

**ANNUAL RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY STATEMENT
2022-23**

PREAMBLE

This statement provides the University's response to the UK *Concordat for Research Integrity* ('The Concordat') and is intended to inform UK Research and Innovation, Research England, the academic community, other funders of our research, and the public more broadly, how the University of Sussex addresses matters of Research Integrity and seeks to foster a culture of professional integrity.

The Concordat seeks to provide a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. As signatories to, and supporters of, the *Concordat to support Research Integrity*, University of Sussex is committed to the following principles:

- 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.

A message from Professor Sasha Roseneil

The University of Sussex is committed, through the Research with Impact strand of the 2025 Strategic Framework, to all research meeting 'the highest standards of rigour, integrity, ethics and governance'. The University recognises that public trust in our work is paramount to our mission and reputation as an ambitious organisation committed to conducting world-leading research that makes a difference to people's lives. The annual Research Integrity statement evidences our full commitment to the Concordat for Research Integrity and sets out the institutional actions we are taking to embed its principles.

Professor Sasha Roseneil, Vice-Chancellor
University of Sussex

Overview of activities 2022-2023

The following activities and initiatives supported the University's commitment to research integrity in 2022-23:

- Appointment of a Senior International Governance Officer.
- Development of a Trusted Research web resource.
- Sensitive Research and Researcher Wellbeing and Safety guidance.
- The delivery of a varied programme of research training and briefings for researchers and ethics committee members.
- Development of an on-line training module in research ethics.
- Research Ethics Integrity and Governance team training.
- Good Practice in Research Ethics Task and Finish Group.
- Nominated an individual to progress work on standardising SOPs across and within Schools.
- Investigated 7 allegations of research misconduct.

Commitment 1: Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research

The University has established and continues to articulate its key standards for research integrity in three main documents:

1. [The Code of Practice for Research](#)¹
2. [The Research Governance Standard Operating Procedure](#)²
3. [The Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research \('the Procedure'\)](#)³

Initiatives and actions in the 2022-23 academic year

In December 2022 the University welcomed the arrival of a Senior International Governance Officer (SIGO), a new role established to provide high-quality advice and professional support in relation to legislation, policies and good practice when working with international partners.

The SIGO has developed a [Trusted Research](#) webpage to provide advice to researchers on how they can protect themselves and their research when engaging in international research collaborations.

The Senior Research Ethics and Integrity Officers have continued to provide training and advice to support researchers to develop good practice and adhere to expected standards, and to embed a culture of research integrity (see commitment 3 below for further details).

¹ <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=code-of-practice-for-research-june-2018.pdf&site=377>

² <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=research-governance-standard-operating-procedures-june-2017.pdf&site=377>

³ <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=procedure-for-the-investigation-of-allegations-of-misconduct-in-research-june-2018.pdf&site=377>

The School of Psychology has developed a Sensitive Research and Researcher Wellbeing and Safety guidance document.

In September 2022 the University established a Good Practice in Research Ethics Task and Finish Group to consider findings of a report into the interaction and alignment between Teaching and Learning and Research Ethics, to ensure appropriate standards for undergraduate and taught post-graduate research. The group produce a summary of findings and recommendations which, will be progressed over the coming year.

2022-2023 also identified a need to look at standardising SOPs across and within schools to enhance governance efficiency and optimise operational application. This work is expected to conclude over the forthcoming year.

Commitment 2: Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

Initiatives and actions in the 2022-23 academic year

The University's Research Governance and Quality Assurance Committee met on 3 occasions, to ensure that University research is conducted to appropriate ethical and legal frameworks based on good research governance, best practice and support for the development and training of researchers.

The Research Ethics, and Integrity Committee also met regularly through the year to review and recommend on matters relating to ensuring integrity in research, upholding the principles of ethical research and review the outcomes of investigations into research misconduct.

The University's sponsorship sub-committee regularly met to review and consider governance matters relating to sponsored research with NHS partners.

The Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance team delivered training to new members of the Cross-School Research Ethics Committees (C-RECs) and School Research Ethics Officers (SREOs).

