

Annual Research Integrity Statement 2024-2025

From: Research Integrity and Compliance Office

Date: October 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Southampton ('the University') is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (April 2025) ('the Concordat') to create a comprehensive framework for responsible research conduct and governance. The principles and commitments include:

- Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
- 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.
- Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research.

In compliance with the Concordat, the University publishes a Research Integrity Statement on an annual basis. All previous statements published by the University are available on our [Research Integrity webpage](#).

The following Statement covers the period from **01 August 2024** to **31 July 2025**. It outlines the University's framework and activities in support of fostering a culture of research integrity and provides a high-level summary of research misconduct investigations undertaken by the University.

Key Research Integrity Contacts

Professor Mark Spearing, Vice-President (Research & Enterprise), is the senior named person within the University of Southampton responsible for research integrity.

Dr Julie Merriman-Jones, Head of Research Integrity and Compliance, is the named first point of contact for queries or concerns about research integrity and/or allegations of research misconduct in line with the University's [Procedure for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research](#) policy.

Contact: researchintegrity@soton.ac.uk

2. PROMOTING HIGH STANDARDS OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND POSITIVE RESEARCH CULTURE

The University of Southampton recognises the importance of undertaking our activities responsibly, in accordance with the highest ethical standards, and in compliance with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#). The University's [Strategy](#) is based on our core purpose, to inspire excellence to achieve the remarkable and build an inclusive world. The University fully recognises our responsibilities to researchers and the wider community and is strongly committed to fostering a culture of research integrity, responsible research conduct, ethics, compliance, and governance across the full spectrum of our research activities.

2.1 RESEARCH ETHICS

2.1.1 University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

The University has an overarching [Research Ethics Policy](#) and a number of ethics sub-policies. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), chaired by the Vice President (Research and Enterprise), meets 3 times per academic year and has the overall responsibility for the process of ethics review at the University, and for oversight, development and review of policies and guidance related to research ethics.

UREC membership includes Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) Chairs, the Chair of the Animal Committee, Academic Registrar, Student representative and Lay Members. UREC reports to the Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC).

2.1.2 Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs)

Each University Faculty has a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) which is tasked with providing ethics reviews and approvals for research projects undertaken within the Faculty. All FRECs report annually to UREC and all FREC Chairs are UREC members. Every year new FREC ethics reviewers receive comprehensive research ethics training from REGO.

2.1.3 ERGO II - Ethics and Research Governance Online

Since 2012 the University has been using an internal system ERGO (Ethics and Research Governance Online) which is an integrated platform for obtaining ethics approvals, sponsorship and insurance, and allows REGO to provide digital oversight of research governance. The current system, ERGO II, was rolled out in March 2018, and since then its functionality has been continuously updated and expanded. ERGO II has improved and streamlined the ethics review process across the University, making it more user-friendly, as well as broadening the scope of ethics review to new areas raising ethics considerations.

All staff and student projects (including undergraduate and postgraduate students) which require an ethics review (notably but not exclusively studies involving human participants, animals, cultural heritage or analysis of data about people) must be registered, reviewed and approved through ERGO II. The system includes filter questions that allow researchers to check whether ethics review of their study is required. Retrospective ethics review is not allowed under any circumstances and where ethics approval was not obtained, this constitutes a breach of the University Research Ethics Policy.

Through ERGO II, in academic year 2024/2025, the Faculty Research Ethics Committees approved following number of staff and student research projects:

▪ Faculty of Arts and Humanities:	246
▪ Faculty of Medicine:	218
▪ Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences:	234

➤ Psychology Sub-committee:	535
➤ Geography and Oceanography Sub-committee:	145
▪ Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences:	421
▪ Faculty of Social Sciences:	602
➤ Business and Law Sub-committee:	866

2.1.4 Research and education activities involving animals

The University Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) ensures that animal related research and activities are carried out according to ethical principles and the [3Rs](#) (Reduction, Refinement and Replacement). Its role is to ensure awareness of the highest standards of animal welfare and promoting a culture of care within the University academic community.

