Annual statement on research integrity 2022-23

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Newcastle University
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	Approved by Senate 17/01/24
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	https://www.ncl.ac.uk/research/researchgovernance/research%20integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Matthew Grenby *Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation*
	Email address: Matthew.Grenby@ncl.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Louise Jones *Research Integrity and Governance Manager*
	Email address: research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided

to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- Policies and systems
- Communications and engagement
- Culture, development and leadership
- Monitoring and reporting

Policies and systems

The following institutional policies and procedures are designed to promote a culture of research integrity at Newcastle University and enable researchers to understand and act according to expected standards and behaviours:

- Animal Research Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Code of Good Practice in Research
- Declarations of External Interests Policy
- Ethical Review Process
- Grievance Policy
- Open Access Policy Statement
- Open Research Institutional Position Statement
- Personal Relationships at Work Policy
- Policy for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct
- Policy on Ownership, Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property
- Policy regarding Participation of Volunteers in Research Projects
- Research Data Management Policy and Code of Practice
- Research Ethics Policy
- Research Publications and Copyright Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Academic Misconduct Policy

Communications and engagement

Information about institutional policies and procedures is provided to new students and colleagues as part of their formal induction programme. Details of research and research-related policies are available to view online on the University's research governance and Student Policies, Procedures and Regulations webpages. Colleagues may also access information about people-oriented policies and procedures via the University's internal webpages.

The research community is encouraged to contribute towards the review of existing policies and the development of new policies and guidance. Recent examples of which include the co-creation of the new Informed Consent Guidelines and Ethics Guidance Note on Impact and Engagement Activities.

Information about new policies is also communicated to the research community via a range of different platforms including staff meetings, newsletters and email communications.

Culture, development and leadership

Research leadership

The named person responsible for research integrity at Newcastle University is the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. The Dean of Research Culture and Strategy also supports this activity. The three Faculty Deans of Research and Innovation and Directors of Research at academic unit level are also responsible for research integrity within their local areas.

University Professional Services support is provided via the Research Strategy and Development Service and specifically the Research Integrity and Governance Manager in collaboration with the three Heads of Faculty Research and colleagues in the University Library and Organisational Development teams.

Research culture

Newcastle's first institutional Research Culture Action Plan was launched in October 2022, comprising 5 main 'pillars' of activity or experiences that are central to a positive and inclusive research environment:

1) Have the time, space and opportunities to be creative and enjoy discovering new things.
2) Be supported in your career aspirations and decision-making, as well as your continuing personal and professional development.
3) Feel part of an inclusive, supportive and safe research environment, where you and your ideas can flourish.
4) Be encouraged to embrace best practices and new ways of working to improve the quality and reach of research, either your own or that of others.
5) Be recognised and valued for your diverse contributions to research.

The implementation of the University's Research Culture Action Plan is supported by the Research Culture Delivery Group. This Group is led by the Dean of Research Culture and Strategy and includes the Research Culture Manager and relevant activity leads. A number of actions have been identified under the fourth pillar to support continuous improvement in open research practices and research integrity. This includes the development of new research policies, guidance and training.

Researcher development

As a signatory of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, Newcastle has a longstanding commitment to support the professional development of colleagues and students engaging in research at the University. This commitment is further demonstrated through the HR Excellence Award and the Technician's Commitment – of which Newcastle University was a founding signatory.

Individual learning needs are identified through annual appraisal processes and discussions between students and their supervisors. This information is then used to inform training and development plans.

Newcastle University provides a number of internal training, tools and resources to support the development of good research practices. Including:

- Research Integrity e-learning programme – introductory level programme, which

can be accessed online by colleagues and students.
- Introduction to Ethics Policy and Procedure – online presentation slides that can be downloaded and used as local training tool.
- Online Ethics Toolkit – guidance on potentially high-risk activities.
- Faculty Postgraduate Researcher Development Programmes – each of the three Faculties provide a programme of training for PhD students, including introductory level workshops on research integrity, ethics and data management.
- PhD Supervisor workshops – the programme includes a workshop on 'Research Integrity, Ethics and Governance', which is offered on a quarterly basis.
- Smart Support Programme – aimed at Professional Service colleagues. The programme includes a workshop on 'Good Research Practice', which is offered on a quarterly basis.
- Skills workshops: covering statistical skills, working with animals and developing research data management plans.
- Methods Hub: provides information and resources on different research methodologies. The Methods Hub also regularly runs events to promote the discussion of best practice and engagement in interdisciplinary research activities.
- Good Academic Practice Hub: guidance and support on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism is available from the University Library.

