Annual Research Integrity Statement 2022-23

Section 1: Key contact information

Name of organisation: Wrexham University

Type of organisation: Higher Education Institution

Date statement approved by governing body:

Research Committee: 19th October 2023

Academic Board: 8th November 2023

Board of Governors: 24th November

Web address of organisation's research integrity page: https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/policies-procedures-and-guidelines/

Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity: Professor Richard Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research. richard.day@glyndwr.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: Frances Thomason, Head of Research Services. Frances.thomason@glyndwr.ac.uk

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

Introduction

Wrexham University is committed to upholding the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The University continues to use the concordat as a framework to embed a culture and environment of best practice and responsible research. The principles and commitments include.

- uphold the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards

- support 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
- use transparent, timely, robust, and fair processes to handle allegations of research misconduct when they arise
- work together to strengthen the integrity of research

In compliance with the final commitment of the 2019 Concordat, the University's Board of Governors publishes an annual report on research integrity, which has been considered and agreed upon by the University Research Committee and by the Academic Board before being published publicly on the University's external webpages.

Description of current systems and culture

Policies and Systems

The University has invested in a Current Research Information System, Vidatum Academia, which includes an online module for the ethical review of research. All research projects requiring ethical approval, as defined in the University Research Ethics Policy, will be submitted through the online system for approval. The system will be launched in October 2023 to all staff and Postgraduate Research Students. Taught Masters and Undergraduate students will be introduced to the system as a phased rollout. It is envisaged that having an online system will streamline the processes of ethics assessment, categorise research risks and bring transparency so that risks can be monitored and reported regularly.

The University has established a new committee structure for the review of research ethics application form. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) reviews applications considered more than minimal risk, this committee meets once a month and reports to Research Committee. The Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee and Faculty of Social and Life Science Research Ethics Committee (FRECs), review applications considered minimal risk and review applications remotely.

Wrexham University has a comprehensive range of policies and systems that govern research integrity matters and ensure our commitment to the core values set out within the Concordat, including but not limited to the following.

- University Research Ethics Policy
- Regulations on Research Practice
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Communications and Engagement

The University Research Strategy and University Research Impact & Communication Strategy outline the University's vision of research that transforms, supporting innovation, learning and economic growth, through being internationally excellent in originality, significance and rigour.

The Research Office communicate to all staff and PGR students on any policy and procedural updates, sector news, training & development events and research success stories via a Research Monthly Email Bulletin, quarterly Research Newsletter, and internal weekly Campus Talks.

The University run an Open House for Research series four times a year, Research Coffee Morning once a month and Research Culture Café sessions. Both faculties have launched a Research Seminar Series which is open to all staff and students across the University. These initiatives are all part of our ongoing work to promote a positive and inclusive research culture at Wrexham University and create an open and transparent space for researchers to discuss ongoing research projects and ideas collectively.

Externally the University launched Glyndwr Talks Research in 2021, now Wrexham Talks Research, a free public engagement lecture series to invite discussion and debate in a variety of thought-provoking subject areas.

Culture, development, and leadership
The University's Research Committee oversee the integrity of the University's research on behalf of the Academic Board.

The University's Named Person for Research Integrity is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Richard Day. The University recognises that concerns relating to research integrity can be complex and highly sensitive which can impact the emotional and mental wellbeing of those involved. Any person wishing to raise, in confidence, concerns about the conduct or integrity of research conducted under the auspices of the University can do so by contacting the Named Person for research integrity, Professor Richard Day or the named contact point, Head of Research Services, Frances Thomason.

Concerns can also be raised initially at a local level via the Deans of each academic Faculty.

Wrexham University believes all members of our research community have a role to play in developing and promoting a positive and inclusive research culture. The University became signatories of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers in 2021. A working group of concordat champions was established with researchers, research students and professional service staff from across the University. The group actively review the culture and environment of all researchers at the University and is currently conducting a gap analysis of the Research Integrity Concordat.

Monitoring and reporting
The Research Committee meet four times a year and a standing agenda item is 'Review of Research Misconduct Policy and Cases' and 'Review of Promoting Research Integrity'.

The University Research Ethics Committee, Research Finance Officer and University Research Degree Committee produce an update report to the Research Committee quarterly.

The University Research Strategy and Faculty Research Strategies are reviewed at least annually by the Research Committee.

Development needs for staff are identified via the annual Performance Development Review procedure (PDR) and annual Personal Research Plans (PRP) used to generate training and development programmes.

Changes and developments during the period under review
As previously detailed the University has launched the new Wrexham Research Ethics System, introduced a tiered ethics committee structure based on the level of risk involved in a project and has a new public-facing Research Ethics webpage.

In 2022/23 the following training sessions were delivered; Introduction to Research Ethics, Informed Consent Workshop, Introduction to Research Integrity, Managing Risk in Research Workshop, Research Data Management, Confidentiality & Privacy in Research Workshop.

The annual University Staff conference 'Engage' included a session on how good practice in research plays an important component in sustaining a research culture which can flourish. The session focussed on the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and University policies and procedures for research integrity and how this all reflects on creating a good research culture at the University.

A new Research Information Governance Task & Finish has been established, reporting to the Information Governance Committee and Research Committee. The task & finish group have been asked to review or implement the following: Research Data Management Policy, Security Sensitive Research Policy, Open Access Policy, Export Control Policy, Research Records Management and Retention Schedule, Shared Data Storage Digital Solutions, Open Access Data Repository Solutions, Research Participant Privacy Notices, Data Sharing/Processing Agreements, Storage of commercial and security sensitive research data solutions and Data Protection Impact Assessments.

The Research Office has conducted a gap analysis using the UKRIO Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity. As part of this, and to show our commitment that all members of our research community have a role to play in developing and promoting research integrity, two consultations were conducted with staff and research students on research integrity and research misconduct.

Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

The last 12 months have been dedicated to the creation of a new research ethics committee process, the development of new research ethics procedures and guidance, and the launch of a new online application approval form, for all staff and students. Furthermore, in 2022/23 we have conducted a comprehensive review and gap analysis of research integrity and the procedures for reporting and investigating matters of research misconduct and questionable research practices. The University has been able to identify the policy and guidance gaps related to Research Integrity at the University and aims to prioritise these over the next 12 months.

Plans for 2023/24

- The University proposes to commit to and become a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA)
- Establish a new Research Integrity Policy and Research Misconduct Procedure.
- Completion of the tasks in place under the Research Information Governance Task & Finish Group, to strengthen the policies, procedures and guidance in place for best practice in data management and open data.
- Launch of a new REF2028 Strategy and Action Plan which embeds research culture and research integrity in the academic departments of the University.
- New 2023-2025 Researcher Development Concordat Action Plan
- Development of Research Integrity webpages and training resources.

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

Responsibilities for monitoring research misconduct at the University lie within the Research Office reporting to the Research Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for research. Responsibilities for academic integrity lie within the Academic Integrity Team in Strategic Planning and Student Administration. Allegations of research misconduct involving the University staff and students are dealt with according to the provisions of the University's Disciplinary Procedure for Staff and/or the Disciplinary Procedure for Students and the Academic Integrity Procedure or Suitability for Practice Procedure, as appropriate. Related procedures have appropriate principles and mechanisms to ensure investigations are thorough and fair, carried out in a transparent and timely manner, and protected by appropriate confidentiality.

No research misconduct cases were investigated during 2022/23 relating to staff of postgraduate research students.

Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

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