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| Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure |
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# **Policy**

## Summary & Purpose

Wrexham University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics, rigour, and integrity in all its research. It seeks to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of all those involved in the research it produces. The Concordat to Support Research Integrity[[1]](#footnote-2) defines research misconduct as behaviours or actions that fall short of the standards of ethics, research, and scholarship required to ensure that research integrity is upheld. Wrexham University defines Research Integrity as all of the factors that underpin good research practice and promote trust and confidence in the research process. Furthermore, research integrity covers all disciplines and the whole research lifecycle, from the initial idea and design of the project through the conduct of the research and its dissemination. Wrexham University is dedicated to upholding the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The university demonstrates its commitment to research integrity by having both clear, well-articulated and confidential mechanisms for reporting allegations of research misconduct, and robust, transparent and fair processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct that reflect national sector guidance.

Investigations under this policy will be conducted with appropriate confidentiality, care, support and sensitivity and under the presumption of innocence. Any allegations or discoveries of potential research misconduct are subject to timely and thorough investigation which is fair and transparent to all parties.

Wexham University takes all allegations or discoveries of potential research misconduct seriously and requires that all allegations and discoveries be investigated in accordance with this procedure. This procedure recognises that research misconduct investigations can be complex and challenging, and that care should be taken with all those involved throughout the process. Whilst this policy and procedure intends to be as comprehensive as possible, it cannot cover all scenarios that will occur during any specific case. [[2]](#footnote-3)

## Scope

This policy and the supporting procedure can be used to raise concerns about research misconduct by current or former members of staff or students, as well as by third parties external to the University, such as research participants, research funding bodies, journal editors, and members of the public.

This policy and supporting procedure apply to all University staff, research students, and anyone involved in research under the auspices of the University. Persons covered by this policy include, but are not limited to:

* A member of staff;
* An independent contractor or consultant;
* A person with visiting or emeritus status;
* A member of staff on a joint clinical or honorary contract.
* A research student[[3]](#footnote-4) (registered for an MPhil, a DPhil, PhD or a Professional Doctorate). This policy and procedure do not apply to undergraduate students, taught postgraduate students, or other types of students, as these groups are generally subject to the appropriate [Academic Integrity Procedure](https://wrexham.ac.uk/media/marketing/quality-and-student-admin-documents/Academic-Integrity-Procedure.pdf). All taught students at Wrexham University are expected to receive training in both research ethics and conducting research with integrity. If a taught student breaches the university's academic integrity procedures in relation to research conduct, the Academic Integrity team will report the breach and the investigation details to the Named Person for Research Integrity and the Research Office.

For the purposes of this policy and procedure, research broadly refers to all investigations conducted under the auspices of the University that generate knowledge through data collection and analysis, whether funded or unfunded.

The policy and procedure apply to research conducted solely at Wrexham University or in collaboration with external entities. It allows for investigations regardless of the contractual status of the individuals involved and extends to individuals who have left the University.

In cases where staff members have honorary contracts with either the University or the NHS, the organisation responsible for leading an investigation into an allegation will depend on the specific circumstances. Where appropriate, the University may notify and coordinate with a third party regarding any investigation under this policy and may delegate responsibility to an external organisation.

## Definitions of Research Misconduct

Wrexham University applies the definition of research misconduct provided in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf).

Research misconduct can take many forms, including:

**Fabrication:** making up results, other outputs (for example, artefacts) or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, and presenting and/or recording them as if they were real

**Falsification:** inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery, results, findings and/or consents

**Plagiarism:** using other people's ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without acknowledgement or permission

**Failure to meet** legal, ethical, and professional obligations**,** for example:

* not observing legal, ethical and other requirements for human research participants, animal subjects, or human organs or tissue used in research or for the protection of the environment
* breach of duty of care for humans involved in research, whether deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence, including failure to obtain appropriate informed consent
* misuse of personal data, including inappropriate consent process, disclosures of the identity of research participants and other breaches of confidentiality
* improper conduct in peer review of research proposals, results or manuscripts submitted for publication. This includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest, inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence, misappropriation of the content of material, and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for the purposes of peer review.
* legal and professional codes in regards to equality, diversity, and inclusion

**Misrepresentation of:**

* **data**, including suppression of relevant results/data or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence presenting a flawed interpretation of data
* **involvement,** including inappropriate claims to authorship or attribution of work and denial of authorship/attribution to persons who have made an appropriate contribution
* **interests**, including failure to declare competing interests of researchers or funders of a study
* **qualifications**, experience and/or credentials of publication history through undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication
* **fraud** or other misuse of research funds or equipment.

**Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct:** failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers, or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding.

Misconduct in research will not usually include honest and reasonable error or honest and reasonable differences of interpretation or judgement in collecting, evaluating or reporting research results. However, misconduct in research can include acts of intentional omission and commission. The basis for reaching a conclusion that an individual is responsible for misconduct in research relies on a judgement that there was an intention to commit misconduct and/or recklessness in the conduct of any aspect of a research project, including failure to follow relevant policies.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Complainant(s):** This is the person(s) making the allegation. They don't need to be a member of the University.

**Respondent(s):** This describes the person or persons against whom the allegation is made.

**Named Person:** The Named Person at Wrexham University is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research. The University nominates this individual and is responsible for receiving any allegations of research misconduct. The Named Person also initiates and supervises the investigation process, ensuring the integrity of the proceedings.

**Named Person's Delegate:** The Named Person's Delegate at Wrexham University is the Head of Research Services. This delegate receives and acknowledges allegations of research misconduct and, with the agreement of the Named Person, initiates and supervises the investigation process while ensuring the integrity of the proceedings.

**Researchers:** Researchers are responsible for following the Procedure for Research Misconduct when required, acting with honesty and integrity throughout the Procedure, whether as complainants, respondents, or panel members. Researchers are also responsible for engaging with relevant information and training to ensure they are aware of the expected behaviours, policies, procedures, and codes of practice that apply. They are responsible for upholding research integrity and ethics, avoiding actions that could lead to research misconduct.

**Research Integrity Champions:** Research Integrity Champions at the University are responsible for supporting the Named Person, Research Office and researchers across the University in promoting research integrity and best practice. Champions will assist the Named Person and Research Office with any alleged misconduct proceedings, support respondents and complainants through the process of any investigations and act as a contact point for researchers to discuss any queries of integrity or misconduct confidentially.

When conflicts of interest occur in any of the above roles and responsibilities during the investigation, a suitable replacement will be appointed.

## Procedure Overview

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| **Stage & Timescale** | **Purpose** |
| Stage 1: Receipt of Allegations & Preliminary Review  Receipt of allegations will be completed as soon as it is practicable upon receipt of an allegation, within **ten working days**. Any delays to this timescale will be communicated to the Complainant in writing, providing an estimated completion date. | The Named Person or Named Person Delegate will acknowledge receipt of the allegation and conduct an initial review of evidence. Determine if the allegation should be identified as not falling within the scope of this procedure, refer to another procedure, report to professional or regulatory bodies, and continue to Stage 2 of this Procedure. |
| Stage 2: Initial Investigations  The Initial Investigation Stage will aim to be completed within **thirty working days** of receipt. Any delays to this timescale will be communicated to the Complainant in writing, providing an estimated completion date. | A Screening Panel is established to review if there is sufficient evidence of Research Misconduct under this policy. All members of the screening panel possess the relevant training and expertise in the area and have no conflicts of interest. |
| Stage 3: Formal Investigation  The Panel will normally reach its conclusions **within three months** of being established; this is an indication that it will depend on the number and complexity of the allegations under investigation. Any delays to this timescale will be communicated to the Complainant in writing, providing an estimated completion date. | A Formal Investigation is initiated to determine whether the allegations of Research Misconduct are fully upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld at all. This investigation is carried out by a separate panel from the screening panel mentioned earlier. All members of this investigation panel possess the relevant training and expertise in the area and have no conflicts of interest. |
| Stage 4: Appeal  The Appeal Panel should complete its work **within two months** of being convened. | The appeal panel will have the power to reverse or modify the decision or recommendation of the Formal Investigation Panel where an appeal is made in line with the Procedure and sufficient evidence is provided  Procedure |

# **Procedure**

## Stage 1: Receipt of Allegations and Preliminary Review

A person making an allegation or complaint will not be penalised, provided that it is done without malice, in good faith, and reasonably believing it to be true. The Complainant(s) should where possible, in the first instance, attempt to address the issue with either the individual concerned or an appropriate senior colleague rather than raising a concern via this Procedure. They may also wish to seek advice from a confidential liaison individual in the University, including the University Research Integrity Champions.

The Receipt of Allegations Stage aims to assess an allegation of research misconduct received and determine the most appropriate process to investigate or otherwise address it. The primary aim is to determine whether the matter falls under the institutional definition and procedure for investigating misconduct in research.

