UWTSD: annual statement on research integrity 2025-26

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)	26 November 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 maintaining the highest standards of ethics, integrity and governance in the research undertaken by its staff and students. The University recognises its obligations under the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and seeks to ensure that research conducted under its auspices is undertaken honestly, rigorously and transparently, with due care and respect for participants, the environment and wider society. Research integrity is viewed as a core component of research excellence and is embedded within the University's broader research culture, governance arrangements and researcher development activities

Policy and Systems

The University's Research Ethics and Integrity Policy, approved by Senate in November 2025, provides the institutional framework for research ethics, integrity and governance. The Policy establishes the standards of honesty, rigour, transparency, care and accountability expected of all researchers and sets out the ethical approval, governance and misconduct procedures applicable to staff and students. It integrates research integrity with wider governance requirements including artificial intelligence, research data management, data protection, health and safety, safeguarding, collaborative and international research, trusted research and innovation, export control, intellectual property and research misconduct. Oversight is provided by the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC), working closely with the Data Protection Officer, the Doctoral College and the University's research and innovation support service, ERIS

Culture, development and leadership

The REC plays a key role in promoting a positive research culture and supporting researchers to understand their ethical and professional responsibilities. Members provide a point of contact within their Faculties and CAWCS, enabling researchers and students to discuss ethical considerations within the context of their own disciplines. This discipline-informed approach supports both staff and students in engaging with ethical issues throughout the research lifecycle.

Supporting guidance and researcher development have evolved alongside the new Policy. Researchers are provided with guidance and training relating to responsible use of artificial intelligence, research data management planning, data protection by design and default, trusted research and innovation, export controls, safeguarding, research conducted outside the UK, and collaborative research governance. These considerations are embedded within the University's ethics review and approval processes.

Programmes of seminars and training are available for postgraduate researchers, supervisors and research-active staff and are supported through the University's Staff Development Programme, Doctoral College and annual Postgraduate Research Summer School. Research integrity and ethical conduct are also embedded within the undergraduate curriculum in accordance with the requirements of relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Bespoke ethics review processes continue to be supported for undergraduate and taught postgraduate research undertaken within individual disciplines.

The REC continues to work closely with the Doctoral College to strengthen support for postgraduate researchers and supervisory teams. This collaboration has enabled the development of centralised training resources and enhanced support for both experienced and new research supervisors. The University also provides training relating to academic misconduct and the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence through its learning, teaching and researcher development activities.

The University's research and innovation support service, ERIS, plays a key role in raising awareness of research integrity and governance matters, supporting researcher development, promoting institutional policies and embedding high standards throughout the design, development and delivery of research projects

Communication and Engagement

The REC, Doctoral College and ERIS jointly deliver a programme of research ethics and integrity training throughout the year. This includes timetabled sessions covering ethical principles, research governance requirements and institutional approval procedures for postgraduate researchers, supervisors and research-active staff. Monthly ethics drop-in sessions provide opportunities for researchers to access informal advice and guidance on ethics, integrity and governance matters.

During 2025-26, the REC expanded its support activities through the introduction of dedicated training sessions for the revised ethics application process, ethics reviewer development activities, enhanced supervisor support, and the development of supplementary guidance materials. These included Frequently Asked Questions, expanded intranet guidance and work towards additional digital learning resources and Welsh-language materials to improve accessibility and engagement.

Monitoring and reporting

The REC reports to the University Research Committee for staff research and to the Doctoral College Board for postgraduate research. The Committee provides ethical review and oversight of staff and postgraduate research, monitors the effectiveness of institutional arrangements and advises on emerging ethical and governance issues. It receives reports from Faculties, research groups and relevant professional services and reports annually on its activities.

All academic staff and postgraduate researchers are required to obtain ethical approval before commencing data collection. During the academic year 2025-26, the REC reviewed 149 ethics applications comprising 127 postgraduate research projects and 22 staff research projects. The University also produces annual reports on student misconduct and fitness to practise matters, which are considered through the University's academic governance structures. During 2025-26, 3 cases of academic misconduct involving research degree student were recorded.

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 most significant development during the reporting period was the approval of the University's new Research Ethics and Integrity Policy in November 2025, replacing the previous Code of Practice. The Policy introduced enhanced requirements relating to artificial intelligence, research data management planning, data protection impact assessment, health and safety, safeguarding, health and social care research, research involving animals, research conducted within prison settings, international collaborations, trusted research and innovation, export controls and intellectual property management. It also established a broader research governance approach, ensuring that ethics review is integrated with wider institutional responsibilities and compliance requirements. To support implementation, the REC undertook a comprehensive review of the University's ethics review processes and documentation. A revised PG2 ethics application process and associated guidance were introduced, aligned to the requirements of the new Policy. Training for researchers, supervisors and ethics reviewers commenced during summer 2025, with the revised process implemented from September 2025. Researcher support was further strengthened through the introduction of dedicated PG2 training sessions, additional ethics drop-in opportunities and enhanced ethics reviewer development activities. The Committee also initiated the development of Frequently Asked Questions, enhanced intranet guidance and additional digital learning resources, including training videos and Welsh-language support materials. Work has continued to improve consistency in ethics review and strengthen supervisor understanding of research governance requirements. During the year, the University also continued to engage with sector-wide developments relating to Trusted Research and Innovation. REC representation at pan-Wales discussions has helped ensure that institutional guidance and processes remain aligned with emerging national expectations regarding international collaboration, research security and responsible innovation.
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.
The past year has been characterised by a transition from policy development to implementation. Approval of the new Research Ethics and Integrity Policy has enabled the University to establish a more integrated and comprehensive approach to research governance, ensuring that ethical review is aligned with broader institutional responsibilities relating to safeguarding, information governance, data protection, trusted research, export control and responsible innovation.