Information on the role and work of AWERB, examples of research involving animals, and number and types of animals used in regulated procedures, is available via the [AWERB webpage](#). The University supports and is a signatory to the [Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK](#). The University also has a [Policy for Involving Animals in Research and Education](#) which was developed jointly by AWERB and the REGO team. The Policy was updated in March 2025, and, following review of the '[Guidance on the use of secondary data for research purposes](#)', AWERB included a section on 'Secondary Data relating to Animals'.

AWERB meets 4 times per academic year and addresses policy while the review process is undertaken by its 3 sub-committees:

- Scientific and Ethical Review Group (SERG) which reviews work covered under ASPA - Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- Animal Committee which reviews non-ASPA research (e.g., fieldwork in wild populations).
- Training and Competence Committee.

AWERB has supported the formation of a 3Rs Champions group comprising selected University staff and students with an interest in further promoting 3Rs activities and knowledge within the University community.

In 2024/25, AWERB met 6 times and held 2 half-day 'away' days to allow for broader discussion of animal ethical issues and the 3Rs.

In total, the following research projects were reviewed and approved:

- 6 ASPA project licence applications and 2 applications for amendments.
- 8 project licence holder' 2- and 4-year progress reports and 3 retrospective assessments (as required by the Home Office).
- 167 applications for non-ASPA research.

Under Standard Condition 18, incidents and near-misses resulting in harm or potential harm to animals were reported to the Home Office. In 2024-2025, within the Biomedical Research Facilities 8 potential non-compliance cases were reported to the Home Office and 1 near-miss (not reported to the Home Office).

2.1.5 Administrative Research Ethics and Quality Assurance (AREQA)

As part of the University Ethics Approval Process, any primary market research activity for the specific purpose of findings solutions to special organisational needs, needs to be reviewed and approved via the [AREQA](#) process.

For the time period August 2024 – July 2025, the AREQA ethics panel reviewed, and approved, 136 applications to conduct administrative research activity at the University. There have been no issues, incidents, complaints or allegations reported back to the panel in this period.

2.2 CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

One of the responsibilities of REGO is to ensure that all clinical research sponsored by the University of Southampton is conducted in accordance with the principles of Good Clinical Practice and meets the relevant regulatory requirements set out by regulators. This includes providing ongoing oversight and support to all clinical trials and clinical investigations of medical devices, monitoring and/or auditing as well as studies involving the use of human tissue.

The University has a large trial portfolio, and the tables below show the clinical activity for the 2024/25 period. Category A* are reviewed only by the REGO Team and mainly comprise studies that fall under the Health Research Authority (HRA). Category A submissions are first reviewed and approved by two FREC reviewers before progressing to the REGO Team for the governance review.

Higher-risk clinical research projects such as trials involving clinical investigation of medicinal products (CTIMPs) or medical device investigations are required to request Sponsorship-in-Principle (SiP) prior to funding bid submission and prior to full ERGO II project submission. These SiP submissions are reviewed by the REGO team to assess safety and institutional risk of the research and to ensure the University can sponsor the proposed research if funded.

	Category A*	Category A	Other Categories	Sponsorship In Principle (SiP)
Total Submitted	577	159	21	18
Total Requiring Revisions	373	115	26	6
Total Approved	528	145	0	17

Student Projects	Category A*	Category A		Sponsorship In Principle (Sip)
UG	16	18		0
PGT	11	4		0
PGR	78	61		0
Total Approved	105	83		0

Staff Projects	Category A*	Category A		Sponsorship In Principle (Sip)
Academic Staff	423	62		17
Professional Services	0	0		0
Total Approved:	423	62		17

Number of Category A* studies reviewed by REGO including revisions requested (01 August 2024 - 31 July 2025):

Faculty Research Ethics Committee	Total Submitted Category A*	Total Approved Category A*	RIG/REGO Revisions Requested
Faculty Of Arts And Humanities	3	2	0
Faculty Of Engineering And Physical Sciences	38	31	36
Faculty Of Environmental And Life Sciences	77	74	64
Faculty Of Medicine	409	375	224
Faculty Of Social Sciences	2	2	1
Sub-Committee Business And Law	1	1	1
Sub-Committee Geography And Oceanography	1	1	0
Sub-Committee Psychology	46	42	47

