

Annual Research Integrity Statement 2023-2024

From: Research Integrity and Compliance Office

Date: October 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Southampton ('the University') is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (October 2019) ('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 2023** to **31 July 2024**. 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 2023/2024, the Faculty Research Ethics Committees approved the following number of staff and student research projects:

▪ Faculty of Arts and Humanities:	208
▪ Faculty of Medicine:	265
▪ Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences:	250
➢ Psychology Sub-committee:	478
➢ Geography and Oceanography Sub-committee:	106
▪ Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences:	339
▪ Faculty of Social Sciences:	793
➢ Business and Law Sub-committee:	1430

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](#) (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement). Its role is to ensure awareness of the highest standards of animal welfare and promoting a culture of care within the University academic community.

The University has a [Policy for Involving Animals in Research and Education](#) which was developed jointly by AWERB and the RIG Team. 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](#).

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.

In academic year 2023/2024, AWERB also held an away half-day meeting.

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

- 13 ASPA project licence applications and 7 applications for amendments.
- 13 project licence holder' 2- and 4-year progress reports and no retrospective assessments (as required by the Home Office).
- 129 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 2023-2024, within the Biomedical Research Facilities 4 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 2023 – July 2024, the AREQA ethics panel reviewed, and approved, 95 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.

The University has a large trial portfolio, and the tables below show the clinical activity for the 2023/24 period. Category A* are reviewed only by the REGO Team and mainly comprise studies that fall under the Health Research Authority (HRA), including sponsored clinical studies requiring ongoing support, monitoring and/or auditing. Category A submissions are first reviewed and approved by two FREC reviewers before progressing to the RIG Team for the governance review.

	Category A*	Category A	Other Categories	Sponsorship In Principle (SiP)
Total Submitted	558	182	20	19
Total Requiring Revisions:	316	105	22	4
Total Approved	524	172	0	17

Student Projects	Category A*	Category A		Sponsorship In Principle (SiP)
UG	16	21		0
PGT	9	13		0
PGR	88	64		0
Total Approved	113	98		0

Staff Projects	Category A*	Category A		Sponsorship In Principle (SiP)
Academic Staff	406	8		17
Professional Services	0	0		0
Total Approved:	406	8		17

Number of Category A* studies reviewed by REGO including revisions requested (01 August 2023 - 31 July 2024):

Faculty Research Ethics Committee	Total Submitted Category A*	Total Approved Category A*	RIG/REGO Revisions Requested	RIG/REGO Revisions Requested 2 Times	RIG/REGO Revisions Requested 3 Or More Times
Faculty Of Arts And Humanities	7	5	4	0	0
Faculty Of Engineering And Physical Sciences	30	27	8	1	0
Faculty Of Environmental And Life Sciences	86	81	58	6	4
Faculty Of Medicine	394	372	220	32	15
Faculty Of Social Sciences	2	1	1	0	0
Sub-Committee Business And Law	2	2	1	0	0
Sub-Committee Geography And Oceanography	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Committee Psychology	37	38	23	4	0

2.5 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. The updated Statement is due to be published.

2.6 EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY ACTIVITIES (01 AUGUST 2023 TO 31 JULY 2024)

1. The University's [International Open Access Week](#) was held on 23-29 October. The theme was 'Community over Commercialisation' which focused on the benefit of community activities in combating the negative sides of commercialisation in scholarly communications, for example, publicly funded research and knowledge being behind paywalls or excessive fees being charged to publish open. In keeping with the theme, the Library launched a new Community of Practice focusing on the development of a University Press - as part of a Strategic Major Project. The University Press Community of Practice (UP CoP) is open to staff and Post graduate students.
2. Under the support of AWERB, the newly appointed 3Rs Champions organised the inaugural 3Rs Conference and Networking event in October 2023. Speakers included a mixture of UoS staff and students along with external speakers, sharing the latest research to promote good practice and the 3Rs. The event was well attended by both UoS students and staff, and has received excellent feedback from the research community.
3. AWERB also invited applications for the 2nd annual UoS 3Rs awards. A range of excellent applications were received from multiple faculties including FOM, FELS and FEPS. These applications highlight the broad reach of these principles and the quality of research being

undertaken at Southampton. An award was made for each category (Replacement, Refinement and Reduction), with winning project summaries featured on the AWERB website.

4. In February 2024 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.
5. In March 2024 RICO published the newly developed [USA Financial Conflicts of Interest Policy](#) as a sub-policy to the University Conflicts of Interest Policy.
6. UKRN Local Network 3rd Festival of Open Research (April 2024).

