

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2023-2024

1. Summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support research integrity

Allegations of research misconduct may be raised directly with the "Named Person", this position is currently under selection or the PVC Research and Knowledge Exchange. Informal queries may be raised with the Head of Research Impact and Culture.

Activities undertaken:

- Research integrity and ethics training has been delivered to PGRs via the Doctoral School inductions. We have worked towards increasing awareness of both Ethics and Research Integrity. We have two training options for PGR students that focus on ethics and research integrity respectively. We have run one Doctoral School inductions in the year 23/24 and we will expand this approach next year to two inductions.
- Research integrity and ethics training is available to all academic staff upon request, at individual, School, or College level. In the year 23/24 we have run this process twice driven by academic demand. Going forward this training will be offered as part of the Academic Development Programme and run quarterly.
- Responsible Research and Innovation, Clinical Governance SOP compliance training has been developed. Students and staff have access to a suite of digital training options. This material will be updated and promoted in the year 24/25.
- Internal webpages will be reviewed and updated to provide practical guidance and links to information on research integrity and ethics.
- Updates to research integrity matters are distributed via the Research and Industrial Partnerships newsletter / all staff emails and news. Six updates are provided annually.
- Research integrity information cascaded to academic colleagues by the research ethics leads / ethics leads form / module leads (for student research). This peer-to-peer process is effective and will continue next year.
- The Human Tissue Authority conducted an inspection in December 2022. Recommendations following the audit have been actioned. The "Designated Individual" of the Human Tissue Oversight Group (HTOG) is vacant, this has coincided with a significant reduction of activity in this area and retention of very few samples. We are updating the SOPs and appointing a new "Designated Individual" in coming the year.
- Review of the Research Misconduct Investigation Procedure in accordance with the latest UKRIO guidelines.
- UKRIO Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity will be completed, and integrated in our action plan for 2024/25
- In line with the 2023-2026 Researcher Development Concordat, we have held two Ethics and Research Integrity inductions for staff in the year 23/24. In addition, in 24/25 We will run two Ethics and Research Integrity inductions in the Doctoral school and update our commitment to responsible metrics.
- We have been reviewing all ethics system and process starting in July 24. We are working with digital services and a range of stakeholders to produce a full system map of current process. We will make the initial set of process changes in January 25.
- We are reviewing how PGR/UG/ students are processed in the online ethics system LEAS to reduce workload whilst maintaining the integrity of the process.
- We will continue to ensure research integrity through equality and diversity, implement inclusive practices that involving diverse populations, ensure equitable participation, eliminate bias and discrimination, enhance accessibility of findings, promote cultural sensitivity, and enforce policies with appropriate training.

Action Plan for 2024/2025:

- The identification and initiation of new policies impacting research integrity in prison research studies and the disclosure of illegal conduct by research participants were initiated but not completed due to role changes in the Ethics team. This process will be completed in the next year now that the Research Governance Manager is in post.
- Plan and execute an audit protocol for ethics. We have carried out a full review of all ethics applications in the system, resolved identified issues, and upheld two formal complaints. This information will be reported annually.
- We are reviewing and refreshing all online ethics and integrity training for supervisors, ethics reviewers, and students, with a full review currently underway and expected to be completed in 24/25.
- We are increasing engagement and awareness among staff and PGR students through active participation in Doctoral School Inductions and exploring improved research methodologies and training. The induction includes a 30-minute session on Ethics and the LEAS application system, followed by a 1.5-hour session on Research Integrity. We aim to hold two staff and two PGR inductions in the next year.
- We will review the UKRIO Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity V2.0 and continue improving research culture. This process will be developed in the next year lead by the Research Governance Manager.
- We have introduced monthly drop-in sessions for researchers and students to support queries on research impact, culture, and ethics. These sessions will continue next year, incorporating additional information on developments in trusted research.
- We will introduce a research ethics and integrity day during ResearchFIRST week, featuring training sessions, methodology workshops, and a speaker series. This activity will be developed next year and lead by the Research Governance Manager.
- We are reviewing the university's existing ethics processes, including the LEAS platform, based on stakeholder feedback. This review began in July 2024, and we are collaborating with digital services and stakeholders to create a full system map. The most immediate process solutions will be implemented by January 2025. We will continue to use the outputs of this process to implement change over the year 24/25.

2. Statement on the processes that the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

The university adopted the 2008 UKRIO Procedure for the investigation of misconduct in research and its new 2023 edition.

3. High-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

The university has undertaken one formal investigation of research misconduct in this period that was further referred to PPC for investigation and resolution.

4. Lessons learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

This investigation came about due to an external whistle blower contacting the University. The University should consider developing an audit policy to review research outputs and ensure integrity is maintained particularly with regards to publishing. This should form part of the academic annual performance review.

5. 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

In line with the new Research & Knowledge Exchange Strategy, the university is committed to nurture a research, knowledge exchange and impact culture that is ambitious, collegiate, focused and agile, and upholds integrity. The implementation plan that accompanies the RKE strategy includes a strand of work on conducting and governing RKE with integrity and vigour, upholding the Concordat obligations. There is a second strand of work that looks at the upholding of integrity practices in the discharging of all research, including Open Research practices. We believe that these commitments are a testimony of the central role of research integrity in the research culture and environment development at Lincoln.

The University has recently engaged a full time Research Governance manger to take forward all elements of a systemic ethics process review. This post will oversee the continuity of the integrity process. The university continues its efforts to raise the profile of ethics leads and developing forums to act as safe spaces for colleagues (staff and students) to discuss ethical dilemmas, errors and mistakes in research practice, reproducibility and research improvement which is supportive.

6. Information on periodic review of research misconduct processes

The university's procedure for the investigation of research misconduct requires review.

7. Contact details for queries

Research Governance Team ethics@lincoln.ac.uk