Number of Category A studies reviewed by REGO including revisions requested (01 August 2024 - 31 July 2025):

Faculty Research Ethics Committee	Total Submitted Category A*	Total Approved Category A*	RIG/REGO Revisions Requested
Faculty Of Arts And Humanities	6	6	7
Faculty Of Engineering And Physical Sciences	8	6	8
Faculty Of Environmental And Life Sciences	17	15	11
Faculty Of Medicine	28	28	22
Faculty Of Social Sciences	24	20	24
Sub-Committee Business And Law	3	3	2
Sub-Committee Geography And Oceanography	1	1	1
Sub-Committee Psychology	72	66	40

2.3 RESPONSIBLE COLLABORATION

The University is committed to the highest standards of research integrity and ethics across all our activities including research, education and enterprise. In July 2024, the University updated its [Responsible Collaboration Statement](#) which states our position on considering research opportunities and funding in relation to potentially contentious organisations and sectors, such as the tobacco industry, energy sector and defence.

2.4 EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY ACTIVITIES (01 AUGUST 2024 TO 31 JULY 2025)

1. In 2024-25, the University has continued to invest in posts that support research culture activity, alongside a portfolio of initiatives funded through our Research England Enhancing Research Culture allocation. These projects have included initiatives to embed protected time for writing, promote compassionate and inclusive leadership, embed the Prosper portal to support postdoctoral career development, enhance the diversity of our PGR student cohort and support mental health and wellbeing of doctoral researchers.
2. In 2024-25, the University took part in the REF 2029 People, Culture, Environment pilot to help shape the framework for assessing research culture in UK higher education institutions as part of the next REF.
3. In 2024-25, the Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences (FELS) newly-appointed Research Integrity Champion (RIC) launched the [FELS Research Integrity SharePoint site](#) as a central hub for resources and guidance, and implemented Faculty-level reporting to support error correction and strengthen best practice.
4. In 2024-25 the Faculty of Medicine (FMED) Graduate School introduced the expectation that all PGRs should register their projects in the ERGO system, regardless of the approvals required. This ensures that PGRs complete the ERGO triage process and therefore have certainty as to whether approvals are required. An audit of ERGO approvals for PGR studies was also completed.
5. In September 2024, FELS RIC attended FELS Researcher Development and Career Festival where she was part of a panel discussing Generative Artificial Intelligence. The RIC's 10-minute talk on "*Generative AI and Research Integrity*" covered benefits, best practice, and the importance of human oversight, and touched on journal and national policy.
6. In September 2024, FMED appointed a Research Culture Project Manager (RCPM) in September 2024 whose role includes identifying opportunities and implementing initiatives to enhance research culture across the Faculty. Research integrity has been identified as an area which would benefit from targeted initiatives at a local level. A Faculty Research Culture Strategic Action Plan 2026-30 is being drafted, actions include raising awareness of the Faculty Research Integrity Champion and reporting mechanisms for suspected misconduct, and delivering dedicated training sessions on Open Research and Research Integrity at both School and Faculty levels.
7. Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH), as part of its long-running collaboration with the Doctoral College, continues to raise awareness amongst the Faculty's PGRs through yearly Research Integrity training sessions. This year a new format was trialled where the RI Champion and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) Chair designed a longer 2-hour combined Ethics and Research Integrity training session for PGRs. The session was delivered online via Teams on Wednesday 30 October 2024 and was well-attended with 31 participants.
8. AWERB organised an online workshop ("*Animals in Research: An Introduction to Ethics and the 3Rs*") for UoS researchers presented by NC3Rs (the UK National Organisation for the 3Rs) in Autumn 2024. Approximately 30 members of staff and students attended the workshop.
9. In January 2025, RICO submitted the Institutional Assurance and Annual Report on Possible Research Misconduct to the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI), in line with the requirements under the Public Health Services (PHS) Policies on Research Misconduct.
10. AWERB has supported the formation of a 3Rs Champions group comprising selected University staff and students with an interest in further promoting 3Rs activities and knowledge within the University community.
11. FMED's [Research Integrity page](#) was redeveloped in March 2025. In addition to details of the University's policies and procedures and how to contact the Faculty Research Integrity Champion, the page now includes: the UKRIO "What is research integrity?" infographic; slides and video recording of a Research Integrity Presentation delivered by RICO to the Faculty in

December 2024; information on and a link to the Erasmus University Rotterdam's Dilemma Game App.

