

University of Suffolk

Research Integrity Statement 2021/2022

Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was launched in 2012 with support from the Government, HEFCE (now Research England) and major research funders such as RCUK (now part of UKRI) and the Wellcome Trust. The Concordat was updated in 2019. Research Organisations in receipt of UKRI funding are required to have procedures for governing good research practice, and for investigating and reporting unacceptable research conduct, to meet the requirements set out in the Concordat and the [UKRI Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct](#).

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. As a component of this commitment, the University requires that all research projects undertaken under the auspices of the University observe a commitment to good research conduct as laid out in the [Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and the [UK Research and Innovation Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct](#). University of Suffolk processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust, and fair, and they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

Commitments

The key provisions of the Concordat are enshrined in five commitments:

- I. We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
- II. We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards.
- III. We are committed to supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the development of researchers.
- IV. We are committed to using transparent, robust, and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise. V. We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly. 6. The revised Concordat builds on these commitments, providing clarification on specific areas to support researchers and employers to discharge their responsibilities.

University of Suffolk upholds the commitments outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Concordat) and is committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat by providing a framework in support for good research conduct and its governance.

In accordance with the Concordat, this annual statement outlines the activities in support of the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research undertaken at University of Suffolk during the 2020/21 and planned for 2021/22 academic year.

Policy framework:

- University Research Ethics Framework
- Code of Good Research Practice
- Research Misconduct
- Conflicts of Interest
- Research Data Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Safety in Research Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Policies are made available to staff through the University webpages and internal communication channels. Communications on research ethics and research integrity training and updates are made through the University's announcements system. Ethics and Research Integrity training is also a item on the University Research Ethics Committee, Research Management Group and Research and Enterprise Committee.

During 2020/21 the following activities continued to support research integrity:

- Regular ethics training workshops for academic staff, research degree students, undergraduate and postgraduate taught students continued to be delivered under the Research Development Programme and in Schools.
- External research ethics training (provided by ARMA)
- The University Research Ethics Committee continued to manage the review and approval process of ethics submissions for staff and PGR
- Schools Ethics Committees continued to manage the review and approval process of ethics submissions for UG, PGT activities.

Activities in 2021/2022

- Become a member of the UKRIO
- Liaise with United Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) on the revised concordat to understand the implications for the University. The review of the University of Suffolk Concordat for Research Integrity (using the UKRIO Self- Assessment tool).
- Introduce mandatory online research integrity training. Provide all academic staff and PGR students with the *Research Integrity* online module (Epigeum). This activity provides evidence of comprehensive, consistent training in responsible conduct and best practices, and support us as an organisation in incorporating the latest research developments and guidelines.
- Review of current ethics and governance processes The University of Research Ethics Committee are reviewing all current documents to ensure they are fit for purpose and clear to researchers. As part of this, members of the Committee are reviewing existing governance systems.
- HRA/NHS Ethics Workshop
- UKRIO workshop

The University of Suffolk will publicly state its commitment to the provisions of the Concordat following the review of the Concordat for Research Integrity.

Risk factors

A few integrity-related risks have been identified, many of which could have serious consequences for the University, should they arise

Risk and Consequences	Initial Risk	Mitigation	Risk following mitigation
Failure to have appropriate integrity and ethics systems and training.	High	Mandatory Research Integrity training Review of the Concordat for Research Integrity.	Medium
Failure to have appropriate systems for ethical review for research projects.	High	Robust governance processes. -University Research Ethics Committee/PGR Ethics Committee/Schools Ethics Committee	Medium
Failure for the Business and engagement activity to implement features to support the effective and efficient oversight of the BEKE projects.	Medium	Training for all Business Engagement and Knowledge Exchange staff	Low
Failure to investigate allegations of research misconduct fairly, and to deal appropriately and promptly with the findings.	Medium	Research Misconduct Policy sets out what misconduct is and how it will be investigated.	Low
Failure to provide adequate responses to assurance questions risks reputational damage with funding bodies.	Medium	Work across Schools to ensure prompt and accurate responses to audits Research Management Group ADR and RIs meetings	Medium
Failure to adhere to any of the principles of the Concordat, which the University will publicly endorse.	Medium	The publication of this report, along with the activities outlined, will provide assurance of our commitment to the Concordat.	Low

Research Misconduct

- In 2020/2021 there were no reported cases of allegations relating to research misconduct made against any PGR students.
- In 2020/2021 there was no reported staff case logged under the Research Misconduct policy

Contacts: For anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity, please contact researchoffice@uos.ac.uk