

University of Suffolk Annual Research Integrity Statement 2025-2026

1. Key Contact Information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Suffolk
1B. Type of organisation	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	02 July 2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	University of Suffolk Concordat for Research Integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Emma Bond Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & KE e.bond@uos.ac.uk
1F. Named first point of contact for research integrity enquiries	Mrs Andreea Tocca Head of Research Culture & KE a.tocca@uos.ac.uk

2. Maintaining and Promoting Research Integrity

2A. Policies, Culture and Monitoring

2A.1. Policies and Systems

The University of Suffolk is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity in its research, placing these principles at the heart of institutional decision-making. This statement is written in alignment with the [2025 refreshed Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), published on 4 April 2025 and hosted by the UK Committee on Research Integrity (UKCORI). As this statement covers the transition period, we acknowledge that some 2025-specific requirements are in the process of being embedded; our planned approach to full alignment is set out in Section 2C. The University upholds the five core principles of the Concordat: *honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability* through a robust governance framework. In line with the 2025 Concordat's updated Commitment 1, transparency now explicitly encompasses appropriate open research practices.

The University's governance framework for research integrity includes:

- A comprehensive Research Ethics Governance Framework and supporting procedures, publicly available through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Resources Hub
- The Research Misconduct Policy (version 6.0), approved by Senate on 11 March 2026, which applies to all staff on research and research-related contracts
- A dedicated Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Misconduct Policy, introduced in 2025–26 to provide a clearer and more appropriate framework for managing PGR-related research misconduct
- Continued alignment with the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) guidance, toolkits, and resources, as a subscribing UKRIO institution
- An Open Access and Research Data Management Policy (currently under approval) that sets expectations for data sharing, repository use, and open publication — directly addressing the 2025 Concordat's strengthened Commitment 1 requirements on open research practices

The 2025 Concordat introduces a formal definition of Questionable Research Practices (QRPs) as *'minor infractions or research practices, including avoidable errors, which fall short of the definition of intentional research misconduct,'* encompassing negligence and avoidable errors. The University addresses QRPs proactively and distinctly from formal misconduct, primarily through the UKRIO–University of Suffolk Training Modules, the research mentoring programme, and the research integrity workshops as part of the Research and KE Development Programme. The Research Misconduct Policy v6.0 also provides clarity on the boundary between QRPs and formal misconduct, supporting researchers in recognising and avoiding both.

2A.2. Communication and Engagement

Policy updates are disseminated through:

- One-to-one research inductions for all new researchers
- Meetings with staff holding Significant Responsibility for Research
- Internal communications and university-wide announcements
- The Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Programme
- School Executive meetings
- The Research and Knowledge Exchange Resources Hub (central online repository for all policies and guidance)

Staff and students are made explicitly aware of the Research Misconduct Policy and the routes for raising concerns, including whistleblowing protections under the University's Whistleblowing Policy. The University is committed to ensuring that anyone with concerns about research misconduct whether a researcher, student, collaborator, or member of the public knows how to raise those concerns and is protected when doing so in good faith. The University's commitment to open research is communicated across the researcher community through training workshops, the Research and KE Development Programme, and active participation in the Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) project, coordinated by the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) to incentivise open research through institutional assessment practices. The [University of Suffolk's OR4 case study](#) was formally signed off on 24 October 2025 and published on the project website, positioning the University as a demonstrable contributor to the national open research agenda.

2A.3. Culture, Development and Leadership

The University is committed to actively supporting researchers across all career stages, consistent with Commitment 3 of the 2025 Concordat. The Research Ethics Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, signalling senior leadership commitment to research culture. Its diverse membership — spanning Research Institute and Research Centre Directors, School PGR Leads, an Early Career Researcher, a Lay Member, and specialist professional services staff — ensures balanced and well-informed governance. The 2025 Concordat explicitly includes acknowledgement of the use of tools such as emerging technologies as part of the transparency principle. The University has responded by developing dedicated AI in research guidance and workshops, supporting researchers to use AI tools responsibly, transparently, and in ways that uphold research integrity for the academic year 2026–2027.