12. FAH's ongoing events series "*Conversations in ethics*" featured an online panel discussion on 13 May 2025 about the ethics of archival research.
13. FAH has also been running a project on Inclusive Research Culture with relevance to the broader reflective approach to research integrity. This project included focus groups with staff in May 2025, discussing enablers and barriers to research, which will feed into future actions and initiatives to improve the Faculty's research culture.
14. RICO hosted the inaugural event "*Embracing research integrity: Why it matters*" for all staff, students, postdocs and technicians on 23 April 2025. The audience heard from expert representatives from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), UK Committee on Research Integrity (UKCORI), Wellcome Trust and the University of East Anglia. The event was well-received and provided thought-provoking and engaging discussions.
15. The Festival of Open Research took place on 24 April 2025, dedicated to exploring the role of Open Research in shaping People, Culture and Environment. It brought researchers together, shared best practices, and explored how local UKRN can build upon the momentum gathered through REF engagement.
16. AWERB hosted the annual 3Rs awards, together with the 3Rs Champions group, in Spring 2025. Two applications, both for Replacement projects, were awarded a 3Rs award. Awardees were presented with certificates by the Dean of Medicine at the annual Faculty of Medicine conference in June 2025.
17. In July 2025, a working group chaired by the Associate Vice-President (Interdisciplinary Research) was established to develop recommendations for enhancing support for researchers at risk of harm through their research.
18. Faculty of Social Sciences' (FSS) Research Integrity Champion (RIC) has developed a project, in collaboration with the Concordat for Researcher Development Champions, to gauge awareness of RI, visibility of information, induction activities and training for staff and PGR students, the process for reporting suspected RI breaches, and barriers to reporting suspected RI breaches.
19. The Library published an open and extensible Responsible Metrics training module which was shared nationally.
20. The Library led on a project which has now launched the UK Reproducibility Network [OER Commons Hub](#) and the [OR4 toolkit](#) which are now sharing open research, reproducibility, research culture and research integrity themed resources nationally.
21. Following on from the Research Culture Survey in 2023/24, and having identified gaps in research integrity awareness, RICO continue to engage with the Technician Commitment group by providing tailored training sessions and ensuring technician representation at events and consultations.
22. The University-wide Research Integrity Working Group has continued to meet throughout the 2024/25 and discuss concerns over low reporting, overlap in policies and ways of addressing the issues.
23. The University took part in the UKRIO Pilot Phase during the development of the Research Integrity training module. 85 out of 100 places were taken, and 71 started the course with 13% completion rate.
24. Following the success of the Pilot phase, the University obtained the new and updated UKRIO training module, now hosted on Blackboard with communications set to go out at the beginning of the new academic year. The module is open to all staff and students, and will help learners apply research integrity principles to strengthen good research practice and enhance the integrity of their work.
25. The Faculty of Social Sciences maintains the 'Research Integrity Corner' on the [FSS SharePoint site](#) and posts RI-related news and events.

26. Further, the ‘Ethics Corner’ on the [FSS Sharepoint Site](#) which provides the slides and recording of the most recent Ethics Training that was conducted.
27. Doctoral College refreshed the mandatory online training for Postgraduate Researchers. A new, University-specific “*Introduction to Research Ethics for PGRs*” replaced the previous externally sourced module.
28. Doctoral College also launched a redesigned “*Research Data Management Plan for PGRs*” supplied by Library Services and updated the existing “*Research Integrity*” module.

3. ADDRESSING RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

University Students

Any concerns about research misconduct in relation to University students can be reported to the Curriculum and Quality Assurance (CQA) Teams based in every University Faculty. Such concerns will be treated as potential breaches of Academic Responsibility and Conduct (ARC) and investigated by Academic Responsibility and Conduct Officers (ARCOs) in line with the University’s [Regulations Governing Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#).

