

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2024-25

Section 1: Key contact information

1A. Name of organisation	Keele University
1B. Type of organisation	Higher Education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	26/11/25 (URC) 10/12/25 (Senate)
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	Research integrity - Keele University
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor David Amigoni Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation
	d.amigoni@keele.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	Professor David Amigoni
	d.amigoni@keele.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

<p>2A. Description of current systems and culture</p> <p>Statement</p> <p>Keele University is committed to ensuring the highest standards of research integrity in all aspects of its research activities and expects its researchers to maintain a similar commitment. Keele University welcomes the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity and supports the five commitments contained within the Concordat.</p> <p>Research integrity is one of the strategic pillars of Keele University's overarching Research Strategy. Our commitment is to the highest standards of research integrity through maintaining a research environment that supports and develops our researchers, with clear processes for responding to allegations of research misconduct. In addition to Professor David Amigoni, the Academic Lead for Research Integrity and Improvement at Keele University and the Director of Research Strategy Delivery (Research Integrity administrative lead) can be contacted. This Research Integrity Group can be contacted through the dedicated email account: research.integrity@keele.ac.uk</p> <p>Governance and Oversight</p> <p>Keele University's Research Committee oversees the integrity of the University's research on behalf of the University Executive Committee, Senate, and Council, and review and approve this annual statement.</p> <p>Quality Management System</p>

The University recognises the need to ensure standards and legislative requirements are met in a consistent and robust manner. The University has a Quality Management System in place to manage compliance with the standards governing our research activity. This Quality Management System comprises three main aspects:

- (1) the University's **policies and procedures** to define the standards and outline processes by which those standards are applied;
- (2) the **training and development** of research staff, to support them in applying and promoting these standards in their research; and
- (3) processes and mechanisms by which the University maintains **oversight** of the ongoing application of these standards and investigates concerns about research integrity.

The five key elements of research integrity (honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability) outlined in the Concordat are reflected in the University's Quality Management System.

Policies and Procedures

The [Keele University Research Integrity Policy](#) is part of the overarching Quality Management System. The University has a [Code of Good Research Practice](#) and a [Code of Practice for Student Academic Misconduct](#) which outline the University's expectations of the behaviour of all staff and students engaged in research. These documents also include the definition of misconduct in research. The code reflects a number of other policies including:

- Data protection
- Management of conflicts of interest
- UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research
- Research data management
- Research ethics

Where an area of work represents a significant risk or there is otherwise a requirement for it, the University will specifically describe processes required to meet standards or legislative requirements through standard operating procedures (SOPs). SOPs are subject to periodic review to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory and funder requirements as well as evolving research practice. Currently, the University has SOPs in the following areas:

- Clinical research, particularly Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products
- Scientific research involving the use of animals
- Research involving human participants, their data or bodily material
- Open Access to research publications
- Ethics Committee review of research

These policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they meet the requirements of our evolving research portfolio and can be found on the [University's Research Integrity webpages](#) and [Policy Zone](#). Communications on research ethics and integrity processes are made to staff and students through the University's internal communications channels. Research integrity is a standing item on the University and Faculty Research Committees.

In addition to this, Faculties are encouraged to develop local processes to promote a culture of research integrity; these may include:

- Peer review processes
- Symposium/Seminar series and academic discussion
- Engagement with research transparency, including (but not limited to):
 - Pre-registration of study protocols
 - Open access to research data
 - Open access to research materials
 - Open access to research software / analysis scripts
- Ethics Committee review of research

Keele is committed to the principle that researchers should publish their results freely, ensuring their work is available to other researchers and the public. The University proactively publishes publicly funded research outputs through its research repository [Worktribe](#), and actively manages situations where restrictions exist on publication accessibility. Currently, around 85% of the content on the repository is freely available to all through open access publication.

The University also has a [repository for research data](#) underpinning published research made available for open access. It builds on and greatly facilitates existing good practice within the University as highlighted by key stakeholders in recent publications.

Keele is committed to supporting transparency in research and to developing approaches to improve the quality of the research we produce. As part of this, Keele has developed a [Statement on Transparency in Research](#) which sets out key expectations of Keele researchers to engage with Open Science and Reproducibility best-practice. Such best practice includes Open Data (public sharing of data underpinning our publications), Open Materials (public sharing of research methods / analysis scripts / software) underpinning our research, as well as engaging in pre-registration of study protocols and analysis plans, where appropriate.

Keele is also committed to recognising and rewarding engagement with Open Research and Reproducibility best practices in its promotion and hiring decisions. Our promotions criteria encourage candidates to comment on their engagement with Open Science and Reproducibility best-practice in their applications. Keele has also developed a [Statement on Responsible Research Assessment](#) to guide hiring and promotion committees in the responsible use of bibliometric data. Keele is also a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) which emphasises the assessment of research on its own merits rather than relying on bibliometric data (such as journal impact factor).

Training and Development

The University recognises that the ultimate responsibility for personal and professional development of researchers lies with the individual and provides a supportive environment with open access to opportunities for training or personal reflection. The University benefits from membership of Vitae and the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) and benchmarks development opportunities against the Researcher Development Framework in order to develop more effective and successful researchers with a specific emphasis on research integrity.

The University seeks to ensure that all researchers are aware of and understand the policies and principles relating to ethics and integrity. The University supports researchers through the provision of learning and development opportunities to ensure compliance with policy in mandating training in certain key areas.

