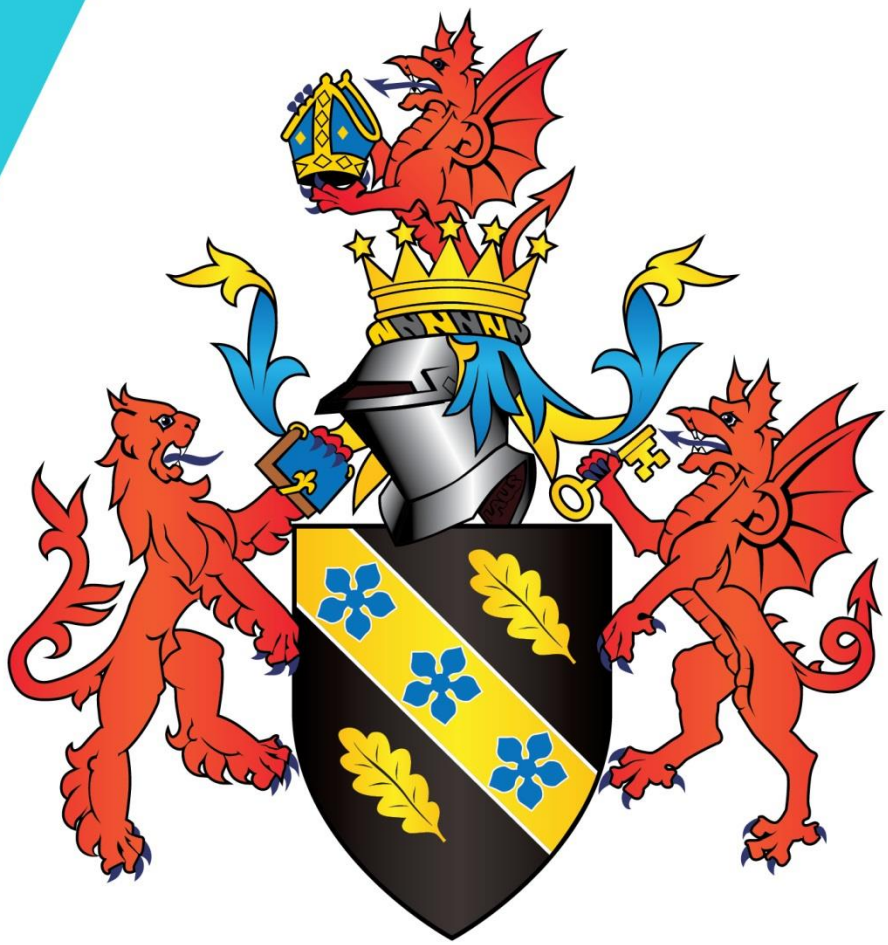
Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



Annual Research Integrity Report 2023-2024

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Introduction

The University of Wales Trinity St. David is a signatory to the **Concordat to Support Research Integrity** and, as a result, is deeply committed to the principles and ideas set out within this framework. This document is the University's annual research integrity statement for the academic year 2023-2024.

This report pertains to research undertaken by academic staff and by postgraduate research students. Any research undertaken by undergraduate and taught postgraduate students is regulated under the University's regulations for taught courses, which are administered by the Academic Office through the Unfair Practice Procedures.

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 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 ("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.

The procedures and guidelines outlined in the Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice apply to all academic and administrative staff, those holding honorary positions at the University, and all students conducting research projects and related activities as part of undergraduate, postgraduate and short courses and research programmes in which students are enrolled/registered at, and/or supervised by staff at the University. The exception shall be cases where the Principal Researcher is registered elsewhere providing that the research project has been approved by an equivalent ethics committee following a comparable level of ethics review.

Governance

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 and the Academic Office. 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 2023-2024 the REC scrutinised 170 ethics forms (129 from postgraduate students, 41 from academic staff), compared with 152 the previous year.

Actions and Activities

The REC 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 has recently invested in the Epigeum 2.0 training course and made this available to all staff and researchers.

During the spring of 2024 the University introduced a Trusted Research & Innovation Policy and Export Control Policy, taking into account appropriate legal advice to ensure that they are fully in step with current legal requirements. We are compliant with both UK Export Control relating to electronic or physical transfer of research materials and regulations for Trusted Research for international collaborations. The University is currently developing a formal policy relating to these and will be providing training on these in due course once the policy is adopted.

University Procedures

The University has a number of procedures and policies that support research integrity and provide effective mechanisms for staff and students to report any concerns or queries. Any such reports are investigated in a fair and transparent manner.

Academic Misconduct Policy

Fitness to Practice Policy

Research Data Management Policy

Trusted Research & Innovation Policy

Export Control Policy (Available on the University Intranet)

Student Intellectual Property Policy

Staff Intellectual Property Policy

Whistleblowing Policy (Available on the University Intranet)

These policies are regularly reviewed and updated.

Research Misconduct

Any cases of research misconduct are dealt with using the procedure given in section 17 of the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice. Research misconduct within postgraduate research projects is handled via the University's Academic Misconduct Policy.

There was one case of academic misconduct brought against a research student during the academic year 2023-2024. The student, at an overseas partner institution, admitted to including significant materials in their thesis without properly attributing them. This was brought to a formal panel of investigation comprised of staff from UWTSD and the partner institution. As a result, 27.3.1.3 of the University's Academic Misconduct Policy was implemented i.e. *Termination of candidature on the grounds of gross misconduct with no examination of the thesis.* The University is satisfied that this shows the appropriate function and application of the University's regulations and policies.

Contact Details

All queries relating to this annual statement or to any activities taken by the University in regards to the Concordat should be directed to one of the following contacts:

- Professor Nik Whitehead – Co-chair, Research Ethics Committee
- Dr Rebekah Humphreys – Co-chair, Research Ethics Committee

- Professor Kyle Erickson – Director of Academic Enhancement, Academic Experience

If anyone reading this document has concerns relating to the conduct of a University of Wales Trinity St. David researcher, they should first consult the appropriate policy or procedure. If you are unsure of which policy or procedure applies in your case, or you are a participant in a research project, please consult the Research Ethics team noted above.