations 2002 \(UK MDR 2002\) clinical investigation of medical devices](#)
- [Statement of Research Contributions](#)
- [Policy on Responsible International Research Collaborations](#)
- [Publications Policy](#)

The University has robust systems in place to ensure the highest standards of ethical conduct of research involving human participants. Research that requires NHS ethical review and University sponsor oversight undergoes a sponsor review that ensures that the research aligns with the University's ethical principles and policies particularly in relation to data protection.

All other research involving human participants undergoes ethical screening commensurate with its level of risk. Low to medium risk research is either screened via a school-based process for student research or our central proportionate review process for staff projects. All high-risk projects are reviewed by one of our University Research Ethics Committees (UREC). We have four URECs that are all centrally based to ensure independence and consistency. The UREC chairs are members of Research Ethics Oversight Committee.

<b>Applications submitted for UREC review 01/04/2025 - 30/04/2025</b>						
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Unfavourable</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Changed route</b>
<b>Full UREC</b>	175	139	4 <sup>(1)</sup>	7 <sup>(2)</sup>	22 <sup>(3)</sup>	3 <sup>(4)</sup>
<b>Proportionate UREC</b>	421	305	16 <sup>(1)</sup>	49 <sup>(2)</sup>	20 <sup>(3)</sup>	31 <sup>(4)</sup>

Full UREC notes

<sup>(1)</sup> ethical issues not sufficiently considered

<sup>(2)</sup> all withdrawn at screening stage - 1 wrong route, 2 no longer needed, 4 w/d instead of revising

<sup>(3)</sup> 9 with applicants for revisions, remainder with committee (assigned to a meeting or resubmitted to Chair)

<sup>(4)</sup> 1 changed to Prop, 2 to school

#### Prop notes

<sup>(1)</sup> 12 didn't meet criteria & required Full UREC, remainder lacked clarity so unable to form a judgement

<sup>(2)</sup> Majority w/d at screening - 5 wrong route, 6 exempt, 6 replaced by umbrella apps, 7 gave no reason, 8 no response to chase, 17 no longer needed

<sup>(3)</sup> 14 with applicants for revisions, remainder with committee (under initial review or resubmitted to Chair)

<sup>(4)</sup> 9 changed to Full, 22 changed to school

All research involving animals is required to undergo ethical review regardless of whether the research is regulated. The University holds a position that research conducted outside of the University of Manchester must be conducted to the equivalent ethical standards.

The University's [Framework for Responsible Research and Innovation](#) encapsulates the expectations and activities that support responsible research and innovation at The University of Manchester. It is intended to strengthen the coordination between the different agendas that support responsible research and innovation within the University. It builds on University initiatives to advance and pilot RRI in order to develop effective and integrated support mechanisms to assist researchers to conduct their research responsibly.

- **Communications and Engagement**

Guidance and information about good research practice is provided on the [Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity](#) website with links to the [Office for Open Research](#).

Initiatives to support engagement with research integrity are coordinated via the University's Research Integrity Promotion Group.

In depth guidance for researchers on how to conduct their research ethically is provided in our online [digital handbooks](#).

- **Training and Development**

Research Integrity training is mandatory for all research active staff and PGR and must be undertaken every three years. The online research integrity training is provided by Epigeum. Early career researchers and PGR are required to do the full course of 8 modules; Good Research Conduct, Irresponsible Research Practices, Planning Your Research, Managing and Recording Your Research, Data Selection, Analysis and Presentation, Scholarly Publication, Professional Responsibilities, and Communication, Social Responsibility and Impact. Five supplementary modules are encouraged to be taken where they are relevant to the research being carried out; Conflicts of Interest, Research Involving Human Participants, The Care and Use of Animals in Research, Intellectual Property and Export Controls.

Staff involved in research must complete the following 3 modules: Good Research Conduct, Irresponsible Research Practices and Scholarly Publication, although all modules are available and encouraged to be taken.

Completion of the research integrity training is monitored by the Faculties who receive 6-monthly reports from the Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity Team. Current compliance is 41% and will be followed up.

All Schools within the University organise conference/seminar series for their PGR and early career researchers providing opportunities for them to present their research. Early career researchers are mentored by experienced academics and Schools are extending their mentoring schemes to mid-career researchers.

