University of Northampton Annual Statement on research integrity 2023-2024

Introduction

The University of Northampton (UON) Annual Statement (2023-2024) on Research Integrity to fulfil the requirements of the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019), of which we are a signatory. The Concordat to Support Research Integrity seeks to provide a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. The Annual Statement on Research Integrity and the supporting action plan is reported to the Research Ethics Committee and the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee.

This statement has been reviewed and approved by our University Board Governors and the University's Statements are published at:

https://www.northampton.ac.uk/research/research-support/research-integrity-ethics-and-governance/research-integrity/

The senior member of staff who oversees research integrity is Professor Mark Rothery. Email address: mark.rothery@northampton.ac.uk

Actions and activities

During 2023/24 UON undertook the following actions and activities to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity.

Update on RI actions from previous year 2022/23

Action	Status
Review of the ethical codes and procedures to ensure ongoing compliance with the sector and the Concordat.	Completed
Review of the Research Integrity Policy in line with the recommendations from the Concordat.	Ongoing
Review of research and enterprise training that is provided, for all staff, including ECRs and PGRs. Both FHES and FAST have implemented mentoring programmes for ECRs and the Graduate School also provide this training for PGRs and ECRs. The research centres also deploy training programmes around ethics and integrity.	Ongoing

Update the University website to include new research integrity and research ethics webpages.	Ongoing
Mapping of UON compliance with the requirements of the revised Concordat against the action plan.	Completed
Update the annual statement on research integrity with the guidance from the Concordat.	Completed
Follow up on the institutional review of whistleblowing and safeguarding policies to ensure research environment is acknowledged within these changes.	Completed
Ensure research is part of the discussions on generative AI within the University.	Ongoing
Review and update research website content on the main University research webpages to strengthen staff and the public understanding of the University research integrity processes and procedures.	Completed

Activities

Key points summarised from the unreserved RIIC and RAKE minutes.

- An updated Research Integrity Statement was presented that included a mapping exercise of how the University meets the expectations of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. This will include an identified named point of contact for Research Integrity, Mark Rothery.
- The process of reviewing the Research Integrity Policy began and was made available on a dedicated Research Integrity webpage.
- The University Research and Knowledge Exchange: Strategic and Operational Plan – Academic Years 2023-28 was approved by the University Leadership Team (ULT).
- The University undertook a review of its research and knowledge exchange governance structure. The Research, Impact and Innovation Committee (RIIC) was replaced by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RAKEC) and the Business, Engagement, Enterprise, and Entrepreneurial Committee (BEEEC) was replaced by a Knowledge Exchange Sub-committee (KESc). Terms of Reference were amended accordingly, and the memberships were reviewed to ensure greater inclusivity.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its relationship to academic and research integrity and guidance was developed.
- Data sharing agreements have been reviewed in line with a strengthen governance structure within the University.
- The induction of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) has been reviewed as part of the wider review of staff induction.
- Teaching and Research contracts were reviewed and updated guidance to support staff approaching a review of their contract.
- The University created a position statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) which serves as the key resource and guidance for Level 8 student and research staff.
- New guidance for researchers to use Microsoft Teams for research-related interviews. The guidance was a collaboration between The Faculty of Health,

Education and Society (FHES), IT and Library, Learning and Student Services (LLSS).
- The University is ensuring the institutions processes of recording staff research training is aligned to the expectations that come from the Concordat.
- As part of the internal audit additional steps have been undertaken from 12.02.24) within the Pure Award Management (PAM) workflow, the main change was staff adhering to UON the terms and conditions for conducting research at the University.

Policy development

Key points summarised from the unreserved RIIC and RAKE minutes.

- Minor amendments to the Visiting Professors and Fellows Policy and accompanying nomination form following the replacement of the Research, Impact, and Innovation Committee (RIIC) and the Business, Engagement, Enterprise, and Entrepreneurship Committee (BEEEC) by RAKE earlier in 2024. This was approved by RAKEC (June 2024), approved by Senate (July 2024)
- The University of Northampton Research Ethics Code was reviewed, and changes have been made. Specially the risk assessment processes and clear guidance on different scenarios for PGRs who are doing research outside of the UK.
- The PGR Regulations and Policies is now in a separate document from the rest of the University's Academic Regulations. This was approved by RAKEC (June 2024) and by Senate (July 2024).

Training and awareness raising

A range of research training and development activities have been delivered during 2023/24. The Graduate School commenced their programme of training and development of our PG Research students. This is also open to ECRs and other members of staff. Out of the 78 individual sessions we have had for PGRs this academic year, 58 were online and 20 on campus, including full days. Most online sessions are recorded and can be viewed after in our NILE site. Approx one third of our PGR cohort attended at least 1 optional workshop in the year. One hundred per cent of PGRs completed research integrity and research ethics courses online. A range of research training and development activities for staff have also been delivered.

Planned future activities

UON is committed to continuing developing its environment that supports the Concordat. In the next academic year (2023-24) the University will undertake the following activities:

Action
The Library, Learning and Student Services (LLSS) to confirm the format of its Faculty Research and Enterprise Committee (FREC) and how it fits in with the structure of RAKE.

A review of the Research Misconduct Policy in line with the recommendations from the Concordat and update accordingly.
A review of the Research Integrity Policy in line with the recommendations from the Concordat and update accordingly. It will be made available on a dedicated Research Integrity webpage.
To review and deliver a range of research and knowledge exchange training development for PGRs and staff. Including: ECRs, the Graduate School also provide this training for all staff. Both FHES and FAST to have implemented mentoring programmes for ECRs and the research centres also deploy training programmes around ethics and integrity.
To update the University staff intranet Research and knowledge Exchange pages to support the training and development of University Staff.
To map UON's compliance with the requirements of the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice.
To develop a gender equality plan, a dedicated webpage and a working group to further develop this.
To review and develop the training and supporting documentation to support staff undertaking ethics.

Addressing research misconduct

Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

The University is committed to investigating all allegations of misconduct in a robust, fair, and timely manner. Our Research Misconduct Policy, available on the University webpages, outlines how any investigations are carried out with consideration for the well-being of all parties.