

# University of Westminster Research Integrity Annual Narrative Statement, February 2023

## Section 1: Key contact information

<b>1A. Name of organisation</b>	University of Westminster
<b>1B. Type of organisation:</b>  higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education Institution (HEI)
<b>1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)</b>	Approved by Research Committee on 10/03/23  Pending 'noting' by Academic Council on 29/03/23
<b>1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)</b>	<a href="https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity">https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity</a>
<b>1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity</b>	Name: Professor Andrew Linn, Pro Vice Chancellor Research  Email address: <a href="mailto:A.Linn@westminster.ac.uk">A.Linn@westminster.ac.uk</a>
<b>1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity</b>	Name: Huzma Kelly, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO)  Email address: <a href="mailto:H.Kelly01@westminster.ac.uk">H.Kelly01@westminster.ac.uk</a>

## Section 2. Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

The University is committed to developing, enhancing and sustaining research good practice as part of its research culture and environment, through research that is ethical and of the highest quality and standards. The University has been a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) since 2014 and has actively supported research integrity, as an employer of researchers, to fulfil its responsibilities as expected and required, by the signatories of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (2012 and 2019), and others we collaborate with.

### Introduction to Research Ethics: in-house online training module

- The University has designed the *Introduction to Research Ethics* training module to increase awareness and build on the capability of researchers to recognise and mitigate any ethical implications which may arise in their research and knowledge exchange (KE) activity throughout the research life cycle. The module also sign-posts to governance issues related to research and KE.
- The module will initially be released to all [University and College level Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committees \(UREC and CRECs\)](#) members, as well as ad-hoc ethics reviewers from the University's pool of ethics reviewers. Undertaking the module will be a requirement for these members and reviewers, to ensure that they are developed and refreshed in the principles of research ethics.

### Researcher Development

- Our Researcher Development Programme (see the [Researcher Development Hub](#) for more information) offers a combination of live sessions and self-paced learning sessions across the following themed areas: The Funding Landscape, Managing your Research Project, Data, Ethics and our Research Environment, Disseminating Publications, the Virtual Research Environment (VRE), Impact and Public Engagement.
- The University has submitted its latest Action Plan 2022-2025 and is awaiting the outcome of its HR Excellence Award retention.
- The University's HR Excellence in Research Award (HR EIRA) accreditation is international recognition of the University's commitment to the [Researcher Development Concordat](#), supporting [researchers and their development](#). For further information please see the progress report <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/researcher-development> and Action Plan: [HR EIRA Action Plan 2022-2025 \(Excel\)](#)

### Public Engagement/Researcher Development Awards

- Westminster's Researcher Development Award scheme (RDA), started in September 2021, and provides funding and targeted support to Early and Mid-Career Researchers across the institution. Awardees meet with their cohort throughout the year to discuss and address barriers to research and receive specific support from the RKEO and work with a mentor in their field.

### Research and KE ethics

- The Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) has been working to streamline the Virtual Research Environment (VRE) System's *Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Self-Assessment Form* (also known as Form Part A), which is used by researchers and ethics reviewers/managers. This review aims to help research colleagues, students and their

supervisors, as well as ethics reviewers. Further enhancements including additional guidance within the form, are planned in Academic Year 2022/23.

- The University has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for *Security Sensitive Research* for use by researchers and those managing or reviewing the research and KE activity, to further support its [Policy for Security Sensitive Research and Knowledge Exchange Activity](#) published, February 2022.
- Using the enhancements made to the VRE System the previous year, the UREC has carried out the first phase of its Audit Plan and this was taken forward via dedicated UREC and CREC Chairs' meetings, drawing up action plans based on shared experience in relation to time, proportionality and service delivery.

#### Post-awards good practice

- A post-awards handbook is being developed by the RKEO to sign-post research colleagues to compliance and research good practice resources.

#### Open Research and Research Data Management

- We are moving (as a University) from engaging in open access to open research (see [open research](#)) – recognising openness, the Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable (FAIR) Principles and reproducibility across the research lifecycle.
- Our Westminster Research repository of all research outputs goes beyond publications and data and includes practice research outputs – often non-traditional (also known as non-text) outputs, (reference to journal article <https://doi.org/10.1629/uksg.582>). The University is leading work across the sector to embed these outputs across the scholarly communications open standards and discoverability landscape (going beyond ORCID and DOIs to the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) and the Researcher Activity Identifier (RAiD)).
- The Practice Research Voices scoping project (PRVoices) funded by AHRC recognised the expertise of research enabling experts, led by a librarian (with research management experience), and included both institutional repository and research data management colleagues alongside academic co-investigators. (see: <https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/prvoices/>).
- The [University of Westminster Press](#) publishes open access monographs and journals and see our publishing expert able to work with our community on open access publishing best practice.
- We raised awareness of Open Access Week with a series of [blog posts](#)
- Our institutional Research Data Management Policy was updated in 2022/23 and the then UK Reproducibility Network institutional lead (Sam Westwood) presented at the UKRIO Annual conference in 2022 about incentivising open science. The team delivered sessions as part of both the Researcher Development Programme and Doctoral Researcher Development Programme.

## Section 2A. Description of current systems and culture

### Policies and systems:

- The University has a suite of policies and procedures relating to research and KE for use by research colleagues and students to support them in best practice. The policies and strategies for research and KE are usually reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary. A list of current policies and strategies can be found here: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-strategies-and-policies>
- The University employs the use of the Virtual Research Environment (VRE) System for the entire research life cycle, used by researchers, students and those managing research and KE. The RKEO and Graduate School Registry are the module owners and continuously review the needs and suitability of the system for all users in collaboration with academic colleagues who sit on a working group to ensure there is representation from our researcher communities.
- The University internal Blackboard site provides resources and SOPs for our colleagues and students working under the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) licence, and those managing and supporting this research. The University uses its [Quality Management System for HTA research](#) to ensure that all human tissue work is carried out in line with the Codes and Standards of the Human Tissue Authority.