### Conducted by

The Named Person or Named Person Delegate is supported by the Research Office. Confidential advice can be sought from people outside the Research Office and Named Person at this stage to seek expert or specialised advice.

### Process

Allegations of Research Misconduct can be raised with the Named Person or Named Person Delegate. If initially raised to another individual at the University, the query should be passed on to Named Person or Named Person Delegate to initiate this procedure.

Allegations can be raised confidentially by a Complainant(s) in writing, via phone call or an in-person meeting. The individual in receipt of the allegation can at this stage ask for any evidence or a timeline of events to support the allegation.

### Outcomes

The Named Person or Named Person Delegate will determine whether the allegation of misconduct in research:

1. Falls under the definition of research misconduct and the scope of the procedure and should advance to the Initial Investigation Stage of this procedure.
2. Falls within the scope of another formal process of the organisation and warrants referral directly to it.
3. Warrants referral directly to an external organisation, including but not limited to the research organisation(s) under whose auspices the research in question took place.
4. Is unfounded and does not fit under the University definition of research misconduct, or because it is mistaken or is frivolous or is otherwise without substance and will be dismissed.

The process outlined above will be completed as soon as practicable upon receiving an allegation, typically within ten working days. If there are any delays in this timeframe, the complainant will be informed in writing, including an estimated completion date. The complainant will be notified of the outcome, and if the allegation is found to be unfounded, the complainant will receive an explanation and will have the opportunity to appeal, as detailed in Appendix 3.

## Stage 2: Initial Investigation stage

This stage aims to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of research misconduct to warrant a Full Investigation of the allegation or if alternative actions should be taken.

### Conducted by

The Named Person and the Named Person delegate with administrative support from the Research Office and a review panel of individuals identified by the Named Person. The Named Person will act as the lead Investigator or appoint an individual to lead the initial investigation. A panel of experienced academic staff will be established.

All panel members appointed will confirm that their participation involves no conflict of interest, will be respected confidentially, will adhere to the principles and standards of this procedure, will confirm relevant training in research integrity and will conduct the initial assessment in the timeframe outlined.

### Process

The Initial Investigation Stage will commence following the Receipt of Allegations and Preliminary Review.

* The Named Person will notify both the Respondent and the Complainant of the establishment and composition of the Initial Investigation Panel in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. The Respondent and Complainant may raise concerns with the Named Person or Research Office about the person chosen to carry out the Initial Investigation.
* The Research Office will provide the Investigation Panel with all relevant information, including any correspondence and information already provided to support the allegation(s). The Research Office will keep a complete record of the evidence received and the proceedings, which should be supported by the administrative and other support identified.
* The Research Office will contact the Complainant and the Respondent to gather any information in support of the investigation being conducted by the Initial Investigation Panel. The Respondent will be given a copy of the allegations and a summary of the available evidence and will be afforded the opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing.
* The Initial Investigator Panel shall assess the information obtained and any additional information they require. The Panel's work will include determining whether the allegation is made in good faith, conducting a confidential review and assessment of the evidence provided, and concluding the allegation(s) in line with the possible outcomes.
* As part of the process, in the interests of fairness and impartiality and to help ensure confidence in the process, both parties will have the opportunity to provide input into the investigation, whether in writing or by interview.
* Complainants and Respondents can be accompanied to interviews by a colleague, trade union or student union representative.
* The Initial Investigation Panel can contact relevant witnesses or experts throughout the investigation process.

### Outcomes

After the Initial Investigation Stage, the review panel will determine whether the allegation of research in misconduct:

1. is sufficiently serious and has sufficient substance to warrant a Full Investigation of the complaint under the definitions of research misconduct in this policy and Procedure
2. has some substance, but due to its relatively minor nature or because it relates to poor practice rather than to misconduct, it will be addressed through education and training or another non-disciplinary approach, such as mediation
3. warrants referral directly to another formal process of the University
4. warrants referral directly to an external organisation, including but not limited to statutory regulators or professional bodies
5. Is unfounded because it is mistaken or is frivolous or is otherwise without substance and will be dismissed;
6. Is unfounded because it is vexatious and/or malicious and will be dismissed

### Conclusion

The Initial Investigation Panel will write a report of the outcomes; the standard of proof used by the Initial Investigation is that of "on the balance of probabilities", meaning that the activity was more likely than not to have occurred. The report will provide a summary of the findings and be sent to the Complainant and the Respondent for comment on matters of factual accuracy. The Investigator will consider the responses received, and if they feel that the report includes errors of fact, they will modify the report as necessary. The Complainant and Respondent will be given a time frame of five days to report factual accuracy.

