Research Integrity Annual Statement 2023-2024

1.0 Key Information

Organisation Name	University of Central Lancashire
Organisation Type	Higher Education
Date statement approved by governing body	19/06/2024 [Academic Board]
Institutes research integrity web address	https://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/integrity
Named Senior Member of staff	Professor Duncan Sayer Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Governance Sub-Committee OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk
Named Point of contact	Emma Neil Head of Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit: OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk

2.0 Introduction

The University of Central Lancashire is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity which was first published in July 2012 and revised and strengthened in October 2019. The principles and commitments include:

- Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research

- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

- 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

- Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise

- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

In compliance with the Concordat, the University is publishing a Statement on Research Integrity on an annual basis. This statement covers the period of September 2023 – August

2024 and has been prepared for the University's Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Ethics Committee 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.

2.0 Summary of Activities to Promote Research Integrity
2.1 Policies and Procedures

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 Ethics, Approval or any amendments are made by the Academic Board via the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee.

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 polices, other documents are available below:
- [Data Protection Policy]()
- [Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedure]()
- [Information Security Policy]()
- [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy]() – available via Staff Intranet
- [Public Interest Disclosure Procedure]() (Whistleblowing)
- [Research Data Management Policy]()
- [Human Participant Research Data Management Policy Statement]()– available via Staff Intranet

2.2 Training and Development

A programme of training in relation to research integrity and ethics is managed through the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit in the Research and Enterprise Service (RES) which is further supported by the University mandatory training programme and other training provided by the RES service. Ethics Committees at School 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:

- An Introduction to Research Ethics – staff and research 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 Applications – staff and students
- Research Supervisor Workshop: Ethics and Integrity - staff
- Monthly drop-ins

- Research with Human Tissue (*in addition to this session staff and PGR students involved in research on human samples are also asked to complete the Medical Research Council's Research and Human Tissue Legislation online module and assessment*).

- Two bespoke online research ethics training modules (Ethics in 45 minutes and Ethics for Researchers) developed by Professor Doris Schroeder and Dr Kate Chatfield from the University's Centre for Professional Ethics.

The University remains a member of UKRIO (UK Research Integrity Office). The regular programme of webinars and events are publicised to staff, as are the resources available through UKRIO. Members of the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit regularly attend these webinars and disseminates best practice to colleagues.

In terms of additional training provided by RES, the University is also a signatory of the Researcher Development Concordat and the Impacts and Outputs Unit have developed a Personal and Professional Development Programme for Research and Knowledge Exchange to complement the Academic Research and Enterprise Induction Programme.

The Graduate Research School have a dedicated Personal and Professional Development Programme for Post Graduate Research students to provide an overview and full details of all workshops and developmental opportunities available each year including workshops on research methods, research governance and professional conduct.

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

- Information Governance
- Safeguarding Essentials (including Prevent)
- Safety, Health and Environment
- Security and Emergency
- Diversity in the Workplace
- Bribery Act Training
- Anti-Fraud Training
- Unconscious Bias

2.3 External Memberships

To ensure that the University keeps abreast of best practice in matters related to the Concordat and research integrity, it is a member of a number of external bodies including:

- UK Research Integrity Office

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2023-24

- Association for Research Managers and Administrators
- UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)
- Laboratory Animal Science Association
- Understanding Animal Research

2.4 Committee and Working Groups Supporting Research Integrity

Research, Knowledge Exchange and Ethics Committee (RKEEC)
The committee is responsible on behalf of the Academic Board for overseeing the development, implementation and monitoring of University strategies relevant to research, knowledge exchange and ethics. This committee, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) and membership includes Academic representations from Schools and representation from the Professional Services Units.

Research and Knowledge Exchange Governance Sub-Committee

The committee has delegated authority by RKEEC to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's governance systems and related polices.

The following groups support the committee on matters relating to research integrity and ethics, and provide updates on matters of national or local significance:

- Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)
- Central Ethics Review Panels: HEALTH, SCIENCE and BAHSS (Business, Arts, Humanities and Social Science).
- Human Tissue Oversight Committee