The '[Open Research Fellowship Programme](#)', delivered by the [Office for Open Research](#), provides an opportunity for staff to contribute to developing diverse elements of open research. Successful Fellows receive a buyout of one day a week for up to a year to focus on projects that aim to define, investigate, or facilitate open research practices in their subject area or institutionally. Fellows become part of a network of advocates, promoting open research within their departments and fostering a community of practice. The first seven Fellows were appointed in October 2023 with five Fellows appointed in August 2024.. Our second cohort draws from across all three faculties; from research, research-related , and PS roles, and from across the span of career progressions. These Fellows are developing a range of open research projects including: development of guidance for Data Note publishing in qualitative research; creating an [open and executable book](#) to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the teaching of robotics; and improving the understanding of Open Research practices within the University's public contributor and co-creator communities. The Fellows have also worked to develop high-quality training and provide expert input to the [Open Research Skills Training Programme](#) and an Open Research Skills Framework.. This Framework is helping to shape the development of open research skills across the University and provide researchers with signposting to policy and compliance requirements, systems and tools, services, and support from across the University and wider sector.

- **Leadership and Culture**

The Vice President for Research provides strategic leadership for the University's research activities and is supported by the Research Strategy Team based in the Directorate of Research and Business Engagement which includes a recently appointed Research Culture and Assessment Manager.

As noted below, starting this academic year, Associate Vice-President for Research, Professor [Melissa Westwood](#) leads, on behalf of Research Strategy Group, on initiatives to enhance our institutional research culture and environment by collaborating with colleagues across the University to amplify the great work already taking place locally.

The Vice President for Social Responsibility is a member of RSG and is responsible for setting the standards of good research conduct supported by the Academic Director for Research

Governance, Ethics and Integrity and the Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity Team based in the Directorate of Research and Business Engagement.

Priority 3 of the University's [Research and Discovery Strategy](#) is "an open and responsible research environment" in which the University commits to "complete our strategic investment in transforming our research environment to support open research and a modernised responsible research framework for how we organise, resource, conduct and share our research to meet the highest standards of conduct and integrity; environmental sustainability; equality, diversity and inclusion; and positive economic and social impact."

This academic year, the University has launched its [Research Culture and Environment Hub](#), bringing together support and guidance from across the university to ensure research and innovation is conducted in a way to have a positive impact on all those involved. This Hub also outlines the four areas of our Research Culture and Environment Framework:

- Supporting diverse and rewarding careers
- Enabling open and impactful research
- Upholding the highest levels of responsible and ethical research
- Building collaboration and interdisciplinarity

As a member of the N8 Research Culture and Environment Group and other emerging sector groups (such as the Wellcome Institutional Research Culture Community) the University is involved in ideas and best practice sharing and collaborative opportunities. Internally, a self-organised 'Research Culture Working Groups' regularly brings together professional support and academic colleagues working on diverse aspect of research culture (including research integrity, open research, researcher development etc), to promote the sharing of best practice and cross fertilisation of ideas and initiatives across the institution.

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

- **Leadership**

Starting this academic year, Associate Vice-President for Research, Professor [Melissa Westwood](#) has taken a lead, on behalf of Research Strategy Group, on initiatives to enhance our institutional research culture and environment by collaborating with colleagues across the University to amplify the great work already taking place locally.

We are currently advertising for a position of Associate Vice President for Responsible Research Practice. This role will play a crucial role in promoting the highest standards of research integrity and ethical practices within the University. The AVP will lead the development and implementation of policies related to responsible research practices, ensuring compliance with regulations, legislation, and research integrity. They will coordinate interactions between key internal staff to effectively promote responsible

research practices. Additionally, the AVP will serve as a member and deputy Chair of the University's Research Compliance Committee and chair panels established under the University's Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct.

- **Policies and Systems**

- Publications Policy

The previous [Publications Policy](#) focused on open access. The revised Policy provides clarity about the University's expectations regarding other elements of publishing, notably authorship and research integrity. The University already published guidelines about authorship which align with those published by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), the British Sociological Association and the Committee on Publication Ethics. By making the guidelines policy we provide clarity to our staff and students about what their responsibilities are. Further to some recent research misconduct cases which have highlighted the need, the policy also provides clarity about when the University should be cited as the affiliated institution.

- Procedure for Investigating Potential Research Misconduct

The University's Code of Practice for Investigating Concerns about the Conduct of Research is undergoing a thorough review. Since the current process was implemented in September 2022, we have had 19 complaints and 8 investigations. We regularly review our procedures to resolve implementation issues and adapt to changes in external research policy and practice.