The Initial Investigation Panel will then submit their final report and records/material relating to the investigation to the Research Office, setting out the conclusions of the Initial Investigation stage on the allegation(s). The Named Person will then undertake the following actions depending on the conclusions of the Initial Investigation stage on the allegation(s) under investigation:

* If it is concluded that the allegation(s) is sufficiently serious and has sufficient substance to warrant a Full Investigation of the complaint, then the investigation moves to the Full Investigation stage.
* For all other outcomes, the investigation moves to the Outcomes and reporting stage.

The complainant and respondent will be notified of the outcome, and if the allegation is found to be unfounded, the complainant will receive an explanation and will have the opportunity to appeal, as detailed in Appendix 3.

## Stage 3: Full Investigation stage Purpose

The purpose of the Full Investigation is to review all the relevant evidence and conclude whether an allegation of misconduct in research is upheld in full, upheld in part or not upheld, and if so, the responsible person and seriousness of the misconduct.

### Conducted by

The Named Person will establish a Full Investigation Panel consisting of at least three persons who have not been involved in the investigation at an earlier stage and who have appropriate knowledge and experience to evaluate the issues and relevant knowledge of investigating procedures. One member of the Full Investigation Panel will be appointed as Chair, and the Panel will typically include a member from outside the University. All panel members will be appropriately trained in research integrity.

Members of the Full Investigation Panel are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest, including those that may arise during the investigation. Both the Respondent and the Complainant will be informed about the panel members selected for the investigation. They have the right to express any concerns regarding the chosen panel members to the Named Person or the Research Office. Any declared conflicts of interest will be reviewed by the Named Person Delegate or a designated member of the Research Office to determine whether the individual's involvement in the investigation should be suspended.

### Process

The Chair of the Formal Investigation Panel will regularly report the progress made by the Investigation Panel to the Named Person and Research Office. The Named Person will also provide appropriate confidential information on the progress of the investigation to other relevant parties.

* The Formal Investigation Panel will examine the evidence collected during the Initial Investigation stage, including the report written and submitted by the Initial Investigation Panel. All meetings and evidence requests will be supported and recorded by the Research Office.
* Representatives from various departments at the University may be invited to attend meetings to provide expert advice on any internal staff and student procedures that might affect the investigation.
* The Formal Investigation Panel will interview the Respondent and Complainant, as well as other individuals who might have information regarding key aspects of the allegations and seek any further written evidence when requested. All individuals invited to interview may be accompanied to any interviews by a colleague, a trade union representative, or a representative from the Student Administration and Support teams or Student Union. Legal representation is not permitted under this procedure.

### Outcomes

The Panel will reach a conclusion on the allegation(s) under investigation and may also make recommendations on subsequent actions that the University should take. After the Full Investigation, the Panel will conclude, giving the reasons for its decision and recording any differing views, whether the allegation of misconduct in research is:

1. upheld in full
2. upheld in part
3. has some substance, but due to its relatively minor nature or because it relates to poor practice rather than to misconduct, it will be addressed through education and training or another non-disciplinary approach, such as mediation
4. warrants referral directly to another formal process of the University
5. warrants referral directly to an external organisation, including but not limited to statutory regulators or professional bodies
6. is unfounded because it is mistaken or is frivolous or is otherwise without substance and will be dismissed
7. is unfounded because it is vexatious and/or malicious and will be dismissed

### Conclusion

The Formal Investigation Panel will reach a conclusion on the allegation(s) under investigation as outlined in the above outcomes. The Panel shall write a report, present its findings, give the reasons for its decision, and record any differing views. The standard of proof used by the Full Investigation is "on the balance of probabilities." This means that the activity was more likely than not to have occurred. The Panel may also make recommendations for consideration by the Named Person and/or the appropriate University Senior Team regarding any further action(s) that the University should take.

The outcome of the investigation will be sent to the Complainant and the Respondent for comment on matters of factual accuracy. The Panel will consider the responses received, and if the report includes errors of fact, they will modify the report as necessary.

The Named Person will inform the following individuals of the conclusion of the final formal investigation report: the Complainant, the Respondent, the relevant Faculty Dean, and any relevant third parties.

The University has a responsibility to report Research Misconduct externally to relevant funders, publishers or regulatory bodies. Please see Appendix 2 for further details of the Universities responsibilities and requirements to report research misconduct.

If the allegations of misconduct in research have been upheld, the Vice Chancellor’s Executive Team will be notified. Where the final report contains recommendations and actions, the Named Person will be responsible for taking the recommendations forward, with the support of the Human Resources department and/or the Student Administration and Support department.

