UWTSD: annual statement on research integrity 2024-25

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: riconcordat@ukcori.org.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Wales Trinity Saint David
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	20 October 2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-integrity-and-ethics
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Dr Mark Cocks
	Email address: mark.cocks@uwtsd.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: Prof Nik Whithead
	Email address: nicola.whitehead@uwtsd.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

Introduction

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David is committed to the maintenance of high ethical and standards in the research undertaken by its staff and students. The University recognises its obligations under the Concordat to Support Research Integrity to ensure that research undertaken under its auspices is conducted to appropriate standards and conforms to robust ethical principles and practices of conduct and governance. The University believes that research ethics review and approval are important for the following reasons:

- To uphold the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
- To ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- To support 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.
- To use transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to handle allegations of research misconduct when they arise.
- To ensure that the University meets its obligations as a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, and the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation 2020 (“UK GDPR”), with respect to research data processing.
- To work together with other institutions as required from time to time to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

Policy and Systems

The University’s Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice expresses the required standards of rigour and integrity expected of researchers undertaking research at the University, the ethical principles and review process that all research must be considered by, and the governance processes which the University requires its researchers to follow. It directly supports the University’s Research and Innovation Strategy and demonstrates our commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (UUK, 2019), which seeks to provide a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. The Code of Practice sets out in detail the requirements for ethical review for all research activity at UWTSD. The Code of Practice also defines what is meant by research misconduct and the procedure to be followed if research has failed to meet the University’s standards for research integrity.

The procedures and guidelines outlined in the Code of Practice are overseen by the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC), who, by working with the University's Data Protection Officer, has oversight of data protection compliance on the research undertaken in the University. The Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Committee can be found in Chapter 2 of the UWTSD Academic Quality Handbook.

Culture, development and leadership

The University's Research Ethics Committee plays a large role leading the provision of support and training in the area of ethics. Members provide a point of contact for their Institutes so that all researchers, staff or students, can discuss the ethical issues related to their work with someone who understands the ethical context of their field. This contextualised approach also makes it possible to provide a range of seminars at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that encourages staff and students to engage with ethical issues outside of the immediate context of their research.

Programmes of seminars are also held that focus on ethical issues and University processes for all postgraduate research students, research-active staff and PhD supervisors. These are supported by resources made available on the University's research webpages and link to the University's Researcher Development Programme, the University's Doctoral College, and the annual Postgraduate Research Summer School. This teaching of research integrity and ethical conduct is also embedded within the undergraduate curriculum, in accordance with the requirements of external accreditation bodies such as the British Psychological Society and the British Computing Society. Work was carried out to support departments in providing bespoke ethical review forms for research carried out by their students as part of their Bachelors and Masters degrees.

The REC is taking an active part in the University's Doctoral College, which is providing a focused community for student researchers and their supervisory teams. This is allowing us to build a centralised resource for training materials for both staff and students, and we have strengthened the training provided to both supervisory teams and to staff who wish to become research supervisors.

The University also provides training in relation to Academic Misconduct allegations through the NEXUS Learning and Teaching Unit. The most significant training has been the development of guidance on the acceptable use of AI and a broad spectrum of training has been offered to staff and students across the Institution.

The University's research and innovation support service (INSPIRE) plays a key role in raising awareness of research integrity and governance issues among research active staff, supporting in staff development, communications, and embedding the highest possible standards in the design and delivery of research projects.

Communication and Engagement

The Research Ethics Committee, the Doctoral College and the University's research support service (INSPIRE) provide termly research ethics and integrity training is offered to staff and students. These include timetabled sessions covering research ethics and integrity principles as well as research ethics practices and procedures for PGR students and supervisors, supported further by monthly 'open door' drop in sessions for research staff, students and PGR supervisors.

Monitoring and reporting

The Research Ethics Committee (REC) reports to the University Research Committee for research carried out by staff members, and to the Doctoral College Board for research carried out by postgraduate students. It has members from each of the University's Institutes together with representatives from the University's Research Degrees Committee and Research and Innovation Services. Its terms of reference are as follows:

1. To provide advice and guidance on established and evolving ethical issues and contribute to ethical awareness and training;

2. To ensure that Institute procedures for dealing with ethical issues raised by staff or student research are appropriate, and to monitor their effective and consistent implementation;

3. To consult whatever evidence and opinions it considers appropriate to ensure that decisions relating to approval of ethical aspects of research methods are based solely on ethical grounds;

4. To provide written approval for all relevant University research projects or research degree programme proposals with conditions or requirements where appropriate, or to provide written refusal with justification;

5. To receive regular reports from Institutes on ethical issues and to make recommendations in relation to ethical issues;

6. To consider and provide formal responses to cases referred to it in response to requests from Institutes;

7. To report annually to the Research Committee and Doctoral College Board on actions taken and decisions made during the preceding year.

The REC is supported in its role by the Doctoral College, Academic Office and the University's research and innovation support service (INSPIRE). It receives reports from the individual Institutes and independent research groups within the University.

All academic staff and postgraduate researchers are required to submit an ethics form for review by the REC at the start of their research project. No data collection may commence until this review has been successfully completed. During the academic year 2024-2025 the REC scrutinised 160 ethics forms (130 from postgraduate students, 30 from academic staff), compared with 170 the previous year.

The University produces an annual report on all student cases, including those involving academic misconduct and fitness to practice where these relate to research degrees. This report is considered by the Academic Standards Committee, Senate and Council. The University had a single case of academic misconduct involving a research degree student in 2024/2025.