Through institutional membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), the University also provides access to a wide range of external resources to support research integrity such as webinars, guidance documents, case studies and workshops.

Full details of internal and external guidance and development opportunities are summarised on the training, tools and resources section of the University's Research Integrity web page. A major project is also currently in progress to bring all this information together in one place as part of the 'Research Space' platform (previously referred to as the Skills Academy).

Monitoring and reporting

The University maintains a central record of participation in formal staff training. This functionality will be developed further as part of the Research Space online platform.

University Research Ethics Committee conducts an annual audit of ethics applications to provide assurance to Senate and Council that research activities at Newcastle are conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

Confidential records of research misconduct proceedings are also maintained by the University for monitoring and reporting purposes. Anonymised data on the number and type of research misconduct is presented to University Research and Innovation Committee, Senate and Council on an annual basis. To promote openness and transparency, a copy of the University's Annual Statement on Research Integrity is published on the University's Research Integrity webpage. In accordance with the University's Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct, relevant third-party organisations (such as funders, journals, professional and regulatory bodies) are also be informed of any allegations which proceed to a formal investigation.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

Research Culture Action Plan

Having time to be creative has been a key priority over the last academic year. In consultation with researchers, examples of best practice for protecting time for research were identified and shared with the wider research community.   Examples include a review of committee structures to streamline decision making processes, the introduction of protected 'research-days' with a goal of increasing to 'research-weeks', plus offering 'writing retreat' opportunities across the institution.

In relation to the third pillar of the Research Culture Action Plan, an external consultant was appointed to consult with colleagues on the subject of building a safe and inclusive research environment. Actions were identified from the recommendations in the report, which will be taken forward as part of a two-year project titled 'Behaviour Matters'.

During 2022/23, University colleagues were also invited to apply for institutional funding for activities which aligned with the Research Culture Action Plan. The fund supported over 30 diverse and innovative projects, examples of which include:

- The production of a mini comic book to apply graphic storytelling to promote open research practices.
- improve accessibility and enhance engagement with Open Research practices.
- The creation of a Technical Expertise Brochure listing over 70 technical facilities across the campus and helping to improve visibility for our talented technical experts.
- Experimenting With a Facilitated Writing Retreat To Free Up Quality Time And Increase Wellbeing And Productivity in our Faculty of Medical Sciences, where this type of activity is uncommon.

Open Research Programme

Newcastle is a partner on the UKRN Open Research Programme. This is a five-year programme funded by Research England which aims to promote open research through training, evaluation and sharing. Newcastle is working with other project partners to develop innovative, multi-institutional training in open and transparent research practices, which will be available to researchers from 2024. A new workshop on preregistration will be piloted at Newcastle University in December 2023 as part of this offering.

The following internal activities were also carried out during 2022/23:

- University colleagues and students were invited to compete a survey on open and research practices in March 2023. The data from 125 responses has been used to inform the local training and support offered by the University.
- A strategy was developed to address how to recruit and support researchers and those who support research to deliver training in a wide range of open research practices at the University.
- An overview of open research principles and sources of support is now included in Faculty Welcome Events for new researchers and Postgraduate Researcher Development Programmes.
- The benefits of open research practices were also promoted through the University's second annual Open Research Awards in July 2023 (see Section 2D).

Development of research policies, guidance and procedures

A new Research Publications and Copyright Policy has been developed, alongside new guidelines on the Attribution of Authorship, Informed Consent and Impact and Engagement Activities which may require ethical approval. The University's Open Access Policy Statement and Policy for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct have also been reviewed and updated. A revised Research Ethics Policy has also been approved and will be launched following amendments to the University's current online Ethics System.