If all or any part of the allegations are upheld, the Named Person, the relevant Executive Team and any representatives from Human Resources (for allegations involving University staff) or the Student Administration and Support department (for allegations involving University research students) will decide whether the matter should be referred through the University's disciplinary processes[[4]](#footnote-5) or for other formal actions and will be responsible for taking forward the recommendations with the Respondent(s).

Should the allegations proceed to the disciplinary process, the report of the Investigation Panel will form part of the evidence that the Disciplinary Panel receives, and the Chair of the Investigation Panel will usually present the case to the Disciplinary Panel. All the information collected and brought to light through the procedure will be transferred to the disciplinary process.

Where allegations have not been upheld (in full or in part), the Named Person will take such steps as are appropriate, given the seriousness of the allegations, to support the reputation of the Respondent and any relevant research project(s).

## Stage 4: Appeals

The purpose of an appeals stage is to permit the Complainant and/or the Respondent to appeal in certain circumstances against the findings of an investigation carried out under this Procedure by the requirements of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The outcome of the Appeal Panel is final, and the Complainant or Respondent has no further right of internal appeal against the decision resulting from the completion of the investigation into an allegation of misconduct in research. Appeals emanating from the disciplinary Procedure will follow the relevant disciplinary Procedure in operation at that time.

The full appeals process can be found in Appendix 3 of this document.

# Appendix 1- Procedure for Postgraduate Research Students registered on a University of Chester Award

1. The University of Chester’s (UoC) PGR Academic and Research Integrity Procedure[[5]](#footnote-6) will apply. The University of Chester follow the [UKRIO Misconduct Investigation Procedure](https://www.chester.ac.uk/research/governance-ethics-and-integrity/) when allegations of research misconduct arise. The Named Person for Research Integrity at Wrexham University will nominate a senior member of academic staff to act as the contact point and take on the role of the ‘Head of Department’ under the UoC procedure. The senior member of staff will confirm no conflicts of interest and ensure the relevant training for research integrity has been completed.

2. Any allegations of a breach of academic or research integrity against a Wrexham University student will be reported to the University of Chester by the nominated staff member.

3. The decision to refer an allegation of a breach of academic or research integrity to the PGR Academic and Research Integrity Review Panel will be made jointly by the member of staff acting as Head of Department and the Senior PGR Tutor. In the event of a dispute, the matter will be referred to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement at UoC who will make the final decision.

4. Where an allegation is considered by the PGR Academic and Research Integrity Review Panel, the Panel will be constituted as set out in clause 5 of the procedure. However, one of the Panel members will be a member of academic staff at Wrexham University who will be nominated by the Academic Registrar (or nominee).

5. Hearings of the PGR Academic and Research Integrity Review Panel will take place at Wrexham University. UoC and WU will be jointly responsible for servicing the panel and proceedings of the investigation.

# Appendix 2- Requirements for Reporting Research Misconduct

**Reporting to funders** Reporting research misconduct investigations to funders is usually the responsibility of the institutions who receive their grants. Some funders, in rare and exceptional cases, reserve the right to directly investigate suspected research misconduct or check that an institutional investigation followed the right process. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has a [research integrity page](https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/research-integrity/) that lists the contacts for institutions to report formal research misconduct investigations.

Wrexham University must inform UKRI of any allegation of research misconduct where it relates to an individual(s) associated with:

• a UKRI grant application under consideration

• any funded UKRI research activity.

• UKRI activity such as acting as an expert reviewer or strategic advisor (e.g. panel, committee, council member)

This should be within one month of deciding to undertake a formal investigation (and must be reported at this stage at the latest) unless the case is deemed high risk or an allegation is demonstrably irrefutable at an earlier stage, in which case UKRI should be informed immediately.

Research funders have different requirements in place for reporting; professional misconduct, research misconduct or preventing harm in research. These requirements might be at the time of an allegation, formal investigation or concluding findings. The Research Office is responsible for overseeing the reporting requirements to research funders.

**Reporting to publishers** Where the University upholds allegations of misconduct related to the reliability or attribution of published work if affected, Wrexham University will inform the journals where the affected work has been published. The Research Office will be responsible for ensuring the correct contact point of the journal is contacted. The University will follow the COPE guidance[[6]](#footnote-7) when reporting any publications misconduct cases.