Commitment 3: 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

Initiatives and actions in the 2022-23 academic year

During 2022-2023 members of the Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance team in Research and Enterprise Services have delivered and supported a variety of training sessions to support researchers across the University, including;

- Working with Difficult Materials/Researcher Wellbeing.
- Research Ethics and the Ethics Application Process.
- Ethics and Social Media Research.
- Introduction to Ethics.
- Research Skills.
- Research Methods for Economics Students.

The Senior International Governance Officer also collaborated with Research and Enterprise professional services staff to raise awareness of international research governance and the Trusted Research campaign.

Information and guidance on research ethics and research integrity is regularly updated on dedicated pages on Sussex Direct and the REIG team developed an online training module in research ethics and integrity 'Introduction to Research Ethics – Student Module' and an online application form and guidance for projects and modules that require generic ethics approval.

The REIG team themselves attended a variety of NIHR, NHS and UKRI training events to offer continued governance support to new and ongoing University sponsored research and to support expanding areas in impact and Knowledge Exchange, and researcher wellbeing.

This year REIG team training had an increased focus on training related to the trusted research agenda, including.

- Export controls, Sanctions and National Security and Investment Act
- What Foreign Interference looks like.
- Situational Awareness.
- Open-Source Intelligence.
- Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation introduction.

Commitment 4: *Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.*

Initiatives and actions in the 2022-23 academic year

A summary of investigations in allegations of misconduct in research undertaken in 2022-23 is provided below.

There were 7 allegations of research misconduct that were investigated during the 2022-2023 academic year. 4 of the allegations were investigated within the same case as they were against the same Postgraduate Researcher. The others were allegations against 2 members of staff and a further Postgraduate Researcher. 2 of the allegations related to plagiarism, one each to falsification and misrepresentation of data, 1 in respect of improprieties in the conduct, recording and storage of personal research data and 2 related to non-compliance with ethics processes.

There were preliminary investigations in the School of Global Studies, the School of Law, Politics and Sociology, Brighton and Sussex Medical School and the School of Psychology and one case was referred on to a Formal Investigation Panel.

Of the allegations made, 2 were partially upheld and the others were upheld in full.

Most were addressed through education and training or another non-disciplinary approach and one case was referred to the student disciplinary process for consideration.

Cases of alleged research misconduct are reviewed anonymously by the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee to identify any lessons to be learned and a summary of the research misconduct allegations that have been upheld over the last 5 years can be found in table 1, below.

Commitment 5: *Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly*

Initiatives and actions in the 2022-23 academic year

The Social Sciences and Arts C-REC, Science and Technology C-REC, and the Research Governance Ethics Committee alongside the School Research Ethics Officers continued to review and approve thousands of new ethics applications submitted for ethical review during the 2022-2023 period.

The University continues to have membership or representation of the following external organisations and groups;

- UK Research Integrity Office
- Association of Research Managers and Administrators
- Association of University Research Sponsors (AURS)⁴.
- Animal Materials Working Group (AMWG)⁵.

Members of the REIG team continue to represent on the following internal committees and groups.

- Pre-Sponsorship Review Panel.
- Open Research Group.
- Safeguarding Panel.
- Safeguarding in Research working group.

⁴ Association of research-intensive institutions with medical schools who operate within the NHS research environment.

⁵ An initiative of the Sanger Institute which seeks to develop a working framework to address ethical issues in the use and sourcing of animal-derived materials for teaching and research.

Allegations of Misconduct upheld in part or full over the last 5 years.

*** 4 are relating to the same case.**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Fabrication	0	0	1	0
Falsification	0	0	0	1
Plagiarism	0	2	2	2
Misrepresentation	0	0	0	1
Breach of duty of care	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Improprieties in the conduct, recording and storage of personal research data.	0	0	0	1
Non-compliance with ethics processes.	0	0	0	2
Total	0	2	3	7*

A copy of the Procedure can be found on the Research and Knowledge Exchange [webpages](#)⁶

Approved by Council 23rd November 2023