University of Portsmouth: annual statement on research integrity, 2023

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University of Portsmouth
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher Education
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	25th September 2023
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.port.ac.uk/research/research-and-innovation-culture
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Prof Jeremy Howell Email address: jeremy.howells@port.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Denise Teasdale Email address: denise.teasdale@port.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

2A. Description of current systems and culture

The University of Portsmouth is fully committed to the ongoing development of a culture that supports and nurtures research integrity. It is likewise committed to ensuring that mechanisms are in place to provide assurances and appropriate interventions where standards are not fully met. The University adopts the United Kingdom Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) Code of Practice for Research as its own. Any breach of this code is dealt with following our 2013 Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research.

Research Ethics

The University Ethics Policy requires an ethics review of all research undertaken by University staff and students. Reviews are proportionate to the type of research and the potential for raising ethical issues. This is achieved through a combination of i) an online review tool, ii) review at departmental level, iii) review by faculty ethics committees, and iv) review by national committees such as NHS RECs or MODREC. Guidance is provided to help researchers determine which type of review is required. The ethics system is co-ordinated by an ethics advisor who is familiar with national and international research ethics requirements. Guidance is continually evolving based upon feedback from applicants and the changing legal and policy landscape. These processes received a routine, external, audit in Spring 2021 and were found to be in accordance with sector best practice. A number of actions were, however, highlighted relating to ongoing training, and University-wide record keeping. Subsequent actions include making integrity and ethics training mandatory for all staff submitting project applications to the faculty ethics committees, and utilising the Pure information system (see below) to track ethics applications. All actions have been delivered.

Ethics Committees

The University Ethics Committee (UEC) is our high level committee concerned with matters of policy, procedures and strategy as they relate to research integrity and ethics. Faculty Ethics Committees are delegated responsibility by UEC for overseeing the ethics review of staff and post-graduate research projects, and have common Terms of Reference and procedures. A Research Ethics Subcommittee is made up of the five Faculty Ethics Committee chairs, along with the University Ethics Advisor, to ensure consistency in the application of central policies and procedures, to support the development of new procedures, to hear appeals from

researchers (there have been none in 2022/23), and to ensure that the University meets essential requirements for UKRI (and other funder) quality assurance purposes.

The University currently enjoys a good reputation with the Health Research Authority (NHS) and its ethics service, with a number of staff directly involved with the HRA and other external ethics committees. The current University Ethics Adviser chairs ethics committees for the NHS, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA, previously PHE), and is able to offer bespoke support to staff and research students completing external applications for ethics review, as well as ensuring that University of Portsmouth processes are kept up to date with best national best practice. In the absence of a Human Tissue license, applications are regularly made to the NHS to grant approval for research involving the storage of human tissue with further guidance available to researchers via the research ethics website. Additional advice to all staff seeking NHS research passports is provided through the University's HR web pages.

Research Environment

Research and Innovation Services (RIS) manages an internal, University-wide, Peer Review College (PRC), and pre-submission peer review has been fully incorporated into our research grant application approval in line with best practice elsewhere in the sector. This is a necessary response to 'demand management' requirements being placed on HEIs by the major research funders in the UK, but is also an essential feature of any quality research culture. The PRC has reviewed over 700 applications since its launch in May 2013. The aim of internal Peer Review is to ensure that all bids reaching certain external bodies, where the application is led by and is submitted by researchers employed by the University, meet all necessary quality thresholds.

The University uses Pure, a Central Research Information System (CRIS), to provide a secure and stable platform to both manage research data and share research with the wider world. Pure includes an online archive in which academics' research data can be stored and, as appropriate, shared publicly. With regards to making research publications open access, we have processes in place to ensure that academics' publications are made open access in accordance with publishers' copyright policies. We have a permanent Research Outputs Team working within the Library whose responsibility it is to manage and oversee all aspects of open access. All publications are validated by this team for accuracy and completeness when they are uploaded onto Pure. We have made excellent progress towards complying with both Research England and other funders' (e.g. UKRI) open access policies. The team provides faculties with weekly reports on what's missing from Pure, and they conduct a university-wide audit annually. Due

to these processes, the University now has 94% of in-scope journal and conference articles compliant with Research England's open access policy, which means that they're in Pure and available to the public on our research portal website (NB the remaining 6% are mostly outside the University's control due to corresponding authors being based at different institutions).