**Reporting to regulators** Where Research Misconduct is upheld which relates to professional misconduct the Research Office may refer researchers who are members of a regulated profession to the regulator. Suspected misuse of human tissue will be reported to the HTA. Animal research concerns will be reported to the Home Office’s Animals in Science Regulatory Unit (ASRU). Research data handling concerns will be reported to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).

**Reporting to research ethics committees** Suspected breaches in the research ethics of an ongoing human or animal study may be raised to the attention of the relevant committees by contacting [rescadmin@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:rescadmin@wrexham.ac.uk). Wrexham University Research Ethics Policy[[7]](#footnote-8) allows for the University Research Ethics Committee to withhold, suspend, or withdraw approval of research project whilst under investigation. Where research ethics approval is held under an external ethics committee, for example, NHS REC, Social Care, Ministry of Defence, UK or Overseas Ethics Committee, the Research Office will be responsible for notifying the committee of an ongoing investigation.

# Appendix 3- Appeals

### Conducted by

The appeals process will be managed by an individual other than the Named Person, as they could be implicated in the substance of any appeal. An alternative designated individual, nominated by a member of the Vice Chancellor’s Executive Team, who has not been involved in the matter previously, will establish an Appeals Panel, none of whom were members of the Screening or Investigation Panels. The panel will normal be composed of three individuals and at least one member of the Appeals Panel must be from outside the organisation.

### Process

Appeals may be permitted on any or all of the following grounds:

* Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation up to and before the Appeal Panel could have had a material impact on the outcome.
* Fresh evidence became available but not to the Investigator and/or the full investigation panel.
* There was evidence of bias or unfairness in the process or decisions taken by the Named Person, Investigator and/or the Full Investigation Panel.
* The recommendations made as part of an outcome of the Procedure/ subsequent actions taken are either excessive or inadequate concerning the misconduct found by the investigation.

The Appeals Panel will:

* Determine whether the Procedure was followed correctly.
* In cases where new evidence has been presented, review the evidence and determine whether the decision resulting from the completion of the investigation into an allegation of misconduct in research was fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.
* The Complainant or Respondent will be invited to submit any new written evidence or attend a meeting to give oral evidence. The Complainant or Respondent may be accompanied to this meeting by a colleague, trade union representative, or student union representative. Legal representation is not permitted under this procedure.

### Outcomes

The Appeals Panel has the power to uphold, reverse or modify the outcomes of the Procedure, including the decisions and/or recommendations associated with them. The following outcomes are available.

* A conclusion of an initial investigation or a full investigation that an allegation is unfounded because it is mistaken, frivolous, or otherwise without substance will be dismissed.
* A conclusion of an Initial Investigation or a Full Investigation that an allegation is unfounded because it is vexatious and/or malicious and will be dismissed.
* A conclusion of an Initial Investigation or of a Full Investigation that an allegation has some substance but, due to its relatively minor nature or because it relates to poor practice rather than to misconduct, will be addressed through education and training or other non-disciplinary approaches, such as mediation.
* A conclusion of a Full Investigation is that an allegation is upheld in full.
* A conclusion of a Full Investigation is that an allegation is upheld in part.

### Conclusion

The Appeals Panel will reach a conclusion on the allegation(s) under investigation as outlined in the above outcomes. The Panel shall write a report, presenting its findings, giving the reasons for its decision, and recording any differing views. Based on the Appeal Report, the Vice-Chancellor will decide whether to endorse, amend or overturn the conclusions of the investigation.

The Vice-Chancellor will notify the Complainant or Respondent and all relevant parties in writing of the outcome of the Appeal Panel and will provide a copy of the Appeal Report and evidence considered by the Appeal Panel. If the outcome of the appeal changes the original conclusions of the investigation, the Vice Chancellor will notify all relevant parties.

1. [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. This Policy and Procedure have been written following the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and a template developed by the UK Research Integrity Office, which has been adopted nationally by research organisations. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For postgraduate research students studying for an award under the University of Chester, the Academic and Research Integrity procedure of the University of Chester will apply. Please see Appendix 1 for details of the procedure that would be used at Wrexham University in reporting allegations or research misconduct to the University of Chester. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Wrexham University Staff Disciplinary Procedure [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.chester.ac.uk/media/media/documents/Handbook-G---Postgraduate-Research-Degrees.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [Cooperation between researcher institutions and journals on research integrity and publication misconduct cases.](C://Users/thomasonf/Downloads/research-publication-misconduct-journals-institutions.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. [Wrexham University Research Ethics Policy](https://wrexham.ac.uk/media/marketing/research/Research-Ethics-Policy.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)