The University will maintain oversight of the conduct of researchers through its Governance Framework (Figure 1) which is based upon a committee structure which reports to the Academic Board.
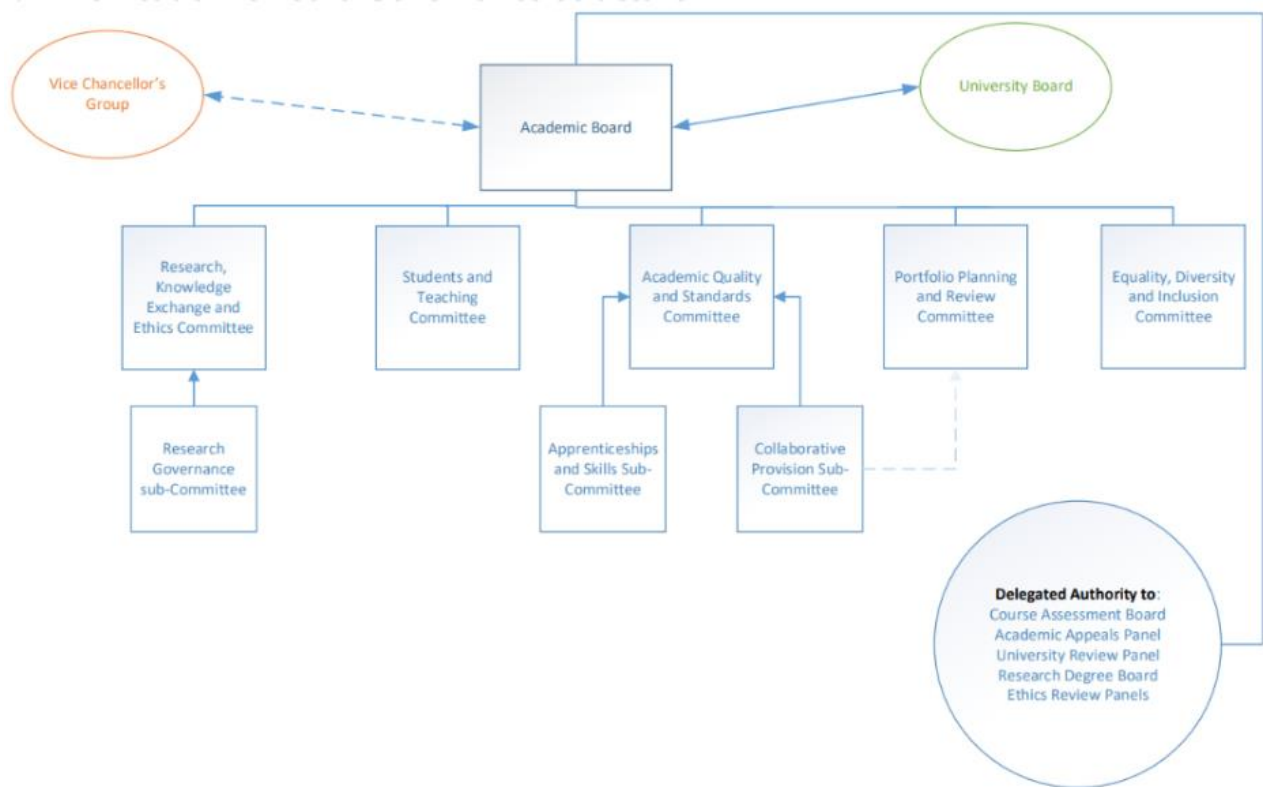
Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the Governance Framework at UCLan.

3.0 Changes and Developments during the period under review

In February 2024, the Research and Enterprise Service hosted the first Research and Knowledge Exchange Festival. A weeklong event aiming to empower research knowledge and skills that can shape the future. The festival provided the opportunity for staff, students, external organisations and stakeholders to attend workshops, training sessions, talks, and tours to enhance their research and knowledge exchange capabilities. In addition to the networking opportunities and helping people develop new sills, the festival celebrated the people and groups who contribute towards a positive and vibrant research environment. As part of the festival James Parry the Chief Innovation Officer from the UK Research Integrity Office ran a session on 'Good Research Practice and a Healthy Research Culture'.

In 2023, a review of polices, practices and procedures took place. Revisions were made to the Code of Conduct in Research to reflect changing and emerging good practice in relation to how artificial intelligence (AI) is used within research in terms of research integrity and the responsible use of these technologies.

The Ethical Principles for Teaching, Research, Consultancy, Knowledge Exchange and Related Activities policy has been revised by updating the section on ethical principles for work using animals (including research using animal by products, veterinary research and research overseas). A new section has been included to provide guidance for projects involving stakeholders, public participation, peer researchers, co-production and

participatory action research. There are several ways in which stakeholder groups and community members may be involved in research projects separate to being a research participant in the conventional sense. This new section provides a summary of the different ways individuals or groups may be involved in research and the ethical considerations are outlined.

4.0 Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

The UKRIO are offering subscribers the opportunity to take part in a pilot for their new online training course 'Introduction to Research Integrity'. UCLan has registered to join the pilot which will provide free access for 12 months for 400 individuals. The online course is structured into three interactive modules and is applicable to all disciplines and provides detail to support those new to the topic area and for those who need refresher training. The learning outcomes will be:

1) What research integrity means and why it matters.
2) The approach to research integrity in the UK.
3) What it means to lead by example and how to build an environment with a good research integrity culture.

Updating and review of the Ethics Review Process to introduce a standard and proportionate review process. It is proposed to have a set of questions at the start of the ethics application form which will determine whether the research should undergo standard or proportionate review. Research which is complex or brings more substantial ethical considerations will undergo standard review to ensure ethical considerations are fully considered, while more straightforward projects will undergo a lighter touch proportionate review.

4.0 Research Misconduct

The University Officer for Ethics and Integrity is a senior academic member of staff with significant experience of research and is responsible for working with the EIGU on key issues relating to Research Ethics and Integrity. The University Officer for Ethics and Integrity will also fulfil the role of the "Named Person" responsible for receiving allegations of research misconduct.

The University requires that all research projects undertaken under the auspices of the University observe a commitment to good research conduct. The University is committed to creating a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. The University Policy for Misconduct in Research includes various mechanisms to ensure any concerns about research misconduct can be raised with the Named Person confidentially, including the ability to raise concerns with the assistance of an intermediary such as a line manager, Trade Union representative, Guild advice service representative, or colleague. 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.

Details of how to raise concerns regarding research misconduct with the Named Person are clearly outlined on the external [research integrity webpage](). The process of raising concerns and reassurances around confidentiality are also part of the research integrity training.

Mechanisms to implement and communicate lessons learned from investigations of research misconduct have been incorporated into the University [Policy for Misconduct in Research]()

4.1 Number of Reported Allegations of Research Misconduct 2023-24

In the academic year 2023/24, there was one case of a staff member who 'failed to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations' which progressed to the screening stage of the University's Policy for Misconduct in Research. The screening panel determined that research misconduct had occurred, but could be dealt with through competency, education and training mechanisms. In addition, other recommendations from the screening panel are being taken forward by the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit.

The University recognises the importance of using issues of research misconduct as important learning opportunities. Each research misconduct investigation concludes with a series of recommendations and lessons arising from the investigation. These are taken forward as part of the Research, Knowledge Exchange, Governance Sub-Committee.