The training programme provides opportunities for recommended training in areas supporting research integrity such as:

- Good Clinical Practice as legislated by the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations
- Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Requests
- Discipline specific research methodology and ethical considerations
- Publications and presentations
- Intellectual Property management including conflicts of interest and transparency
- Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act
- Human Tissue Act
- Plagiarism and Research Misconduct
- Information Security

The University recognises the need for a flexible and dynamic training package to respond to changes in research focus in the staff and student populations, as well as external forces such as changes in legislation or funder requirements.

The University's research integrity training needs are held under review by the Research Committee.

The [Research Governance Toolkit Research Integrity webpage](#) is regularly updated. We also have an [internal hub](#) for academic colleagues with pages dedicated to Research Integrity.

Research integrity training is available to postgraduate research students. As part of the Keele Doctoral Academy Researcher Training Centre an introductory session on, integrity, research governance and ethics explains the differences between the three and when each is relevant along with real-time examples and support for students to think about their own projects.

An Academic Lead for Research Integrity and Improvement at Keele along with Faculty Research Integrity Leads for each Faculty continue to work with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation and the Director for Research Strategy Delivery to foster a stronger culture of research integrity, open research, and reproducibility at Keele. The Academic Lead sits on University Research Committee, and the Academic Lead and Faculty Research Integrity Leads are members of the Research Leaders Network at Keele and their respective Faculty Research Committees.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

In 2024/25 we conducted a comprehensive revision to the University's Research Misconduct Policy to ensure alignment with recommendations set out by the UK Research Integrity Office. The new policy was implemented towards the end of 2024 and we continue to communicate its update and key changes therein.

Much of our focus has been on making considerable progress on delivery of the Open Research Training as part of the UK Reproducibility Network's Open Research Programme funded by Research England. We are operating a "train the trainer" model, by funding Keele researchers to attend UKRN training who then to return to Keele and develop and deliver training locally. We are also developing bespoke training material internally. In 2024/25 we developed and delivered a number of training offers on topics such as Reproducible Research, VIRT2UE research integrity framework, FAIR data sharing, and Pre-Registration & Registered Reports. To date we have trained over 121 researchers and research-enabling staff at Keele as part of this program (81% of our target number for end of 2026). We have met with all Schools to understand their training needs around Open Research and Research Integrity which will inform targeted training offers in 2025/26.

We continue to work to ensure engagement with Open Research practices are recognised and rewarded appropriately. We have developed several case studies of excellence in engagement with Open Research across our faculties. Engagement with Open Research has prominence among academic promotion criteria as a criterion for excellence in research. In addition, we are delighted that Open Research continues as a recognised category in the institutional "Keele Excellence Awards". We work with Faculty Deans of Research and School Research Directors to ensure Open Research has visibility in how research quality is assessed, and we provide formal recognition of all of our trainers volunteering to develop workshops. We are developing recommendations for inclusion of open research requirements in academic recruitment materials to provide the necessary visibility of this important activity for research excellence.

Keele led on delivery of the inaugural Midlands Innovation Open Research Week, bringing together researchers from across all partner institutions to deliver a programme of attractive and engaging talks on important and timely topics relating to open and reproducible research. We had over 500 registrations across the week, and it was widely deemed to be a huge success. We anticipate that a Midlands Innovation Open Research Week will be a recurring event, and plans are already under way for 2025/26.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

During the 2024/25 academic year, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, the Academic Lead for Research Integrity and Improvement, the Faculty Research Integrity Leads, and the Director of Research Strategy Delivery will work together to deliver our 2025/26 Open Research & Research Integrity Action Plan. Key objectives are as follows:

1. Training & Capacity Building

- a. Deliver comprehensive and varied open research and research integrity training at all levels and disciplines, from PhD to Professor
- b. Embed core training within inductions for new-starters, PGR development, and research leadership programmes
- c. Develop and sustain a network of open research advocates

2. Policy & Infrastructure

- a. Develop and publicise accessible, practical tools for self-assessment and guidance on open research and research integrity
- b. Develop and/or maintain practical policies / codes of conduct on open research, authorship, data management & sharing, and research misconduct, ensuring they remain state-of-the-art
- c. Establish feedback mechanisms to gather and respond to challenges to engaging with open research and research integrity

3. Alignment of Incentives

- a. Celebrate and share success stories and case studies that exemplify excellence in open research, rigour, and/or research integrity
- b. Complete institutional self-assessment via UKRN's Recognising and Rewarding Open Research toolkit, and act on identified improvement areas of the maturity framework
- c. Ensure open research and research integrity are recognised and valued in promotions (for researchers, research enablers, and technicians) and academic research appointments

4. Inclusive, Ethical, & Responsible Practice

- a. Identify and address structural, disciplinary, and career-stage barriers to engaging with open research
- b. Ensure equitable access to training, resources, and support for all researchers, research enablers, and technicians
- c. Promote responsible authorship, respectful collaboration, and ethical leadership

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

The University provides assurance that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair and that they are appropriate to the needs of the organisation. The University has a policy for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct which was approved by the Universities Senate committee following the release of the revised concordat to support research integrity. The policy can be accessed in Keele's [policy zone](#).

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Formal investigations completed during the period under review (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year).

	Number of allegations
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Type of allegation	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	2	0	0	0
Falsification	1	0	0	0
Plagiarism	1	1	0	1
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	3	1	1	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	2	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
Other*	0	0	0	0
Total:	9	2	1	1
*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.				