Following the development of a Trusted Research process to ensure that formal due diligence is carried out on international research partnerships, additional guidance on Export Licence procedures and the National Securities and Investment Act has also been produced to support researchers. The Research Policy, Intelligence and Ethics team provide information and advice on specific projects.

Investments in staff resources

Over the last year, Newcastle University has invested in a number of Professional Service posts to support research integrity. Key appointments during 2022/23 include:

- A full-time fixed-term Open Research Training and Development Officer in October 2022. This is a new post that will work alongside the Dean of Research Culture and Strategy to lead on the delivery of the UKRN Open Research Programme.
- A full-time Research Governance and Compliance Officer in October 2022. This is another new post that will work with the Research Integrity and Governance Manager to support Trusted Research and Export Control.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

Reflections on progress

Progress has been made in several areas which were identified as actions in the

University's 2021/22 Annual Research Integrity Statement. Including:

- Launch of new Attribution of Authorship Guidelines in December 2022 to support good practice in assigning authorship and giving credit for intellectual work. Where possible, researchers are encouraged to have an early conversation about who should be included in the authorship list and to confirm this in writing. A template form has been developed that can be adapted to create a formal record of what has been agreed. Guidance has also been produced on Raising Concerns over Authorship Practices.
- Launch of revised Open Access Policy Statement, Policy for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct, Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Growth of UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) Local Network, which provides peer support for researchers through the discussion of open research issues via a dedicated Team (51 members) and mailing list (130 members). A co-lead was appointed to provide additional support to local activities, as well as external engagement with UKRN and other Local Network Leads.
- A ReproducibilTea Journal Club was established through this network to facilitate informal discussions on improving transparency, reproducibility and openness in research. The first programme of events ran from October 2022 – July 2023, with a total of 72 attendees. A new programme for 2023-24 is currently underway, with a broader scope of discussion topics to increase relevance to a wider range of disciplines and career stages.
- Delivery of quarterly workshops on research integrity, ethics and governance for PhD Supervisors and Professional Service colleagues. A total of 11 PhD Supervisors and 58 Professional Service colleagues attended this training during 2022/23.
- Delivery of actions associated with the University's Research Culture Action Plan. Including the launch of a new EDI Toolkit for Researchers to promote inclusive research practices. Plus the production of a report on tackling inappropriate behaviours.
- Consideration of the business need for investing in a new Ethics System support the operation of the University's ethical review process. Alongside initial market research, consultation was carried out with key stakeholders to support the development of a business case.

The following actions were delayed due to operational reasons:

- The University's Code of Good Practice in Research is due to be reviewed and updated. This activity is currently in progress, alongside consideration of actions to support the implementation of the revised Code, including the creation of a Research Integrity / Good Research Champions Network at Newcastle University.
- The launch of an online platform, 'Research Space', to provide a 'one stop shop' for researcher training, development and networking opportunities has been delayed to Autumn 2024.
- The delivery of additional research ethics training on high-risk activities such as working with human participants. Potential gaps in ethics training needs will be considered alongside a replacement ethics workflow system. The content, format and timing of PhD Supervisor workshops will also be reviewed to increase participation.

Funding has recently been approved for a fixed-term post to provide additional support to

research integrity and ensure that sufficient resources are in place to drive these initiatives forward. The recruitment of this post will take place in early 2024.

Plans for future developments

In addition to the actions which have been carried forward, the following activities are planned for 2023/24:

- Behaviour Matters: the delivery of a two-year project aimed at promoting positive and tackling inappropriate behaviours. A dedicated post to support this project will be recruited in 2024.
- Building Enhanced Leadership Capacity to enable Psychologically Safe and Inclusive Research Environments: the delivery of a £1M Wellcome Trust project which aims to create a new leadership development programme will commence in April 2024.
- Guidance on Artificial Intelligence (AI): A University Task and Finish Group is bringing together information from key areas across the University to identify current activities and future opportunities for AI and automation. A working group looking at this specifically from a research perspective will be established in early 2024 with a remit to include highlighting examples of good practice and developing guidance on the appropriate use of AI tools.
- Ethics Workflow System: funding has recently been approved to procure a commercial off-the-shelf product to support the University's ethical approval process. A review of the wording of online questions will also be carried out as part of this project, alongside consideration of ethics training and guidance materials. It is anticipated that the new system will be launched at the start of 2024/25.
- Research Culture Week: Newcastle held its first Research Culture Week in October 2023, which included sessions on managing successful research collaborations, career development and open research. The University is planning on running this event again in Autumn 2024.
- Researchers Empowering Newcastle University (RENU): following a researcher symposium in August 2023, it was agreed that a researcher-led cross-Faculty network would be established that will foster a community of researchers across the University.
- Research policy development: a new Human Tissue Policy will be developed outlining the University's expectations regarding research ethics and governance arrangements. The University's Open Access Policy Statement will also be updated to incorporate new funder guidance on long-form publications.