This revised process uses the UK Research Integrity Office template, developed after extensive consultation, to ensure consistent handling of research misconduct allegations across higher education institutions.

- Review of Participant Information Sheet

In an effort to improve engagement with research participants and access to UoM research projects, a revised template for the participant information sheet is due to be released that received extensive consultation and input from a variety of both internal and external stakeholders. The new template also received feedback from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion colleagues to ensure it meets the University's commitment in this area.

- AAALAC Accreditation

In March 2024, the Biological Services Facility received prestigious Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International accreditation demonstrating high standards of its animal care and use program.

- Secure Research Strategy

Work is underway to develop a secure research strategy, which includes a re-evaluation of the data classification system for research to provide a solid foundation for the development of new

platforms, services and policies for data collection, storage, processing and collaboration. This work is in the initial phases and is likely to result in a new Data Safe Haven (DSH)-like environment and a new environment that sits between DSH and Research Data Storage in terms of security and governance controls. The capacity of the existing DSH will be enhanced in the interim.

- **Communications and Engagement**

As part of our Research Culture and Environment work, this year we undertook a comms 'campaign' highlighting each of the four themes of our [Research Culture and Environment Framework](#) in turn. Our work to highlight the theme of '[Upholding responsible and ethical research](#)' included details of the policies, guidance, training, and support colleagues can access to ensure their research upholds the highest standards. We also worked with different members of our academic and professional support staff community to develop a series of [spotlights and case studies](#). These showcased in more detail the importance of different areas of responsible research including Trusted Research, Research Security, Environmental sustainability in research, as well as case studies of how individual academics have engaged with the Responsible Research and Innovation Framework, and the support for Clinical Trials research. These communications and engagement measures sought to 'bring to life' different aspects of research governance with real-life examples.

We have established a Research Culture Engagement Forum, including the AVP Research, all nine school research directors, members of the Research Strategy Team and other key professional support roles. This Forum met four times this year, and aims to share best practice across school and provide support for common research culture, and act as a sounding board for new initiatives.

In February 2025, we launched an [open funding call for projects to enhance our research culture](#). We invited applications for funding of £50,000-£80,000 for projects which align to one of the University's four research culture themes, including upholding responsible and ethical research. Successful projects will commence from August 2025 and will develop and test potential solutions, or increase the scale of already proven practices, to address known research culture challenges

- **Project to develop ethical review processes to address barriers to co-produced research**

The aim of this project is to develop and deliver practical, flexible and workable solutions that address the major challenges to co-produced research identified in previously conducted projects. It will aim to create an infrastructure that is adaptable and able to respond to the changing research landscape and, in particular, the findings and recommendations of the Co-Production Futures Inquiry.

The project established an Ethical Scope Working Group that has developed Guidelines for Ethical Review for Co-Production Research and Community Engagement. The Co-Production Research Review Board that oversees the project has also established working groups to explore and resolve the issues of remuneration and insurance.

- **Trusted Research Awareness**

The Regulatory Compliance Team facilitated awareness sessions at various locations within the University focussed on specific key research areas of concern: the Royce hub, Department of Materials, and a multi-faculty event focussed on “Bio”. These were based on NPSA Roundtable Exercises on Trusted Research. Four different government departments sent representation to attend this event (ECJU, NPSA, NCSC, RCAT). This increased awareness of Trusted Research, and export legislation helps improve compliance.

- **Culture of Care Pledge**

CRUK Manchester Institute formally launched its Culture of Care Pledge at an event in September 2024 which was opened by Dr Penny Hawkins (RSPCA). Prior to the event they ran an internal survey assessing themes in relation to Culture of Care and one common theme was in relation to the emotional labour involved with caring for animals. They have just initiated a position ‘in vivo listening ear’ to provide informal support to members of staff.

- **Training and Development**

A priority for investment by the University using Research England additional funds for Enhancing Research Culture is Supporting Diverse and Rewarding Careers. To that end the University implemented the following projects:

- **PGR incentive for timely submission:** Three-month stipend awards allocated evenly across Faculties to drive positive behaviour and support PGRs’ careers.
- **[Prosper Project implementation](#):** Innovative training developed and delivered by a dedicated post in the Researcher Development Team to build capabilities and opportunities for successful academic and industrial career paths, and to enhance mobility between these pathways.
- **Development internships:** Internships for PGRs to work on a range of projects that will enhance our Researcher Development offer, while also providing a development opportunity for PGRs and improving their employability.
- **An integrated and amplified approach to diversify our early career researcher community and develop an equitable and inclusive research leadership pathway:** Diversify early career researcher community and develop research leadership pathway through evaluation of pilot initiatives mapped against critical early career researcher stages:
  - Pre-PhD three-month research placements for under-represented late-stage undergraduates, including support workshops.