University Staff

The University has the [Procedure for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research](#) policy (‘the Policy’) which was last updated in February 2019. It is managed by the Research Integrity and Compliance Office (RICO) and includes clear principles and mechanisms to ensure that any investigations are conducted in a fair, thorough, objective and timely manner. All allegations are treated with confidentiality and in line with data protection legislation. Any allegations concerning University staff (both present and past) can be reported at the Faculty level by contacting the Faculty’s Research Integrity Champion (RIC) or the Associate Dean for Research (ADR), or directly to RICO.

This Policy now needs to be reviewed, updated, and aligned with the Academic Responsibility and Conduct process, and incorporate changes in the Research Integrity landscape. The review is underway by RICO and aims to introduce an appeals procedure and a support function to ensure that throughout the process, both complainants and respondents have access to other services (such as mental health and wellbeing). The Policy needs to be more encompassing and link with the [Inclusion and Respectful Behaviour Policy](#), as well as other existing policies where appropriate. As part of the review, RICO will benchmark the Policy against other leading universities and the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity which was published in April 2025.

3.1 RESEARCH MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS

The table below sets out the high-level details of investigations and findings in relation to research misconduct allegations covering University staff in academic year 2024/2025.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations in 2024/2025			
	Allegations reported to the University.	Allegations for which a preliminary investigation was undertaken.	Allegations upheld (in full or in part).	Allegations for which a formal investigation was undertaken.
Fabrication	2	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	1	1	Ongoing	0
Misrepresentation	1	1	1 *	0

Lack of authorship credit	1	1	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	5	3	2*	1**
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	2	2	1*	0
Other	2	1	0	0
Total	14	9	4*	1**
* while the allegation was partially upheld, it did not require a formal panel and was resolved through remedial action and training. Some of these cases are ongoing at the time of writing and the outcome is not yet known.				
** a further formal investigation was undertaken by another department as it was a co-investigation.				

In addition to staff allegations/investigations, in academic year 2024/2025, there were 2 suspected breaches of academic integrity for post graduate research (PGR) students, with both occurring in the Faculty of Environmental & Life Sciences and falling under 'breaching ethical standards' category.

As per our Policy, where an allegation concerned funded research, or involved another third party, all relevant funders/third parties were informed about the allegation being investigated (in line with their policies and terms and conditions), as well as the outcome of the investigation.

Looking to the future

RICO has been receiving at least a few research misconduct allegations every year. It should be noted the majority of the allegations came from external sources, so internal reporting remains a challenge although we have seen an increase in internal reports. The work continues to raise awareness of research integrity and research misconduct across the University community to ensure that all staff and students are more confident in approaching RICO and raising concerns. To address this, RICO are focusing on specific schools and career pathways (such as technicians) to increase understanding, awareness and engagement.

Based on the 2025 success and feedback, RICO have secured funding to run another Research Integrity event in 2026. The event will incorporate feedback and include more conversations about the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in research, as well as case studies and outcomes of research misconduct.

The University "Procedures for investigating cases of alleged misconduct in research" is under review, in line with the revised UKRIO's "Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research" and the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity published in April 2025.

The AWERB, together with the members of the Research Division of RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), will co-organise a Culture of Care workshop in early academic year 2025-26 which will be aimed at engaging researchers, technicians, and Named Persons involved in animal work at developing the University's Culture of Care, and discussing the animal-human relationship. The outputs of the workshop are intended to be used to develop a training resource to support staff working in these roles.

The Doctoral College has also developed and approved an additional workshop – "*Research Integrity for PGRs: Generative AI and the doctorate*" – which will run in the new academic year 2025-26.

This Statement was approved by Research Integrity and Governance Committee on 12th November 2025.

APPENDIX I – UNIVERSITY CURRENT SYSTEMS AND CULTURE

I.I. Research Integrity and Compliance Office (RICO)

The University has two dedicated teams that focus on specific regulatory activities: Research Integrity and Compliance Office (RICO) and Research Ethics and Governance Office (REGO). Both teams are based within [Research and Innovation Services](#) (RIS).

