



Annual Report on Research Integrity 2020/21

The University of Worcester is committed to uphold the principles of the ***Concordat to Support Research Integrity***. That commitment includes an obligation to present an annual report on Research Integrity to its governing body, which should be published by the University following approval. This report has also been considered and approved by its Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and its Academic Board.

Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published in 2012 by Universities UK to provide a 'comprehensive framework for good research conduct and its governance'. A revised Concordat was published in October 2019.

The intention of the Concordat is to help ensure that research carried out by or in partnership with the UK research community is undertaken to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

The signatories and supporters of the concordat, which include UKRI, commit to five principles detailed as follows:

1. Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
2. Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
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
4. Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
5. Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly

Research Governance

Research Governance falls under the remit of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. Its Research Integrity and Governance Ethics sub-Committee takes operational responsibility for research governance. This sub-Committee is chaired by the University's Research Integrity Champion, Dr John-Paul Wilson.

There are a number of policies and procedures which govern research as follows:

- Research Ethics Policy
- Policy for Effective Management of Research Data
- Guidelines and Procedures for Good Research Conduct (including procedures for Investigation of Research Misconduct).

Implementation of the Concordat

The University completed a gap analysis against the Concordat in 2012 and again in 2019. It established an action plan based on this analysis which is reviewed at each meeting by the Research Integrity and Governance sub-Committee and on an annual basis by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. Core to this action plan are the following:

- Regular review and update of policies, procedures and guidance relating to research integrity to ensure they reflect best practice
- Raising awareness of research integrity
- Providing appropriate training and guidance for researchers around research integrity

Developments in Policies and Procedures

The University began a full review of its policies and procedures at the end of 2020/21. As part of this review, it was agreed that a separate policy to deal with allegations of research misconduct would be developed in 2021/22.

Training & Guidance

The University continues to offer a full programme of training around research integrity as part of its Researcher Development Programme for staff and research students.

Research Students are required to undertake the following workshops:

- Research Integrity
- Research Ethics
- Research Data Management

Optional workshops include:

- Undertaking Ethical Research
- Demystifying the Ethics Review Process
- Avoiding Misconduct
- Open Data

Research Integrity training and information on ethical review processes is also built into induction for new academic and research staff.

The University has continued to develop its extensive online support for researchers on research ethics and integrity through its Virtual Learning Environment.

Research misconduct

The University identifies on its website a named contact (and an alternative) for any individual who has any concerns with the conduct of research undertaken by staff or students at the University. Individuals may raise general concerns or may choose to make a formal allegation which may then be subject to investigation.

There were no investigations of research misconduct in 2020/21.