

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2019-2020

Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity, which was substantially updated in 2019, requires employers of researchers to provide a short annual (publicly available) statement that must include:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues
 - a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation
 - a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, which will include data on the number of investigations
 - a statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring
- a statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct

This statement has therefore been prepared for the University's Committee for Ethics (CEI) and Integrity to summarise how the University of Central Lancashire ensures compliance with the terms of the Concordat and meets the expectations outlined within this for both research institutions and individual researchers.

1. Supporting and Strengthening Understanding of Research Integrity

a. Training and development

A programme of training in relation to research integrity and ethics is managed through the Research Governance Unit in Research Services which is further supported by the University mandatory training programme. Ethics Committees at Faculty and University level also reflect on case studies to identify and disseminate good practice at all levels.

The following training is available in research integrity and ethics.

Face to Face Training

- *An Introduction to Research Ethics - staff and students*
- *Research integrity and Ethics at UCLan - academics and research students*
- *Lay reviewer training - Ethics committee members*
- *Chair and reviewer training - Ethics committee members*
- *Procedures for ethics application - staff and students*

Online training

Online training in Research Ethics is provided through Epigeum, all academics are required to complete the following modules:

- i) *Becoming an ethical researcher*
- ii) *Research ethics in practice*

The University of Central Lancashire was the first European University to adopt the [Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings](#). Online training in the application of the code is provided to all ethics panel members.

The specific training in research integrity is underpinned by a mandatory training programme for staff members which is managed by HR. The following modules are mandatory; any anomalies in completion of the mandatory training programme is managed through Heads of Schools and Directors of Services and the appraisal process.

- i. *Data Protection (GDPR)*
- ii. *Intellectual Property Essentials*
- iii. *Information Security Essentials*

- iv. *Safeguarding Essentials*
- v. *Bribery Act Training*
- vi. *Anti-Fraud Training*
- vii. *Unconscious Bias*
- viii. *Prevent Training*

The University also benefits from membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) and Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA).

b. Research Integrity Culture

Work is currently underway to review the level of engagement with issues relating to research integrity, as well as development of further mechanisms to share best practice and communicate key issues relating to research integrity across the University.

2. Policies and Procedures

a. Research Integrity

The University sets out its commitment to research integrity in the [Code of Conduct for Research](#), further strengthened by the [Ethical Principles](#) document which are reviewed annually by the Research Governance Unit within Research Services. Approval for any amendments are made by the Academic Board via the Committee for Ethics and Integrity.

The University Policy for Misconduct in Research outlines the process to be followed for investigation of allegations of research misconduct. Details of these policies are disseminated through the academic staff induction and the research student induction, as well as the training programme run throughout the year.

In addition to these policies, other documents are available below:

- a) [Data Protection Policy](#)
- b) Safeguarding Guidelines - available via Staff Intranet and to externals on legitimate authorisation
- c) [Information Security Policy](#)
- d) [Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy](#)
- e) [Public Interest Disclosure Procedure \(Whistleblowing\)](#)

The Academic Governance Review took place during 2018/19 and was approved by the University Board in July 2019 for implementation in September 2019. The purpose of the review was to ensure that Governance Framework was fit for purpose. Consequently, Ethics Review Panels have operated with delegated authority from Academic Board since September 2019. The current University Governance Structure is shown in **Figure 1** (Section 4).

b. Research Ethics

The University Committee for Ethics and Integrity (CEI) is responsible for developing and overseeing policy and procedure relating to both research ethics and integrity which is then administered by the Research Governance Unit. Ethics reviews for staff and research students are processed digitally through one of three Ethics Review Panelsⁱ, each of which is constituted from academics of the relevant subject groups, in addition to independent lay members.

Reports on each Ethics Review Panel outcomes, total number of applications, and matters of national or local significance are provided to the CEI. Undergraduate and post graduate taught students receive ethical approval from school ethics committees with oversight provided by the CEI and the Faculty Research, Innovation and Ethics Committees (FRIECs).

The CEI meets three times annually and the five FRIECs meet twice annually. The three Ethics Review Panels meet two times per annum.

3. Research Misconduct

The University Policy for Misconduct in Research was recently updated and recommended for approval by Academic Board on 29th September 2020 by the University Committee for Ethics and Integrity. Academic Board approved the revised policy on 8th October 2020.

The University requires that all research projects undertaken under the auspices of the University observe a commitment to good research conduct. The Chair of the University's Committee for Ethics and Integrity is the Named Person responsible for receiving allegations of research misconduct.