RICO responsibilities include:

- Leading on the compliance with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) through facilitating review and development of research integrity policies, guidance and processes.
- Providing expertise and advice on research integrity and research compliance matters in line with legal and ethical requirements and available guidance and codes of conduct.
- Providing advice and training to staff and students on all aspects of good and responsible research conduct including research integrity and research compliance.
- Management of the University's [Procedure for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research](#) policy and ensuring that any allegations of research misconduct concerning University staff are investigated in a fair and timely manner.
- Upholding the Trusted Research framework and providing expert advice and guidance on matters of export control, national security within research, and international collaborations.

I.II. Research Ethics and Governance Office (REGO)

REGO responsibilities include:

- Oversight and management of research ethics processes through the University's ethics system ERGO, and governance review and monitoring of high-risk research projects.
- Providing expertise and advice on research ethics and clinical governance (including sponsorship of clinical trials and other externally regulated health and social care studies) in line with legal and ethical requirements and available guidance and codes of conduct.
- Providing advice and training to staff and students on all aspects of research ethics and clinical governance.

I.III. Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC)

The University's Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC) is chaired by the Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) and meets 3 times per academic year. Its core responsibility is to foster a culture of research integrity and responsible research conduct amongst the University's academic community. It provides leadership on policy development in line with the Research Policies Action Plan and monitoring of implementation of regulatory compliance across the University. Membership of RIGC include Associate Deans for Research (ADRs), Lay Members and senior representatives from the Doctoral College, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB), Library, Finance, iSolutions, RICO and REGO. RIGC members provide Annual Research Integrity Reports for their respective Faculties/Departments which are considered by RIGC at the beginning of every academic year.

I.IV. Doctoral College

Leadership on training and personal development for postgraduate researchers is provided through the University's [Doctoral College](#). The University strongly supports the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and since 2012 has been holding and retaining the [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) for its ongoing work in implementing the Concordat.

I.V. Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP)

The University [Centre for Higher Education Practice](#) (CHEP) promotes academic professional learning for every member of University staff, in all areas of academic activity and at every stage of their career, by working in partnership with University Faculties and RICO.

I.VI. Research and Innovation Services (RIS)

Research and Innovation Services (RIS) developed the [RIS SharePoint site](#) which includes information for staff and students on all aspects of the research lifecycle (from research funding through to enterprise and commercialisation) with 'how to' guidance and signposting to important sources of information both elsewhere in the University and externally. This includes RICO and REGO guidance on research integrity, ethics, authorship, regulatory compliance and clinical governance.

RIS publishes a monthly [RIS Newsletter](#) for researchers, and a termly publicly available magazine, [Re:action](#), both of which periodically include articles on research integrity, research culture, and University research policies and guidance written by RICO and REGO in cooperation with relevant academics and professional services staff.

I.VII. University Library

The Library has developed a wide range of resources offering advice and support on [research data management](#) and [open access](#) research. To promote and foster best practice among staff and research students, the Library holds regular workshops and training on data management and open research, copyright clearance and publishing best practice, either face to face or via remote means. These courses can be booked via Gradbook (open to postgraduate researchers) or Staffbook, and other bespoke training sessions and talks can be arranged on request.

The University has a **Responsible Research Metrics Policy** which was developed by the Library and is available [here](#) together with information on responsible use of metrics.

I.VIII. Research Culture

The University strategic plans, launched in 2022, feature dedicated research culture objectives. Research culture is led by the Associate Vice-President (Interdisciplinary Research) and informed by a dedicated Research Culture Group, including faculty Associate Deans (Research and/or EDI) and the institutional leads or co-leads for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Open Research, UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), Doctoral College (DC), the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) and cross-institution or sector culture change initiatives. The group shares good practice and co-ordinates activities that impact on research culture across the wider University. An internal SharePoint site highlights best practice in research culture.

I.IX. Fostering Research Integrity

The University has a number of academic lead groups, centres and initiatives that develop and support aspects of ethics, integrity and good research practices, including:

- [Southampton Ethics Centre \(SEC\)](#) (launched 2013/2014) brings together a large community of researchers working on ethics and ethics-related issues across the University. The Centre provides newsletters and information on national events and hosts events locally.
- [Clinical Ethics, Law & Society \(CELS\)](#) (established in 2010) is a multidisciplinary research group that explores the ethical issues of rapid medical technological advances through research, education, policy engagement and public dialogue. Since 2021 the CELS group includes members both from the University of Southampton and the University of Oxford.

