Template: annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Health Sciences University
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)	11/12/2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.hsu.ac.uk/research/integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Dr Julie Northam
	Email address: Julie.Northam@hsu.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: Dr Julie Northam
	Email address: Julie.Northam@hsu.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. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- Policies and systems

- Communications and engagement

- Culture, development and leadership

- Monitoring and reporting

AECC University College became Health Sciences University (HSU) in July 2024 and the former University College of Osteopathy joined HSU as a school in August 2024. HSU is strongly committed to the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and has been a signatory of the Concordat since October 2017.

This statement covers the academic year 2024/25 in relation to research misconduct covering both staff and postgraduate research students and confirms that there were no allegations of research misconduct received.

The Head of Research is responsible for overseeing all aspects of research integrity at HSU and is the first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity. The Institutional Research Ethics Committee provides oversight and leadership for matters of research ethics and integrity institutionally. The Head of Research and Chair of the Institutional Research Ethics Committee are responsible for embedding principles of good research culture. The University's Executive Leadership Group or the Academic Registrar & University Secretary are the primary contacts for whistle-blowing procedures.

We are committed to conducting all research activity at HSU with the highest standards of rigour and integrity. This commitment is reflected in our Research

Misconduct Policy and Procedure, the HSU Code of Good Practice for Research and our Research and Ethics Policy and Procedures.

We are committed to fostering and supporting a research culture that is underpinned by research integrity, responsible research conduct, ethics, compliance, and governance across the full spectrum of our research activities and fully recognise our responsibilities to researchers and the wider community.

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.

Health Sciences University's (HSU) strategic aims set out our ambition to *'become a first choice partner within specialisms for research and innovation in the health science community'* which involves significantly increasing our research activity and developing our emerging research culture. Our RKE strategy was launched in February 2025 and stresses our commitment to advancing high-quality, impactful research that addresses regional, national, and global challenges. By strengthening partnerships with industry, government, and communities, we aim to translate our research into practical solutions that benefit society. Work has continued to improve our guidance, training and support throughout the full research lifecycle (please see further detail below).

Development work is underway on a new online ethics platform that aims to make our ethics process more robust and transparent. Our new Research Ethics Policy and Procedures were launched in January 2025 after being reviewed and standardised across the institution, including the set-up of an Institutional Research Ethics Committee which takes a strategic overview of research ethics and integrity, and School Research Ethics Panels which provide ethics review. As part of this work, academic colleagues were provided with training on this system and conducting ethics reviews. Further training is scheduled for 2025/26.

At the same time, the first HSU Code of Good Practice for Research was launched, which sets out the principles and standards we expect of researchers at HSU for all aspects of research. The Code includes the UK Research Integrity Office's

recommended checklist for researchers which highlights the key points of good practice for a research project from start to finish.

The HSU PGR Student Handbook was updated and launched in December 2024, including a much more detailed and robust section on ethics and integrity.

A draft Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy based on the refreshed Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2025) is currently progressing through HSU approval routes with a view to being launched by December 2025.

Multiple new RKE policies and procedures have been implemented to-date including:

- a process for Managing Due Diligence in Research, based on UKRI guidelines
- a Publications Policy including Open Access procedures
- a Recognition & remuneration policy for research contributors & participants which incorporates patient and public involvement (PPI) procedures
- an External approvals and research ethics review policy and procedure
- a Research sponsorship policy and procedure
- the introduction of an Institutional Open Access Fund
- a process for applying for external research and knowledge exchange funding
- a Research data management policy and procedure
- a Research Governance & Integrity Policy

Our first cohort of postgraduate researchers (PGRs) completed their third year of study in 2024/25. The second cohort of 11 PGRs joined HSU in 2024/25, with a further 14 expected to begin their studies in 2025/26.

The University's Research and Innovation Committee, which reports to the Academic Board, has recently been reviewed and restructured. Standing agenda items will include matters of research ethics and integrity and will be discussed on a quarterly basis.

HSU has also made commitments to several external best practice initiatives including:

- Subscribing to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and implementing mandatory training for all ethics panel members via the UKRIO introduction to integrity online module.
- Signing the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)

agreement.
- Signing the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).
- Signing the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) Manifesto for Public Engagement.

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.

A thorough gap analysis of the HSU RKE infrastructure was completed in 2023/24, with ethics and integrity comprising one area of the analysis. An action plan was produced following this analysis to be undertaken in academic years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, and includes the following planned developments:

- A comprehensive review of ethics and integrity policies and processes to ensure our processes are as robust and efficient as possible - ongoing
- Implement training around ethics and integrity as part of a larger training and development package for RKE – some training has been provided with more planned in 2025/26
- To better communicate our processes and policies around ethics and integrity to raise awareness and understanding, and to have a dedicated space on our staff webpages for ethics and integrity where all guidance and policies will be located. An internal 'RKE Hub' was launched in January 2024 which includes improved guidance on ethics for staff and PGR students. A new institutional website will also allow better public access to our policies and procedures and information on our RKE activity - ongoing
- To produce a Code of Good Research Practice - complete
- To produce a process for informing funders of research about misconduct investigations – ongoing and addressed in the new Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy
- To implement internal ethics and integrity audits
- To update and strengthen our Postgraduate Research Handbook, which includes guidance on ethics and integrity - complete
- Training for supervisors of PGRs by Solent University, our awarding body for research degrees – some staff have already received training with this action ongoing
- Implementing an annual review of our compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- Participation as a pilot institution in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029 People, Culture and Environment pilot exercise – complete

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.
[Please insert response]

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.

HSU has the following relevant policies/processes relating to research integrity:

Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure – currently under review (Sept 2025)
This policy and procedure apply to all HSU staff and postgraduate research students undertaking research under the auspices of the University. The document sets out HSU's principles around research integrity, advice on concerns about research integrity, and confidentiality and data protection. It sets out the process by which allegations of research misconduct can be reported, the process of investigation, and that the principle of no detriment shall apply to both the complainant and the respondent.

Research Ethics Policy and Procedures – Reviewed and updated (Dec 2024)
This document covers all major areas for ethical consideration including responsibilities of researchers, students, supervisors and panels, research ethics principles, research ethics definitions, informed consent, the research ethics

application and review process. Schools have independent research ethics panels which report to the Institutional Research Ethics Committee. This document has been reviewed to standardise the process across Schools.

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures – May 2025

This policy sets out how to raise concerns in the event someone believes that wrongdoing or malpractice is taking place within the University. The policy applies to governors, students, those contracted to supply services to the University and to everyone who works for the University. The policy sets out how whistleblowers will be protected and the action that will be taken on any member of the University's community who discriminates against anyone who raises a concern under this policy. Concerns can be raised by emailing whistleblowing@hsu.ac.uk.

The following policies and procedures also set out the expectations, policies and procedures around academic integrity for our staff and students:

- Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure (due for review Autumn 2025)

- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (due for review Autumn 2025)

- Student Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures (due for review Autumn 2025)

- Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures (postgraduate research degree students) (due for review Autumn 2025)

- Postgraduate Research Student Handbook (published Dec 2024)

- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy (due for review June 2026)

- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (due for review Sept 2027)

- Data Protection Policy (due for review June 2028)

- Code of Conduct for Staff (due for review Sept 2026)

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	0			
Falsification	0			
Plagiarism	0			
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0			
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0			
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0			
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0			
Other*	0			
Total:	**0**			

*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]