2A.4. Monitoring and Reporting

The University has established robust mechanisms for monitoring compliance with its research integrity framework and reporting internally on research culture indicators. These include:

- Reporting to the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics application volumes, outcomes, and trends enabling early identification of areas requiring additional guidance or support
- Annual reporting to the Research and Enterprise Committee and University Executive Board on the Annual Research Integrity Statement, providing institutional-level oversight
- Monitoring of research integrity training completion rates by the Head of Research Culture and Knowledge Exchange
- Individual training needs identified through annual appraisal processes and supervisor–student discussions, integrated into development plans.
- Ongoing review of the Research Misconduct Policy and associated procedures, with v6.0 approved by Senate in March 2026, the most recent iteration of a regular review cycle

2B. Changes and Developments During the Period Under Review

Training and Development

All researchers are expected to conduct their work within established ethical, legal, and professional guidelines, including obtaining necessary ethical approvals. Researchers engage with colleagues in a manner that upholds integrity, honesty, and collegiality — including providing fair references and participating responsibly in peer review. The University of Suffolk is a subscribing member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). UKRIO guidance documents, toolkits, and resources are disseminated to staff via newsletters, one-to-one research inductions, the Research and KE Development Programme, and the Research Resources Hub.

Research integrity training remains mandatory for:

- All staff on research contracts
- Early career researchers
- Academic staff on learning, teaching, and research contracts
- All staff (academic or professional services) submitting research funding applications

In December 2025, the University launched the [UKRIO–University of Suffolk Training Modules](#): a three-course online series developed in collaboration with UKRIO. These modules are available to all UKRIO subscribing institutions, positioning the University as a national contributor to research integrity training and best practice. These modules are replacing the previous Epigeum Research Integrity training, and their completion is being phased in across all staff with research responsibilities during 2025–26.

The UKRIO–University of Suffolk modules were launched in December 2025 and made fully available to staff in March 2026; rollout across all eligible staff is continuing throughout 2026–27. As rollout was staggered across the second half of the academic year, the University does not yet hold significant completion rate data for inclusion in this statement. The University commits to reporting measurable completion data including the percentage of eligible staff who have completed at least one module, as well as full suite completion rates in the 2026–27 Annual Statement. Module completion is being actively monitored by the Head of Research Culture and Knowledge Exchange, with progress reported to the Research Ethics Committee. Any staff who have not completed the required modules by the start of the 2026–27 academic year will be identified and supported to complete them as a priority.

New Online Ethics Application System

In September 2025, the University launched a fully integrated online ethics application system, bringing undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, and staff applications together into one platform, making submission, review, and tracking more efficient across the institution. Between 1 June 2025 and 30 May 2026, 80 applications were reviewed by the Committee and received a first outcome. The data shows a strong pattern of favourable or conditionally favourable outcomes; while a number of applications required amendments or resubmission, the majority were fundamentally ethically sound at point of submission.

Governance and Approval

The University Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved this statement at its meeting on 1 June 2026. The statement was noted at the Research and Enterprise Committee meeting on 16 June 2026 and will be noted at the University Executive Board on [DATE TO BE INSERTED]. Following approval, it will be published on the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange webpage in accordance with the requirements of the Concordat.

Sector Engagement and Collaboration

The University continues to demonstrate active engagement with the national research integrity community, contributing to as well as benefiting from sector-wide discussions:

- OR4 Project (UKRN): The University's case study was formally signed off on 24 October 2025 and published on the project website, directly addressing the open research transparency requirements of the 2025 Concordat. This positions the University as a demonstrable national contributor to open research culture change.