- [National Centre for Research Methods \(NCRM\)](#) was established by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in 2004 and was originally coordinated from the University of Southampton. Since 2014, NCRM has been a partnership between 3 universities with international reputations in methodological research and training in the social sciences: University of Southampton, University of Manchester and University of Edinburgh.
- [Centre for Machine Intelligence \(CMI\)](#) was established within the School of Electronics and Computer Sciences to create an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental platform for researchers and practitioners, with the aim of delivering the impact of machine intelligence to society. It operates in parallel with the [AI UK: Creating An International Ecosystem For Responsible AI Research And Innovation](#) project. The AI UK project recently published a paper on [Responsible AI governance](#).

I.X. External Memberships

To ensure that the University keeps abreast of best practice in matters related to the Concordat and research integrity, it is a member of several external bodies including:

- UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)
- Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA)
- Understanding Animal Research (UAR)
- Russell Group Research Integrity Forum (RGRIF)
- Russell Group Trusted Research Forum (RGTRF)
- Higher Education Export Control Association (HEECA)
- UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN)

Russell Group Forums

RICO actively participates within the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum (RGRIF) which aims to share best practice in the area of ethics and research integrity, and the newly established Russell Group Trusted Research Forum (RGTRF) which shares best practice in relation to Trusted Research and research compliance among the Russell Group Universities.

UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN)

Since June 2020, the University has been a formal institutional member of the [UK Reproducibility Network](#) (UKRN), a national peer-led consortium that aims to ensure that the UK retains its place as a centre for world-leading research.

Moreover, since 2019, the University has had a Local Network Lead in place as a point of contact for UKRN and to oversee grass-root groups (including Early Career Researchers) that meet periodically across the University to discuss issues related to reproducibility and open research, including the [ReproducibiliTea](#) journal club at Southampton. More information can be found at: <https://library.soton.ac.uk/lovedata/reproducibiliTea>.

A [new website](#) was also set up to promote Local Network activities at Southampton.

I.XI. Culture, development and leadership

Research Integrity Leadership

The Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) has the overall responsibility for compliance with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) including the oversight of research policies, research ethics, research compliance and governance, as well as training and development opportunities for our staff and students. The following groups and committees support the Vice-President on matters relating to research integrity:

- Research and Enterprise Executive Group (REEG)
- Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC)
- University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
- Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

The Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) reports regularly to the University Executive Board (UEB), University Senate, and Council on research integrity matters to ensure institutional oversight. Deans have an overall responsibility for researchers in their respective Faculties. They are supported by Associate Deans Research (ADRs) who represent their Faculty on REEG and RIGC and are responsible for championing research integrity and implementation of research policies and processes within their Faculties.

Deans and ADRs are further supported by Research Integrity Champions (RICs) who have been appointed for most University Faculties. RICs contribute to promoting and fostering a culture of research integrity within the disciplines relevant to their respective Faculties.

The Research Integrity and Compliance Office (RICO) and the Research Ethics and Governance Office (REGO) support the Vice-President (Research and Enterprise), ADRs and RICs on all matters related to research integrity, research compliance, and research ethics and governance.

Training and professional development

It is the University's policy that all researchers should receive appropriate training and development opportunities to enable them to conduct research to the highest standards.

Each University Faculty organises regular training, workshops, and awareness raising events for both staff and students on research integrity and University research policies and procedures. Examples of these include: good research conduct, ethics submissions on ERGO II, ethics in research with human participants and human tissue, good laboratory practice, animal research ethics, academic integrity, authorship, and data protection and management. Training is delivered both in-person, via remote online sessions and through online training modules. Information and advice is available on Faculties' Intranets and via regular newsletters, email communication or blogs.

In addition to the training organised by the Faculties, RICO and REGO deliver training on all aspects of good and responsible research conduct including research integrity, research ethics, research compliance and clinical governance.

University staff and students can also access a wide range of online skills training including technology, business, IT and creative thinking through the University's subscription to [LinkedIn Learning](#).

