

# Annual statement on research integrity 2024-2025

## Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Suffolk
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	24 June 2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	<a href="#">Concordat for Research Integrity-University of Suffolk</a>
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Emma Bond Pro Vice Chancellor Research & KE Email address: e.bond@uos.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	Mrs Andreea Tocca Head of Research Culture & KE Email address: a.tocca@uos.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

The University of Suffolk is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity in its research, and places ethics and integrity at the heart of its decision making. University of Suffolk upholds the commitments outlined in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and is committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat by providing a framework in support for good research conduct and its governance. Preparing and publishing our annual statement on research integrity demonstrates our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of research.

As part of its commitment to the principles of the Concordat to support Research Integrity, the University of Suffolk will support researchers to maintain the highest standards of integrity in research by:

- Providing clear policies and procedures
- Training and guidance to help researchers better understand how to maintain high standards of research integrity.
- Having suitable mechanisms for reviewing ethical issues raised by research.

- Using transparent, robust, and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct.
- Continuing to work to strengthen the integrity of its research through regular review and monitoring of its support, policies, and procedures.

The University of Suffolk Research Ethics Committee is responsible for advising Research and Enterprise Committee on the development, implementation and review of institutional procedures and guidelines relating to ethical issues arising from teaching, research, and other related institutional activities. The role of this interdisciplinary Committee is to be proactive in relation to emerging issues of institutional, national, or international significance. The Committee oversees research integrity across the University, including monitoring compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Research Ethics Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, comprises the Research Institute Directors (4), the Head of Research Culture and Knowledge Exchange, the Associate Director for Research and Knowledge Exchange (Funding and Contracts), Associate Deans for Research and Knowledge Exchange (3), two Early Career Researchers, and one Lay Member. The committee's diverse composition brings together a broad range of perspectives and expertise, which is essential for ensuring thorough, balanced, and well-informed decision-making.

The University has established clear policies on research ethics, supported by a comprehensive research governance framework. Information about University policies and procedures is provided to all new staff and students as part of their formal induction programme. Information about new policies is communicated to the research community via a range of different platforms including 1-2-1 research inductions, 1-2-1 meetings with staff with significant responsibility for research, internal communications, research and knowledge exchange development programme, research newsletters, university-wide announcements, as well as Schools and course program handbooks. Individual training needs are identified through annual appraisal processes and discussions between staff and line managers and students and their supervisors. The annual appraisal process is used to identify individual learning needs, which are then integrated into personalised training and development plans. This approach supports staff and students in strengthening their skills and knowledge in areas of research integrity relevant to their specific roles and responsibilities. The policies are readily available to the university staff and students through the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Hub Pages. This accessibility ensures that staff and students can easily access and refer to the guidelines and requirements pertaining to research integrity. This approach ensures that research integrity is consistently communicated and embedded across the institution.

A copy of the Annual Statement on Research Integrity is also published on the University's [Research and Knowledge Exchange webpage](#).

## **2B. Changes and developments during the period under review**

It is a university commitment that all researchers should receive appropriate research training and research development opportunities to enable them to conduct research to the highest ethical standards. Researchers are expected to conduct their work within the established ethical, legal, and professional guidelines, standards, and frameworks. This includes obtaining the necessary ethical approvals for their research projects. Additionally, researchers engage with their colleagues in a manner that upholds integrity, honesty, and collegiality. This includes providing fair and honest references and participating in peer reviews responsibly.

The University's Research and KE hub pages dedicated to the Research Ethics and Research Governance provide access to supporting documents that can assist staff and students in navigating the ethical review process. These documents include guidelines, templates, checklists, and other resources that provide guidance on ethical considerations and requirements.

The University of Suffolk is a subscribing member of the [UK Research Integrity Office \(UKRIO\)](#). UKRIO's comprehensive guidance documents, toolkits, and resources are widely disseminated to the university staff via Newsletters, 1-2-1 research inductions, Researcher Development Programme, and the Research Resources Hub. As a subscribing member, the University of Suffolk has benefited from UKRIO's expertise and insights in policy development and implementation, ensuring alignment with national best practices.

Since June 2022, research integrity training has been mandatory for all University staff on research contracts, early career researchers, academic staff on learning, teaching, and research contracts, and all staff academic or professional services submitting research funding applications. The University has licensed online research integrity training from Epigeum, ensuring consistent, comprehensive education in responsible conduct and best practices. As of March 2024, 94% of staff with research responsibilities have completed the training (valid for 3 years). Additionally, all current Chairs of the School Ethics Committees completed Chair Training led by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) in 2024. This training equipped them with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively oversee and lead the ethical review processes within their respective schools.

In addition, the University of Suffolk piloted the new online UKRIO training course, *Introduction to Research Integrity*, over a 12-month period. This course replaced the previously used Epigeum Research Integrity training and was made available via the Staff Research Integrity module on Brightspace. Designed to be applicable across all disciplines, the course provided a comprehensive introduction to research integrity for those new to the topic, as well as a valuable refresher for more experienced staff. A total of 78 staff members registered for the course during the pilot period.

- 13 registrations -School of Allied Health Sciences
- 4 registrations-School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health
- 26 registrations- School of Social Sciences and Humanities
- 35 registrations- School of Technology, Business and Arts

In May 2025, the University enrolled a further 200 places on the recently launched UKRIO training course, Introduction to Research Integrity. This training is available to all staff and postgraduate researchers (PGRs) who have not previously completed either the Epigeum Research Integrity training or the UKRIO pilot course.