- 6-month post- PhD funding for researchers from under-represented groups.
- **‘Leading Researchers’ programme:** An 8-month collaborative interdisciplinary leadership development programme (commissioned from [64 Million Artists](#)) to enable mid-career and senior academics to raise their research ambitions and achieve their goals. Cohort 3 started in May 2025, with participants nominated by Heads of School and School Research Directors.
- **[Research Leadership Essentials](#):** A new development programme launched in May 2025, specifically tailored to help mid-career academics develop and realise their most ambitious research goals.
- An **export control training package** developed by the HE sector (including the University of Manchester) in collaboration with government has been rolled out to all researcher and research related staff as well as in some PS Directorates. The overall completion rate across the University currently stands at 25%.
- The **Biological Resources Unit (BRU)** at CRUK Manchester Institute has produced several videos for the NC3Rs website.

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

- a) The effectiveness and efficiency of LabCup, the University’s chemical inventory management system, will be reviewed.
- b) UNIAC has been commissioned to conduct an audit of Research Compliance Committee processes to evaluate their effectiveness in assuring the Board of Governors that the University is adequately addressing the risks related to compliance with regulations that govern its research.
- c) The Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity Team plans to utilise AI to improve access to the wealth of guidance information that supports researchers to conduct their research robustly. This will start with a chat bot to support the URECs.
- d) A monitoring process to replace the HRA annual progress reports will be established.
- e) The University’s Policy on the Use of Animals in Research still needs to be reviewed and updated.
- f) We no longer plan to develop an in-house research integrity refresher for experienced staff as Epigeum has introduced a new concise course.  
The Clinical Trials team is piloting the use of AI (Microsoft 365 Copilot) to review, risk assess study related material when making decisions about sponsorship and to address queries related to the classification of study type (type of drug or class of medical device under investigation)

## 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, whistleblowing, 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

The University has the following processes for handling allegations of misconduct:

[Code of Practice for Investigating Concerns about the Conduct of Research](#)

[Whistleblowing \(Public Interest Disclosure\) Policy and Procedure](#)

[Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#)

The University's Code of Practice for Investigating Concerns about the Conduct of Research provides the University's definition of research misconduct which aligns with the UUK definition outlined in its Concordat to Support Research Integrity. This process is currently under review.

Key lessons learned from recent research misconduct cases include:

- Publications:
  - Promotion of the publication policy to ensure researchers know what is expected of them, including guidance for PGR students on what they can publish from their PhD (and with whom).
  - Clearer guidelines required for the use of images in publications, including how to cite repeated use of images.
  - Update Publications Policy to include the requirement for authorship to be decided at an early stage of a project and documented. The decision should be revisited and updated upon agreement when changes take place.
- Promotion of the ownership of research ideas, data, outputs, etc, should be carried out to that it is clear to researchers and students who can take the work forward and in what format.
- Clarification required for exiting staff members on what they can take, e.g. data, and under what conditions they can publish this data, including use of affiliation and co-authors.
- Clarity should be provided in policy/guidance material regarding what a PhD student can/cannot do in relation to research activity when they are a registered student of the University; what they should inform their supervisor about; and when they should/should not affiliate the University to a research paper.

- Guidance and training for supervisors should be reviewed to ensure it clarifies their responsibilities for screening students for potential conflicts of interest and what input they should have in articles published outside of the student's PhD activities.
- Clearer feedback could be provided to Complainants and Respondents about the decision to proceed to an investigation or not, and the role a Panel can have in making someone a Respondent once a case progresses to an investigation.
- The processes to be for when counterclaims are made would benefit from being reviewed.
- Routes of appeal for the different stages, when they can be made and under what circumstances could be made clearer for Complainants and Respondents.

### 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	No. of allegations reported	No. formal investigations	No. upheld in part after investigation	No. upheld in full after investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification	1			
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	4			
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
Other*				
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5</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.