To assist with fostering a culture where students and staff feel comfortable raising concerns, the policy puts provisions in place for concerns to be raised via, or with the assistance of, an intermediary. In addition, the Named Person will act as a confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under the auspices of the University. Mechanisms to implement and communicate lessons learned from investigations of research misconduct have been incorporated into the updated University Policy for Misconduct in Research.

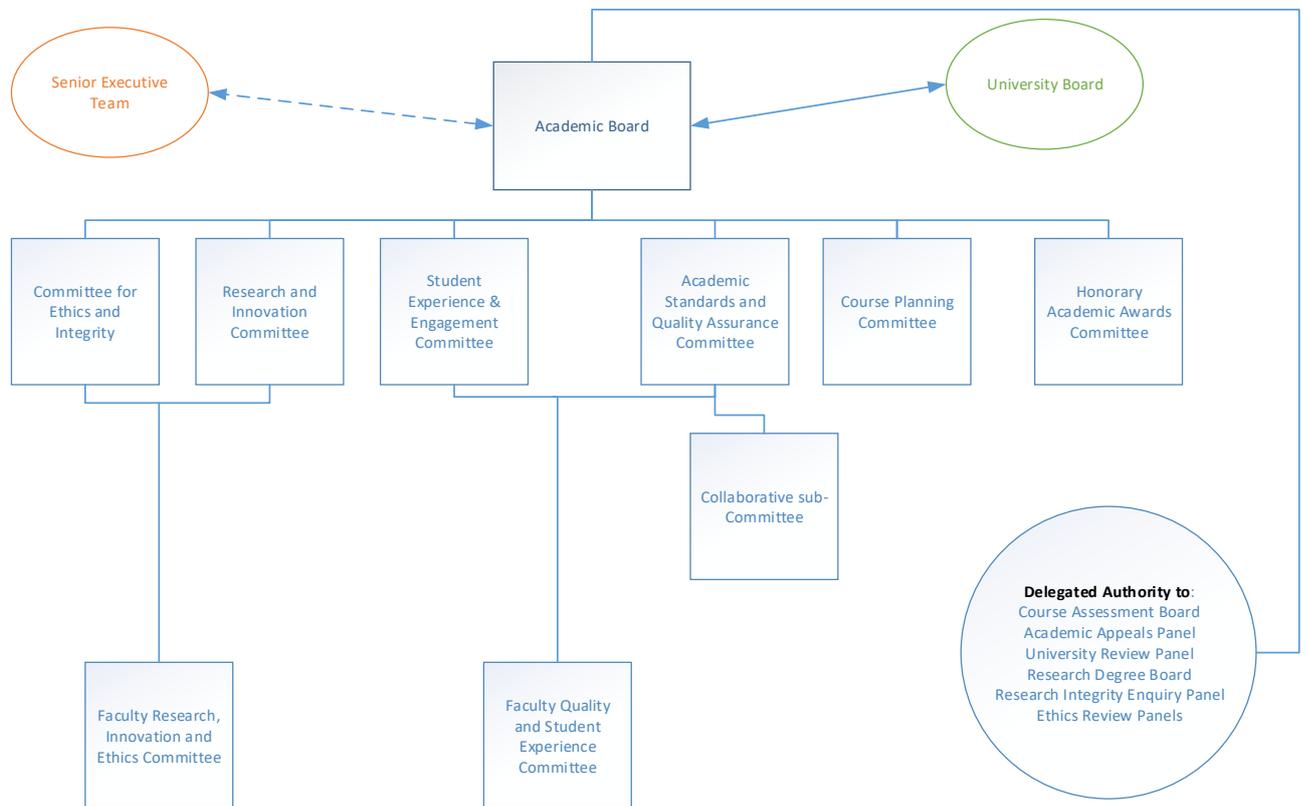
**a. Number of Reported allegations of Research Misconduct 2019-2020
(June 19 - September 20)**

During the period 1st June 2019 to 30th September 2020, one allegation of research misconduct has been investigated through the formal investigation process, and the investigation is currently ongoing

One further case of potential research misconduct has been identified during this period, which was considered by the Named Person to be appropriate for resolution through further training and development.

4. Ongoing Review and Oversight

The University will maintain oversight of the conduct of researchers through its Governance Framework. This will be supported by ongoing provision of a comprehensive and current professional development programme. The Governance Framework is based upon a committee structure which reports to the Academic Board.



ⁱ The three central research ethics review panels are:

- BAHSS (Business, Arts, Humanities and Social Science)
- Science
- Health

During 2020/2021 the University will actively promote the regulations and processes surrounding Ethics and Integrity to Staff and Students.