The University's Corporate Health and Safety Team continues to support research by developing and implementing policies, arrangements and procedures that ensure the safety and well-being of researchers and participants and the reputation of the University. Equally the Corporate Health and Safety Team ensures statutory and best practice compliance in relation to health and safety legislation. To assist with compliance and implementation of policies and arrangements, the Corporate Health and Safety Team provides comprehensive training, instruction and information to faculties and has representatives on all of the University's ethics committees. The University also recognises the importance of protecting research samples, products and artefacts from physical damage caused by adverse events and is considered through the risk assessment process.

Research Governance

The University has research governance and ethics webpages that provide guidance for its research community as well as links to policies on research conduct. We publish a one page checklist of research governance responsibilities that is promulgated throughout our research community via the Research and Innovation Services blog, various researcher networks, training days, and ensuring all new staff receive copies of the appropriate information at their formal induction.

The University's research governance structure is broadly aligned with the Association for Research Ethics' Framework of Policies and Procedures for University Research Ethics Committees. The University is also a subscriber to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). We are therefore confident that our governance framework is similar to those of other HEIs. The Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research, Innovation & External Engagement, is the formal contact point for all research integrity matters and is publicly listed as the University's research integrity lead on the UKRIO website as well as the University's website.

We have a research support website that provides guidance for staff regarding what constitutes a conflict of interest in research, and the requirement to declare interests according to the University's Declaration of Interests Policy is also flagged by research finance forms at the post award stage. The research support website also signposts the RCUK 2010 Concordat for Engaging the Public in Research, and Research Finance documentation also flags this as appropriate to those in receipt

of RCUK funding.

Data management

The University's Data Management Policy complies with research funder requirements and aligns with UKRI research data policies. While this policy states that research data needs to be made open access wherever possible, first and foremost it states that academics must operate within the "Regulatory Environment". This includes respecting all applicable legislation (e.g. GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, etc.), contractual or funder obligations, and ethical and policy requirements. The University's Retention Schedule highlights best practice for the retention of Project Records, including those pertaining to Research and Innovation Projects. The University also holds *CyberEssentials* plus certification.

The University's Research Outputs Team, based in the Library, are tasked with coordinating the management of research data, including ensuring that academics comply with these requirements and standards. Within this team, the Research Outputs Manager oversees the work, while the Research Data Officer provides practical and continuous support. Both roles are full-time permanent posts. This involves supporting academics to develop data management plans (DMPs), and assisting them in managing their research data throughout their projects and making research data (wherever possible) open access at the end of the project. This role also involves providing expert advice on a range of areas including storage solutions, appropriate file types for long-term preservation, security, licensing and the most suitable archive in which to preserve the research data. This advice includes providing workshops, online training, one-to-one guidance and extensive online support, which has been updated this year. Crucially, the linkage is in place between the ethical review process and research data management; all researchers going through the ethical review process are directed to seek advice about research data management as part of this process.

The University is registered with the ICO (registration number Z7027819) as a data controller for the personal data it processes, including in relation to research projects. Researchers continue to abide by the requirements of the data protection legislation and seek advice from relevant sources within the University – the University's Ethics Adviser, the Research Outputs Manager, the University's Data Protection Officer, and staff on Faculty Ethics committees – when questions arise.

Following a decision by the EU Commission in June 2021 to grant a decision of adequacy for the UK data protection regime all research contracts involving personal data processing between the UK and the EEA can continue as if the UK had not left the EU. However, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

(DCMS) issued a new form of International Data Transfer Agreement (IDTA) in March 2022 which forms the UK's version of the EU's Standard Contractual Clauses to be included in any contract involving the transfer of personal data to / from organisations in 'third countries'. A third country is defined as one that does not have a decision of adequacy with the UK for its data protection regime.

Animal Research

Whenever possible, our research uses alternative methods, such as cells grown in the laboratory and computer models, however there is still some research involving animals that remains essential. The University has an Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) as a requirement under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. This is the legislation that allows us to do experiments on protected animals. Protected animals are those that have a backbone and members of the cuttlefish/squid/octopus family. The University has an Establishment License and PIs in the Institute for Biomedical and Biological Science (IBBS) hold 8 project licenses for work focused on diseases and basic biology in mice, fish and frogs. The day-to-day care of the animals is overseen by our named animal care and welfare officers (NACWOs). We have three, each being responsible for either mammals (we only hold mice and a few guinea pigs), frogs or fish and they work closely with our named veterinary surgeon (NVS). In total there are 40 projects running at the University that involve animals, all have been approved by the AWERB.

