

University of Warwick Research Integrity Seventh Annual Statement (2020-21)

The University remains strongly committed to ensuring the highest standards in the conduct of all research undertaken in our name, on our premises and in our facilities. This includes research undertaken by staff, students, visiting or emeritus staff, associates, honorary or clinical contract holders, contractors, and consultants. In this, the University recognises its obligations to the wider research community, to the funders of research and to society as a whole to uphold the integrity of academic research, and to comply with the Universities UK (UUK) '[Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)' (2019) (the 'Concordat').

A strong commitment to research integrity is embedded within our institutional systems and culture. This includes a well-established committee structure that provides transparency and accountability for all matters of research integrity and governance, reporting to Senate, the academic authority of the University, and Council, the University's executive governing body, via the central Research Governance & Ethics Committee (RGAEC).

Chaired by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), RGAEC provides oversight and leadership to research integrity across the University. It meets on a termly basis with a membership comprising lay representatives and senior members of the academy and professional services. Each of the University's research ethics committees¹ report directly to RGAEC, as does the University's Sponsorship & Oversight Committee (SOC), providing strong institutional oversight that is supported by a dedicated Research Governance & Systems team situated within Research & Impact Services (R&IS).

The strength and agility of these structures were demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the University successfully delivered its research ethics and sponsorship functions via remote and secure working. All committee meetings took place via video conferencing, receiving ethics and sponsorship applications beforehand and providing a full review to each application, ensuring the continuity of research at the University.

During the 2020-21 period, the University has taken a proactive approach to Trusted Research, with oversight being provided by the RGAEC and overall responsibility with the University's Council.

The University is committed to fostering safe and secure international partnerships and has developed a framework of underpinning institutional policies and related processes, relating to dual-use, export control and sensitive research. This has included an enhanced due diligence process for funded and un-funded research projects and gifts to assess potential partners.

RGAEC also established a Secondary Data Working Group, including researchers from across a range of disciplines as well as representatives from the Information and Digital Group and R&IS, which developed and published a set of guidelines on the use of secondary data in research. An ethicist specialising in secondary and internet data issues subsequently delivered a presentation to RGAEC on these topics.

A new University Research Culture Committee has also been established. This brings together researchers, technicians, postgraduate research students, and Professional Services Staff to have open and collaborative discussions about the University's research culture, to share best practice and to influence future developments in this area. The Committee is putting in place a programme of consultation with the wider research community around research culture and how it can be

¹ Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC); Biomedical & Scientific Research Ethics Committee (BSREC); Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

developed. The Committee will contribute to sector-wide discussions on the development of positive research cultures and bring together relevant internal stakeholders to discuss and propose the most appropriate University response to the changing funding and policy environment.

The University has also signed up to the revised 'Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers' and has made a submission for renewal to the Vitae 'HR Excellence in Research' accreditation. This has involved the development of an associated action plan, which will embed research integrity awareness and training into researcher induction, Early Career Researcher programmes and research leadership training. In addition, the University has introduced mandatory General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) training for all University staff and students.

Support to all staff and research students with regards to all matters of research integrity is provided by the Research Governance & Systems Team in R&IS, which also delivers the Secretariat function to our internal Research Ethics, Sponsorship and Oversight, and Governance Committees. During 2020/21, the team has been restructured to support the implementation of an institutional on-line ethics review and approval system. This system will strengthen the current Research Ethics Committee provision, embedding a consistent approach across disciplines and harmonised sponsorship and ethics application forms. The new system will also support delegated Ethics approval processes, facilitating increased oversight and quality assurance at an institutional level.

Work has been on-going at the University to support research integrity through fostering Open Research, led by the Open Research Group, which is formally constituted as a sub-committee of the University Research Committee. Furthering its commitment to ensuring research integrity and transparency in all aspects of research, the University has adopted the 'Warwick Principles for the Evaluation of Research' (accessible at <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/open-research-warwick>) which are based on the Leiden Principles on research assessment and has published a statement of commitment to these principles. The Open Research Group is driving progress to ensure that these principles are embedded in the University's processes for research communication, administration, and assessment.

The Open Research Group also agreed to map the University's development of Open Research policies and practice against a recognised external framework: 'A roadmap for cultural change' (accessible at <https://www.leru.org/publications/open-science-and-its-role-in-universities-a-roadmap-for-cultural-change>), developed by the League of European Research Universities in 2018, to capture institutional progress and identify priority areas for activity.

The University is a partner in the TRAIN (Transforming Research and Innovation) Horizon 2020-funded project. One of its work packages is on Open Science and Societal Outreach. The Open Research Group will maintain oversight of this work, which will be led by the Library.

The Library's expert support staff continue to support open access through the [Warwick Research Archive Portal](#) (WRAP) and through the management of block grants and through participation in new transformative deals with publishers. The Library has set out recommended principles for determining the allocation of any open access funding that the University may have available, to allow researchers to ensure the best possible open access to their papers. The University continues to champion open access, with compliance with the current UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Policy increasing for the seventh consecutive year to 87%.

With respect to cases of research misconduct, the University has one case to report during the period. This was investigated within the framework of the University's Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct and the allegation was upheld.