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

Open Research Awards

In July 2023, Newcastle University held its second annual Open Research Awards ceremony, which was attended by 55 colleagues.   The aim of this activity is to recognise

and reward students and colleagues who have used open research practices to make research more accessible, reproducible or transparent. A total of 17 entries were submitted, from which six winners were selected. Case studies based on the winning entries are available to view online to promote understanding of the aims of open research and the benefits to researchers. The awards will run again in 2024 with support from the University's Enhancing Research Culture Project Fund.

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, whistle-blowing, 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.

Organisational policies and processes

The University's Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct were updated in April 2023 to incorporate developments in good practice and funder policies. The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) was also invited to comment on the revised draft policy. The policy will be reviewed again in three years.

Where possible, colleagues are encouraged to raise any concerns with the individual, their Line Manager or the appropriate Head of Academic Unit in the first instance. Alternatively, concerns can also be raised with the Research Integrity and Governance Manager. If an informal resolution is not possible, formal complaints should be submitted in writing using the Reporting Allegations of Misconduct Form and submitted by email to: research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk alongside any supporting evidence. Although Complainants are expected to put their name to any allegation they make, any information provided will be treated confidentially. Anonymous allegations will be considered at the discretion of the University.

Any allegations relating to the research undertaken by University students will be investigated via the separate Student Academic Misconduct Procedure, which was also updated in 2023.

Concerns regarding the conduct of University colleagues may also be raised in confidence via the University's Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing). This policy was last updated in 2018 and is due to be reviewed during 2023/24.

Creating and embedding a research environment whereby everyone is comfortable reporting instances of misconduct.

A new Research Misconduct webpage has been developed to help raise aware of University policy and the procedure for raising concerns. Key documents including the Reporting Allegations of Research Misconduct Form are available to view and download, as well as more general guidance on avoiding research misconduct. A confidential inbox has also been established for reporting concerns and is managed by the Research Integrity and Governance Manager (email: research.integrity@ncl.ac.uk).

University colleagues and students are encouraged to report concerns in a responsible and appropriate manner. Information about reporting mechanisms is promoted via the University's Code of Good Practice in Research, internal training and comms.

Anonymised lessons learnt from formal investigations of research misconduct.

Following the formal investigation outlined in the 2020/21 Annual Research Integrity Statement, an internal audit of informed consent procedures was completed in Autumn 2022. The audit report identified a number of actions to promote awareness of the University's expectations of researchers working with human participants. These expectations are reflected in the revised Research Ethics Policy and new Informed Consent Guidelines. The wording of questions has also been updated on the University's Ethics Form and guidance strengthened on the online Ethics Toolkit.

The learning from informal cases has also been used to support continuous improvement at Newcastle University. For example, new guidelines on the Attribution of Authorship were launched in December 2022. Following which, a Template Publication and Authorship Agreement and Guidance on Raising Concerns on Authorship Practices were also developed and added to the University's Research Integrity and Research Misconduct webpages.

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	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	*0*			
Falsification	*0*			

Plagiarism	*0*			
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	*0*			
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	*0*			
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	*0*			
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	*0*			
Other*	*0*			
Total:	0	0	0	0

*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.

No formal allegations of either staff or student research misconduct were received during the reporting period.

However, advice was sought on three authorship and publication queries during 2022-23. In each case, an informal resolution was agreed. The learning from these cases was used to inform the development of internal guidance (see Section 3A).

Report completed by Louise Jones, Research Integrity & Governance Manager
23rd November 2023