The event brought together a diverse group of researchers, students, and stakeholders from various disciplines, all united by a shared passion for open research and improving research culture. The day was opened by the event organiser, Christian Bokhove, who introduced the keynote presentation which was delivered by Dr. Sholto David, a significant contributor to the science sleuthing community. Other speakers included Amy Peters and Phillipa Broadbent (ReproducibiliTea), Amanda Blatch Jones, Hayward Godwin, and Simon Coles, talking on themes from identifying misconduct and replicability, to examples of best practice in sharing data. Some of our experiences with open research practices are presented as Case Studies on the local UKRN website <https://www.ukrnsoton.org.uk/>
7. The University participated in Vitae's pilot Research Culture Landscape Survey which ran between May and July 2024, and was facilitated by the Research Culture team within RIS and with input from RICO. Key findings include highlighting that while staff have some idea of research misconduct, they are less confident in reporting it. It was also discovered that over half of Technical staff say they are not aware of either the University policy of handling allegations of research misconduct or the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. These results were highly informative in devising RICO's priorities for 2024-25.
8. Following on from the Research Culture Survey, and having identified gaps in research integrity awareness, RICO engaged with the Technician Commitment group. More consultations will follow in 2024-25.
9. A new University-wide Research Integrity Working Group has been set up by the Research Integrity and Compliance Office, with representatives from across the faculties and other departments. The first RIWG meeting took place in person on 10th July 2024 on Highfield Campus with good attendance. Multiple integrity issues were discussed, with a clear consensus that there is an overall lack of research integrity training for staff and a lack of clarity when it comes to reporting. As a priority, RICO began work on creating a staff training module that will be offered in staff inductions. More will follow in 2024-25.
10. Doctoral College has updated our central mandatory online learning course "Research Integrity for PGRs" which provides all PGRs with an understanding of research integrity (including research ethics, research governance, and academic integrity), why it matters and how to work with integrity in their day-to-day practice as a researcher.
11. Doctoral College also held the following workshops available to postgraduate students
 - a. Research integrity for PGRs: academic responsibility;
 - b. Research Integrity for PGRs: Conducting Ethical Research;
 - c. How to be a Virt2ous researcher: An Embassy for Good Science workshop;
 - d. Responsible Research and Innovation.
12. Faculty of Medicine created a 'People, Culture and Environment (PCE) Working Group' to help the Faculty's ongoing development of a positive research culture. The PCE working Group was established to support, inform and guide the faculty's research culture workstream. The FMED PCE Working Group aims to support the development, delivery and evaluation of research culture activities, initiatives and policies in the Faculty of Medicine in order to promote a positive research culture.

13. Library supported the Research Excellence Framework's (REF) development of People, Culture, and Environment (PCE) Indicators by facilitating a workshop session on Integrity and the Research Process.
14. The ORCA managed the UKRN Open Research Programme training project, supporting individuals to develop and deliver training in open research and research integrity practices nationally.
15. A new widely shared open educational resource was developed on how to publish research which included elements around "Think, Check, Submit" and author contribution roles.
16. The Faculty of Social Sciences maintains the 'Research Integrity Corner' on the [FSS SharePoint site](#) and posts RI-related news and events.
17. Further, the 'Ethics Corner' on the [FSS Sharepoint Site](#) which provides the slides and recording of the most recent Ethics Training that was conducted.

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 is due to be released in the early 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 2023/2024.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations in 2023/2024			
	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	0	0	0	0
Falsification	1	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation	1	1	0	0
Lack of authorship credit	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	4	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	2	2	1*	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	8	3	1	0

* while the allegation was partially upheld, it did not require a formal panel and was resolved through remedial action and training

In addition to staff allegations/investigations, in academic year 2023/2024, there were **18** suspected breaches of academic integrity for post graduate research (PGR) students, with 77% occurring in the Faculty of Environmental & Life Sciences and the majority falling under ‘breaching ethical standards’ category. **10** of the suspected breaches resulted in written warning or resubmissions.

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. More work is required to raise awareness of research integrity and research misconduct across the University community to ensure that staff are more confident in approaching RICO and raising concerns. To address this, RICO are developing more training, and working with the technical staff to increase awareness and engagement.

Based on consultations and feedback, RICO are also planning a Research Integrity and Open Research event in 2025 with the theme of ‘back to basics’.

Our Policy needs to be updated to cover scenarios experienced during the investigations that are currently not mentioned in detail in the Policy. The Policy will also be updated, where necessary, in line

with the revised UKRIO's 'Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research' and the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity, which is due to be published early 2025.

This Statement was approved by Research Integrity and Governance Committee on 7 November 2024, University Executive Board on 10 December 2024, University Senate on 5 February 2025, and University Council on 4th March 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 for Interdisciplinary Research and informed by a dedicated Research Culture Group, including the institutional leads or co-leads for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Open Research, UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), Doctoral College (DC), and the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) which is responsible for researcher development. The group shares good practice and co-ordinates the activities that impact on research culture across the wider University. The 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