Leadership training

Line Managers of researchers or Line Managers who are researchers can attend The University of Southampton Line Manager Development Programme. This programme's enables participants to continue to develop their leadership style and enhance their knowledge and skills in relation to their line management responsibilities. The modules are engaging and interactive, they provide participants with opportunities to engage with their peers, share experiences and build their networks. They also have access to additional resources through the Line Manager Toolkit, the Line Manager Community, Leadership Circles and other workshops that provide deeper dives into line management topics. Researchers (who do not have line manager roles) can also access a range of internally delivered workshops, eLearning and self-directed resources to develop their interpersonal skills topics such as communication, working with change, team work, time management and personal leadership as well as the huge range of resources through MindTools for Business, Management Pocket Books, Scott Bradbury Watch and Go and LinkedIn Learning.

I.XII. Research Policies

The University has comprehensive research policies and procedures to meet the expectations of the Concordat, including the Code of Conduct for Research which provides an important framework for conducting research at the University and covers the entire research lifecycle. The Code of Conduct for Research is currently under review as it was last updated in October 2017 and is out of date.

The University's research policies can be found [here](#).

The 'University Policy Framework' applies to all policy and associated documentation creation at the University of Southampton. It sets out the requirements and definitions for University Policy, procedure and related minimum governance requirements. The purpose of this framework is to establish a consistent approach to the development of University of Southampton policies, including development, approval and maintenance. It will help develop consistent and clear policies, readily available to members of the university community and other user, which is fundamental to promoting efficiency, transparency, diversity and inclusivity within our organisation.

This Framework will create a library of policies which will be closely monitored and reviewed in an appropriate timescale, removing conflicting or competing policies. This will bring stability and organised structure into the policy suite.

APPENDIX II – RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

II.I Research involving Cultural Heritage

Since October 2018 the University has the [Ethics Policy on Cultural Heritage](#) which applies both to land-based and underwater cultural heritage. The Policy aims to help researchers working with cultural heritage to consider the impact of their research, including the potential loss or damage to tangible cultural heritage, provenance and acquisition of artefacts, and working with human remains more than 100 years old.

II.II Research involving social media

The University has well-established guidelines for [internet-mediated research](#), developed by the University Ethics Committee in 2017. The guidelines help researchers identify some of the possible ethical issues surrounding internet-mediated research. Considerations include privacy and confidentiality, covert observation, recruitment, informed consent, study withdrawal and debrief. All appropriate ethical approvals must be in place before commencing internet-mediated research. This will include registering the project on the University's Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO II) system as well as any external reviews that may be required such as NHS Research Ethics Committee and/or Health Research Authority approvals.

II.III Research and artificial intelligence (AI)

Over the past few years, a rapid and disruptive acceleration of progress in artificial intelligence (AI) has occurred, driven by significant advances in widespread data availability, computing power and machine learning¹. AI has the potential to transform knowledge access and increase research efficiency but without appropriate safeguards, the use of AI systems, including generative AI (genAI), can exacerbate inequalities through inaccurate, biased, or fabricated content. It can also undermine research integrity, as outputs may lack reliability and reproducibility. In March 2024, the EU published [Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research](#) developed by the European Research Area Forum. The guidelines are based on 4 key principles (reliability, honesty, respect and accountability) and include recommendations for researchers, research organisations and funders. It is advised that research organisations should:

- *Promote, guide and support responsible use of GenAI in research.* This covers providing training, verifying outputs, upholding privacy, protecting intellectual property and addressing biases, and ensuring compliance with ethical and legal requirements.
- *Monitor the development and use of GenAI within their organisations.* This means being aware of research activities that utilise such tools, to better support the research community, tailor training and safeguard against potential misuse.
- *Reference or integrate the 'EU generative AI guidelines' into their general research guidelines for good research practices and ethics.* Use the guidelines to have open discussions within the community.
- *Whenever possible and necessary, implement locally hosted or cloud-based generative AI tools that they govern themselves.* This enables researchers to feed data into a tool that ensures data protection, cybersecurity and confidentiality.

Having identified the necessary principles for governing responsible AI use in research, the University will work on implementing them into the research culture over the next few years.

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/guidelines-responsible-use-generative-ai-research-developed-european-research-area-forum-2024-03-20_en