- UKRIO Consultation — Authorship Disputes: The University was represented at the UKRIO consultation event on 'Supporting collaborative thinking and progress on discussing authorship disputes' in 2025, contributing directly to sector-wide standards on authorship — a specific area of QRP risk highlighted in the 2025 Concordat.
- UKRIO Membership: As a subscribing member, the University benefits from UKRIO's guidance documents, toolkits, self-assessment resources, and the updated Concordat Self-Assessment Tool (v3.0, July 2025), which has been used to inform the structure of this statement.

Open Research Practices

Open research practices sit at the heart of the 2025 Concordat's Commitment 1 on transparency, which now explicitly includes '*appropriate open research practices*' and '*acknowledging the use of tools such as emerging technologies*.' The University is actively developing its open research infrastructure and culture:

- The University's Open Access Policy sets expectations for the open publication of research outputs, aligned with UKRI Open Access Policy requirements
- The University's institutional repository is used for the deposit of publications and, increasingly, underlying research data
- The OR4 project case study (signed off October 2025) demonstrates the University's commitment to embedding open research into institutional reward and recognition frameworks, a direct response to the open research requirements of the 2025 Concordat

The University acknowledges that open research infrastructure and culture-change is an area of ongoing development. Further embedding of Research Data Management support, open data practices, and AI transparency guidance is identified as a priority for 2026–27.

2C. Reflections on Progress and Plans for Future Developments

Retrospective Review: Delivery Against 2024–25 Commitments

2024–25 Planned Initiative	Delivery Status	Notes
Implement integrated online ethics application system	Delivered — September 2025	System launched on schedule; initial uptake strong. Transition complexity noted below.
Develop research integrity training to replace Epigeum	Delivered — December 2025	UKRIO–University of Suffolk modules launched; phased rollout in progress.
Continue OR4 project participation	Delivered	Case study signed off October 2025 and published.
Develop AI in research guidance	Partially delivered	Two AI in research workshops delivered; standalone guidance document in development for 2026–27.
Expand research mentoring programme	In progress	Programme operational; quantitative engagement data to be reported in 2026–27.
Review and update Research Misconduct Policy	Delivered — March 2026	Policy v6.0 approved by Senate; now includes formal appeals stage.

Achievements 2025–2026

- Successfully launched the UKRIO–University of Suffolk Research Integrity Training Modules, positioning the University as a national contributor to research integrity training and best practice, with modules available to all UKRIO subscribing institutions
- Implemented a fully integrated online ethics application system (September 2025), streamlining and making fully auditable the submission, review, and tracking process for all staff and student ethics applications
- Achieved a strong pattern of favourable outcomes across 80 ethics applications reviewed during the period
- Strengthened sector engagement through participation in the UKRIO authorship consultation and continued OR4 project involvement, reinforcing the University's national presence in research integrity and open research discussions

- Approved the revised Research Misconduct Policy v6.0 (March 2026), which now includes a formal appeals stage, bringing the University into alignment with the Concordat's requirement for transparent, timely, robust, and fair misconduct processes
- Delivered dedicated AI in research workshops, directly responding to the 2025 Concordat's updated transparency principle regarding emerging technologies

Honest Reflection: Areas for Improvement

Challenge 1: UKRIO Training Module Rollout

The December 2025 launch of the UKRIO–University of Suffolk modules, while a significant achievement, means that completion across all eligible staff within the 2025–26 academic year was always going to be partial. The phased rollout reflects a pragmatic and planned approach, but it means the University cannot yet report full compliance with mandatory training requirements. This is the single most significant gap in the current reporting period and is the primary driver of the 100% completion target set for 2026–27.

Challenge 2: Transition to New Ethics System

The implementation of the integrated online ethics application system in September 2025 brought significant benefits but also transition complexity. Consolidating multiple previously separate processes into a single platform required staff and student familiarisation, additional guidance, and in some cases re-submission of applications that did not meet the new system's requirements.

Challenge 3: Open Research Infrastructure

Open research — including open data, open access, and transparent reporting of research methods — is an area where the University is making meaningful progress (OR4 case study, Research Data Management support, AI guidance) but where full cultural and infrastructural embedding is still maturing. The University is a comparatively young institution, and its open research infrastructure is developing in line with its growing research volume and ambition.