Alongside these structural developments, considerable progress has been made in strengthening researcher support and engagement. The introduction of revised ethics documentation, enhanced training provision, regular ethics drop-in sessions and expanded online guidance has improved awareness of institutional expectations and provided researchers with greater access to support throughout the research lifecycle. The strengthened relationship between the REC, Doctoral College and ERIS has also contributed to a more coordinated approach to researcher development and research governance.

The REC has identified several priorities for the coming year. These include continued embedding of the new Policy, further development of supervisor and reviewer training, expansion of digital and bilingual guidance materials, refinement of ethics application processes and enhanced support for researchers working with artificial intelligence and in complex international research environments. Ongoing engagement with Trusted Research and Innovation activities, together with continued monitoring and feedback from researchers, reviewers and supervisory teams, will help ensure that the University's research integrity framework remains effective, proportionate and responsive to emerging challenges.

Overall, the University considers that substantial progress has been made during the year in strengthening its research integrity framework and embedding a culture in which ethics, integrity and responsible research practices are recognised as integral to research excellence

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.

During 2025-26, the University undertook a pilot project to explore whether generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) could support, but not replace, human judgement within research ethics processes. The work emerged from two related challenges. First, academic departments were experiencing increasing pressure when reviewing large volumes of undergraduate project ethics applications within limited timeframes. In one instance, more than 100 Level 6 project ethics forms required review within a single week. Second, doctoral students often required significant support in identifying and understanding the ethical implications of their proposed research before submitting formal ethics applications.

The pilot was designed around a clear principle: Generative AI should never be used to make ethical decisions or determine approval outcomes. Responsibility for ethical review and decision-making remained entirely with academic staff and members of the University's Research Ethics Committee. Instead, the project investigated whether AI could assist in identifying potential ethical issues that might warrant further human consideration.

Alongside the pilot, guidance resources were developed for Level 8 students on the responsible use of Microsoft Copilot to support early-stage ethical reflection. Two guidance videos were produced in both English and Welsh. The first demonstrated how students could discuss proposed research plans with Copilot to explore possible ethical issues before completing an ethics application. The second showed how Copilot might be used to review completed applications for consistency and to identify areas that may require further consideration. These resources emphasised that AI tools should be used only as a learning and reflective aid and not as a mechanism for obtaining ethics approval. The production of Welsh-language resources supported the University's obligations under the Welsh Language Act, despite recognised limitations in the performance of some GenAI systems in minority languages and specialist academic

domains.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, a pilot study was undertaken using 30 anonymised ethics applications. The applications were submitted to both the University's instance of Microsoft Copilot and ChatGPT (using a secure GPT Plus account). Ethical issues identified by the AI systems were compared against issues previously raised by Research Ethics Committee reviewers. ChatGPT successfully identified 97.7% of reviewer-identified issues, while Copilot identified 81.6%.

The findings suggest that generative AI can provide a valuable mechanism for supporting researchers, particularly during the early stages of identifying ethical risks and developing ethical awareness. While the technology is not suitable for decision-making and cannot replace expert review, the results indicate that AI-assisted reflection may help researchers identify a wider range of potential ethical considerations before engaging with supervisors and formal ethics review processes. Further research is planned to better understand the strengths, limitations and appropriate governance of AI-supported ethics review activities.

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 procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct were reviewed as part of the development and approval of the Research Ethics and Integrity Policy in November 2025. Following this review, allegations relating to undergraduate, taught postgraduate and postgraduate research students are investigated under the University's Academic Misconduct Policy. Allegations involving members of staff are reported through the University's Whistleblowing Policy and investigated under the procedures established within the University's Disciplinary Policy. Together, these arrangements provide transparent, timely, robust and fair processes for addressing concerns relating to research misconduct in accordance with the principles of 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 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. The Policy defines research misconduct as including fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, failure to meet ethical, legal and professional obligations, and the improper handling of allegations of misconduct. The University recognises that maintaining a positive research culture requires both support for good research practice and effective mechanisms for reporting concerns where standards are not met

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, ERIS, which plays a proactive role in helping staff integrate ethics and governance considerations into their research from the earliest stages.

ERIS 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, ERIS 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. 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	*2*	*2*		*2*
Plagiarism	*1*	*1*		*1*
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:	**3**	**3**		**3**

***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.**