The University Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved the statement at its meeting on 21 May 2025. The statement was noted at the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting on 29 May 2025 and the Research and Enterprise Committee meeting on 10 June 2025 and the University Executive Board meeting in July 2025. This multi-stage process through the University Research Ethics Committee, University Research & KE Committee, Research and Enterprise Committee and the Executive Board demonstrates the University's strong commitment to research integrity and its ongoing efforts to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with ethical standards.

#### Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) University of Suffolk Case study

The University is part of a large-scale national collaboration coordinated by the [UK Reproducibility Network \(UKRN\)](#) to create a community of practice to incentivise and enable open research through institutional research assessment practices. The [OR4 project](#) (Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition) is a major initiative to reform how open research is recognised and rewarded in recruitment, promotion and appraisal practices. [43 UK academic research institutions](#) are participating in the initiative 14 as case studies and 29 in a wider community of practice. The University of Suffolk case study is currently under review and pending final sign-off. This recognition affirms the significant progress the University has made in strengthening its research integrity culture and practices.

#### UKRIO workshop on authorship disputes

Professor Nicholas Caldwell, Research Institute Director (Digital Futures) attend the workshop on behalf of The University of Suffolk. Professor Caldwell participated and contributed to the [UKRIO workshop on authorship disputes](#), "The Influence of Rapidly Changing Environments on Authorship" section.

#### AI Infrastructure and Data Protection

An *AI Infrastructure and Data Protection* workshop was held over two days in March 2025 at the University of Suffolk, offering an invaluable opportunity to explore the technical aspects of security and privacy, key themes currently being addressed by the Horizon-funded MISTRAL project team. The workshop was led by Dr. Domenico Lofù, Assistant Professor (RUTD-a) in the Information Systems Research Group, Department of Electrical and Information Engineering, Polytechnic University of Bari and was attended by 15 participants across all Schools and Directorates (ECRs, PGRs, Professors, Directors and IT and Digital colleagues).

## **2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments.**

Progress has been made across all activities outlined in the University's 2023/24 Annual Research Integrity Statement. This reflects our continued commitment to strengthening research integrity and fostering a culture of responsible and ethical research conduct throughout the institution.

Looking ahead to the 2025/26 academic year, the University of Suffolk has outlined several key initiatives to further strengthen research integrity and support a culture of ethical, responsible research across all levels:

- **Launch of UKRIO -University of Suffolk Training Modules:** In collaboration with the UK Research Integrity Office, we will launch an eight-course online module series in Summer 2025. These courses will be available to all UKRIO subscribing institutions, positioning the University of Suffolk as a national contributor to advancing research integrity training and best practice.
- **New Online Ethics Application System:** We will implement a fully integrated online ethics application system that consolidates undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, and staff applications in September 2025. This platform will streamline the submission, review, and tracking processes, significantly improving efficiency and user experience.
- **Continued Collaboration with Sector Partners:** We remain committed to working with peer institutions and national bodies to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.
- **Expansion of Research Integrity Resources:** Additional resources and guidance materials on responsible research conduct will be developed and made available through Brightspace and internal HUB pages, enhancing accessibility for both new and experienced researchers.
- **We plan to host a series of thematic workshops and awareness events** during the academic year, focusing on key areas such as authorship, data management, ethical challenges in AI research.

## **Section 3: Addressing research misconduct.**

### **3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with**

The current University Research Misconduct policy (2022) outlines the processes which should be followed when complaints of misconduct in academic research are brought against any student or member of staff whose research is liable to bring the University of Suffolk into disrepute. We are committed to promoting and supporting a culture of research integrity that discourages unacceptable behaviour by dealing seriously and sensitively with all allegations of research misconduct. The policy was reviewed in April 2025 (version 6.0) and the inclusion of a formal appeals stage, in alignment with the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity was included.

A separate policy now exists for postgraduate research (PGR) student misconduct, enabling the University to establish clear referral pathways to the University of Essex and to emphasise the student's right to escalate their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) once all internal procedures have been completed. The current Research Misconduct Policy applies now exclusively to staff, while cases involving taught students continue to be addressed under the Academic Misconduct Policy. The University's named contact for matters relating to research integrity and misconduct is the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and KE. Concerns relating to the integrity of research conducted under the auspices of the University may also be addressed to the Head of Research Culture and KE.

The University of Suffolk is committed to upholding the highest standards of research integrity and fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. As part of this commitment, we ensure that information about the University's Research Misconduct Policy is easily accessible and clearly communicated across the institution. Advice and resources are provided through a variety of channels, including the Research and Knowledge Exchange Resources Hub, university-wide communications, one-to-one research inductions. These efforts aim to equip researchers with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to engage in responsible research practices and to report potential misconduct. In addition, the University continues to cultivate a supportive and inclusive research environment through initiatives such as the research mentoring programme, which is available to all staff on research and knowledge exchange contracts and on learning, teaching, and research contracts. This initiative promotes professional development, fosters collaboration, and reinforces a culture of integrity at all levels of research activity.

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

There have been no reported cases of allegations relating to research misconduct made against any staff and student at the University of Suffolk

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 (e.g., 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			
<i>Other*</i>	0			
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>			

This Annual Research Integrity Statement reflects the University of Suffolk's ongoing commitment to fostering an ethical research environment, one that respects all participants and stakeholders. We hold our researchers to these standards, expecting them to demonstrate professionalism, integrity, and excellence in their work, thereby upholding the reputation and core values of the University.