Planned Initiatives for 2026–2027

The following planned initiatives respond directly to the challenges identified above and to the requirements of the 2025 Concordat:

Initiative	Rationale / Concordat Link	Lead
Achieve 100% UKRIO–University of Suffolk module completion for all eligible staff (funding applicants, ethics applicants, PGR and dissertation supervisors, PGR students)	Mandatory training compliance; 2025 Concordat Commitment 3	Head of Research Culture & KE
Report quantitative training completion and researcher engagement data in 2026–27 Annual Statement	Evidence-based monitoring; 2025 Concordat Commitment 5	Head of Research Culture & KE
Develop and publish enhanced guidance on AI in research, including data management and governance	2025 Concordat updated Transparency principle (emerging technologies)	Digital & PVC Research and KE
Strengthen pre-submission ethics guidance to reduce modification and resubmission rates	Continuous improvement; ethics system optimisation	Research Ethics Committee
Expand and report on research mentoring programme reach and participation	2025 Concordat Commitment 3 (supporting all career stages)	Head of Research Culture and KE
Develop formal open research roadmap, including Research Data Management policy review and open data infrastructure	2025 Concordat Commitment 1 (open research practices)	Head of Research Culture & KE
Complete formal self-assessment against the 2025 Concordat using UKRIO Self-Assessment Tool v3.0	Full 2025 Concordat alignment; transition completion	University Research Ethics Committee

Initiative	Rationale / Concordat Link	Lead
Continue and deepen sector engagement via UKRIO, UKRN/OR4, and national research integrity networks	Commitment 5 (sector engagement); national leadership	Head of Research Culture and KE

3. Processes for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct

3A. Statement on Processes

The University Research Misconduct Policy (version 6.0) was approved by Senate on 11 March 2026. This revised policy represents a significant strengthening of the University's misconduct framework, incorporating a formal appeals stage that brings the University into full alignment with the Concordat's requirement that misconduct processes be *transparent, timely, robust, and fair*. The policy applies to all staff on research and research-related contracts. Cases involving taught students continue to be managed under the Academic Misconduct Policy. A separate Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Misconduct Policy has been introduced in 2025–26, providing a clearer and more appropriate framework for managing PGR-specific research misconduct and reflecting the distinct nature of research-active postgraduate study.

The University is committed to ensuring that concerns about research misconduct can be raised safely and without fear of detriment. The following routes are available:

- Research Misconduct Policy: the formal route for raising allegations of research misconduct by staff against other staff
- PGR Student Misconduct Policy: the equivalent route for concerns involving postgraduate researchers
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy: provides protection for anyone — including students, professional services staff, and external collaborators — who raises a genuine concern about research misconduct in good faith
- Named senior lead: Professor Emma Bond, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & KE, is available as a direct point of escalation
- UKRIO independent advice line: provides confidential guidance for researchers who wish to seek advice before raising a concern formally

There were no reported allegations of research misconduct involving staff or students at the University of Suffolk during the 2025–26 reporting period. While this is a positive position, the University is careful not to interpret the absence of allegations as necessarily indicative of a fully developed reporting culture. Building awareness of routes for raising concerns, and normalising the use of those routes where appropriate, remains a standing objective. The proactive focus on recognising and avoiding Questionable Research Practices through training and mentoring is part of the University's strategy to address issues early, before they escalate to formal misconduct.

This Annual Research Integrity Statement reflects the University of Suffolk's ongoing and active commitment to fostering an ethical research environment that respects all participants and stakeholders. The University holds its researchers to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and excellence. This statement has been written with explicit reference to the 2025 refreshed Concordat to Support Research Integrity, and the plans set out for 2026–27 are designed to complete the University's full alignment with its requirements. The University will report against these plans in the 2026–2027 Annual Statement.