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.
The University has developed a new Research Integrity and Ethics Policy, which is in the final stages of Institutional approval. The Policy updates the existing Code of Practice with strengthened provision for: artificial intelligence, data protection impact assessment, health, safety and wellbeing, health and social care research, research involving animals, research in prison establishments and the probation service, research conducted outside the UK and export control. This follows the introduction of Trusted Research & Innovation and Export Control policy in the spring of 2024. Following these policies and review, the REC initiated an update of the Application For Ethical Review form in order to align the review process with the new policies. This provided an opportunity to restructure the ethics training programme. The new form will come into active use in September 2025, but training of reviewers, researchers, and research supervisors began over the summer. Further development of training materials and opportunities will continue throughout 2025.
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.
Over the past year, the University has made good progress in strengthening its research integrity framework. The introduction of new policies align our practices with evolving national and international standards. The integration of provisions for artificial intelligence, data protection impact assessments, and research in sensitive contexts demonstrates our proactive approach to emerging challenges. We have worked with the Research Collaboration Advice Team (at DSIT) in this area. The restructuring of the ethics review process and associated training has already begun to yield positive outcomes. Early feedback from reviewers and researchers indicates improved clarity and consistency in ethical decision-making. The expansion of training opportunities for supervisors and research-active staff has enhanced awareness of integrity issues across disciplines, and embedding ethics education within undergraduate and postgraduate curricula continues to foster a culture of responsible research from the earliest stages.
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.
The co-chairs of the REC are exploring ways to use generative AI tools to help researchers engage with ethical considerations in their work. As a Welsh university, we are committed to supporting researchers in doing this in their preferred language. While Welsh is a minority language and large language models have historically had limited access to the corpora needed for full training, this challenge presents an interesting opportunity for consideration in the coming years. By highlighting this as a diversity, equity, and inclusion priority, we can work toward ensuring that discussions around research ethics are as sophisticated in Welsh as they are in English. This will be an important area to monitor and develop in the coming years

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.

The University's procedure for dealing with allegations or research misconduct has been reviewed during the development of the new Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. Following this review, the UWTSD Academic Misconduct Policy will be used to deal with allegations research misconduct in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and postgraduate research programmes are set out in the Following the review, allegations of Staff Research Misconduct will be reported through the process established in the UWTSD Whistleblowing Policy, and investigated following the procedures established in the UWTSD Disciplinary Policy. These procedures provide clear, robust processes for addressing allegations of research misconduct, ensuring transparency, fairness, and compliance with national standards and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Relevant Policies and Procedures

Academic Misconduct Policy – Governs allegations of misconduct in research undertaken by undergraduate, taught postgraduate, and postgraduate research students. This includes plagiarism, falsification of data, contract cheating, and breaches of ethical approval.

Whistleblowing Policy – Provides a confidential mechanism for staff to raise concerns about wrongdoing, including research integrity issues, without fear of reprisal. It sets out reporting routes, confidentiality safeguards, and escalation procedures.

Disciplinary Policy – Applies to allegations of research misconduct by staff. It outlines investigation stages,

rights to representation, and possible sanctions, including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice (pending final approval of the new Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Policy) - Defines expected standards of rigour and integrity, ethical review requirements, and governance processes. It includes definitions of research misconduct and links to the above policies for handling breaches.

Process Overview

Students: Allegations are investigated under the Academic Misconduct Policy, starting with an initial review by an Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator and, where necessary, referral to an Academic Misconduct Investigation Panel

Staff: Concerns are raised via the Whistleblowing Policy and investigated under the Disciplinary Policy by an appointed Investigating Officer.

Cross-Institutional Cases: The Investigating Officer liaises with counterparts at partner institutions to agree on lead responsibility and collaborative arrangements.

Third-Party Reporting: Where contractually required (e.g., Research Councils), relevant bodies are informed. If misconduct is upheld, journal editors and other stakeholders are notified to correct the research record.

The University promotes research integrity by requiring ethics approval for all research projects and embedding ethical principles within researcher development activities. A central part of this effort is the work of the University's research and innovation support service, INSPIRE, which plays a proactive role in helping staff integrate ethics and governance considerations into their research from the earliest stages. INSPIRE provides guidance on preparing ethics applications, offers tailored advice on compliance with legal and professional standards, and ensures researchers understand the implications of data protection, consent, and responsible innovation. Through training sessions, workshops, and one-to-one support, INSPIRE helps research-active staff navigate complex ethical requirements and embed best practice in project design and delivery. It also supports communication and awareness-raising across the University, ensuring that policies, updates, and sector developments are clearly signposted and accessible. By working closely with the Research Ethics Committee and academic teams, INSPIRE contributes to a research environment where integrity is not just a procedural requirement but a core part of the research culture.

Policies are reviewed regularly to keep them aligned with sector guidance and emerging issues; for example, the Academic Misconduct and Whistleblowing Policies were updated in 2022–2023, and the Disciplinary Policy is reviewed periodically in line with employment law. A new Research Integrity and Ethics Policy is expected to be implemented in December 2025. Lessons learned from investigations help improve procedures and training, such as adding clearer guidance on AI use and data management to ethics forms and training materials

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				
Falsification	*3*	*3*		*3*
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
*Other**				
Total:	**1**	**1**		**1**

***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.**

[Please insert response if applicable]