2B. Developments during the period under review

Over the last five years the University has undergone transformational change, with the launch of the new University Vision 2030, Strategy 2025, and Research and Innovation Strategy 2025-2026. These documents reaffirm the institution's commitment to develop and support its researchers and specifically commit the institution to "*promote opportunities and develop skills for early and mid-career researchers*", "*nurture our postgraduate researchers to become the next generation of research and innovation leaders*" and to "*provide an infrastructure that improves the capacity and capability of our researchers*". The University also commits to '*building a strong research and innovation ecosystem*' and '*making our research more open, inclusive and accessible.*' These aspiration underpin all our research activities and management.

Responsibility for ethics and impact is promoted through online ethics resources that include a wide range of research related forms and documents, and are being

constantly updated and modified to emphasise researcher responsibilities as defined in the UUK Concordat. No student can submit a thesis without evidence of ethics review, and a completed declaration modelled on the UKRIO Code of Practice for Research.

Research Culture Funding

In March 2023 the University announced a call for internal applications as an avenue for distributing funding we had received from Research England. This initiative aligns with the government's vision outline in the 2021 R&D People and Culture Strategy. This strategy aims to ensure that our research system nurtures talented and diverse individuals in an environment that brings out their best, to pilot new initiatives, increase the scale of already-proven activities and continue activities already supported.

Applicants were asked to explain how their proposals fitted with the suggestions offered by Research England and/or areas covered in the R&D People and Culture Strategy. We also advised colleagues we would positively welcome collaborative (ideally interdisciplinary) submissions between academic and professional support (either central or Faculty) and that we were also particularly keen to encourage applications oriented to strengthening our research and innovation environment from the perspective of future projected REF and KEF submissions.

The response to the call was good, with 15 applications requesting a total funding of £384,708. However, given the available funds of £115,000 the Selection Panel faced tough decisions. Ultimately, five projects were chosen for funding, each contributing uniquely to the enhancement of research culture within the University.

HR Excellence in Research Award

The University signed up to the new Concordat to Support Career Development of Researchers in September 2019. It has published its 3 year plan for 2023-2026, developed through the Researcher Development Group (previously Concordat Implementation Group), through liaison with the researcher community and feedback surveys including those received through CEDARS 2023. The action plan identifies the following areas of priority: Developing research talent - Recruitment, development, progression and next job; Culture - EDI, Engagement, Wellbeing; and, Using the concept of 'Impact through Knowledge Exchange' as a lens through which to view research staff experience and development.

Staff Training

Ongoing training is provided by the Research and Innovation Staff Development Programme (RISDP) that is targeted to research and academic staff (but is also open to all staff in the University). Workshops and seminars for researchers seeking new funding sources and collaborative networks continue to provide an overview of Research Integrity issues and researcher obligations as outlined in the UUK Concordat, and over 70 staff attended specific Research Ethics and Integrity workshops. In addition to the RISDP programme research staff are able to take part in coaching and Researcher' Network events. Staff with a broad range of job roles including teaching fellows, technical specialists, scientific officers and librarians have also attended workshops to develop research skills. The University has a well-attended Research Staff Forum (for contract researchers) and a Researchers Network (for early career staff) to help make researchers aware of their individual responsibilities.

Graduate Training

The Graduate School Development Programme (GSDP) has been developed to complement the subject-specific and advanced training available from faculties, departments or research groups, and provides some of the 10 days a year of research development required by the UKRI for research students (five days for part- time students). The Graduate School's Research Supervision Events include introductory sessions, best practice workshops and topics of advanced or specialist interest. All supervisors who are new to supervising research degree students at Portsmouth are required to attend the Introductory Workshop for Research Supervisors before they can be confirmed on the research supervision team. The workshops provide an overview of the processes involved in managing a research degree student at Portsmouth as well as providing opportunities to discuss the art of supervision with experienced supervisors. These workshops are available both live and online, and each take place up to three times a year. 95 doctoral students attended Research Ethics and Integrity training during the 2022/23 academic year.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct
There are established policies and procedures in place for the investigation of alleged financial, academic and research misconduct. For research in particular, the University has a *Procedure for the investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research* (September 2013 - the policy is currently subject to review). This procedure provides a clear mechanism to report allegations of misconduct coupled with a robust, fair and transparent process for dealing with each case. The policy is based on best practice in the sector and advice received from UKRIO. However, most queries relating to research conduct are resolved at a local level by Heads of School. Only serious cases as judged by Heads of Schools and Deans, or are based on evidence provided by either internal or external whistle-blowers, trigger the formal misconduct policy.

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

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication				

history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	1	1		1
Other*				
Total:	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**