### Communications and engagement

- The RKEO works with colleagues in Marketing and Communications and Colleges and Schools to circulate news via its [blog](#), newsletter, [researcher development hub](#) site, research away days led by the Pro Vice Chancellors for Research and KE, as well as through its series of [development](#) workshops both online and in person. The RKEO has created within the *hub* a [‘self-service’ site](#) for researchers where they can learn further via videos created by the RKEO, including in research ethics and integrity, research data management, open access, research dissemination and public engagement.
- The University’s Early and Mid Career network have their own Blackboard site in order to share relevant materials.
- All researcher support web pages, including [Research Governance website](#) have been redesigned and launched.

### Culture, development, and leadership

- The University’s strategy, *Being Westminster 2022-2029* ([Being Westminster: Our Strategy 2022–29 \(PDF, 8.31 MB\)](#)) highlights three priorities, one of which is Inclusion. We commit to putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the core of how we engage with everyone and is underpinned by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) is one of our four objectives, and our Strategy for Research Development and Support 2018-23 highlights a focus on People, Culture and Inclusion, to create a positive place and culture so all our people are supported and encouraged to realise their ambition.
- Research leadership is provided by many individuals and Advance HE ran a Research Team Leadership course for colleagues in November 2022 as part of our commitment to developing our leaders.
- Values 101, the Common Cause Foundation’s flagship introductory workshops series will run in June and July 2023. Participants will be introduced to the social psychology of human

values and explore how an understanding of values can increase wellbeing and create a supportive research environment.

- University Research Committee approved a responsible research evaluation paper in 2022 with a view to adopting the Leiden Manifesto Principles and putting in place an action plan.

#### Monitoring and reporting

- The University has established a new **Report and Support** platform this year, which makes it straightforward for colleagues to anonymously (or non- anonymously) report incidents of bullying, harassment, or misconduct.

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

- The University continues to build on its use of the [UKRIO/ARMA Guidance for Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations](#) document to further enhance its own research ethics review and support guidance and procedures which will be reviewed and revised in Academic Year 2022-23.
- The UREC has been working towards separating ethics review from governance compliance matters as per good practice in the sector, and the [UKRIO/ARMA Guidance](#). This work will feed into the review of the University's [Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research](#) and its related ethics policies and guidance in Academic Year 2022/23.
- The University is fully compliant with the [Human Tissue Authority's Codes and Standards](#). This work continues to be managed by the [Human Tissue Authority Steering Group](#) (reporting to UREC) which has reviewing its existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and ascertaining the need for additional SOPs for colleagues and students working under the licence (and those supporting and managing this work).

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

#### Research Misconduct

- The University will review and revise its procedures and regulations for managing allegations of suspected research misconduct. Taking into account the expansion of definitions of research misconduct as well as expansion of responsibilities of all involved within research, as published in the [UUK Concordat \(2019\)](#). The University will use further guidance from UKRIO, in particular; *UKRIO's short guidance on misconduct* <https://ukrio.org/news/research-misconduct-a-short-guide/> (January 2023).

#### Human Tissue Authority (HTA) research

- A proposal to strengthen the governance structure around management of the HTA licence is being submitted to the University's senior governance bodies in February 2023, for their consideration and approval. An HTA Operational Group would be set up reporting and accountable to the HTA Governance and Oversight Committee to build on existing good practice and compliance at a local level directly with colleagues and students working under the licence.

Further embedding KE activity into the research ethics process for review

- The RKEO is continuing to consider whether processes for ethics review are suitable for all types of research activity including knowledge exchange. The RKEO Research Ethics and Integrity Officer and Collaboration Manager attended the National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) event on whether current institutional process for Cultural Knowledge Exchange Fit for Purpose.

Institutional Research Integrity Self- Assessment

- Although the University had planned to carry out an institutional research integrity self-assessment based on updated guidance from UKRIO, this work had not progressed due to additional work needed around the research ethics governance framework, including training and development in research ethics for reviewers and researchers. This work will be carried forward following review and revision of the misconduct procedures to occur in AY 2023-24.

### Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

Section 3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

- The University has clear processes in place for those with concerns about the integrity of research to raise these concerns:
  - [Staff research misconduct procedure \(PDF\)](#) (Approved Academic Council, 18 October 2017)
  - [Student research misconduct regulations \(PDF\)](#) (Approved Academic Council, 18 October 2017)
  - [Public Interest Disclosure Policy \('Whistleblowing' policy\)](#) (Approved Court of Governors 24 November 2021, Updated 22 December 2022]
- The University has robust policies and procedures in place relating to research integrity and research ethics. The key documents for use are the University's [Code of Research Good Practice](#) (September 2020) [Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research](#) (September 2020).
- A list of research related policies and strategies can be found here: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-strategies-and-policies>

Key Contacts:

<b>3B. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (containing research good practice and research misconduct information)</b>	<a href="https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity">https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity</a>
<b>3C. Named Persons contact details for receiving allegations of suspected research misconduct</b>	Name: Professor Andrew Linn, Pro Vice Chancellor Research  Email: <a href="mailto:A.Linn@westminster.ac.uk">A.Linn@westminster.ac.uk</a>  Name: Professor Janet Jones, Pro Vice Chancellor Knowledge Exchange  Email: <a href="mailto:J.Jones1@westminster.ac.uk">J.Jones1@westminster.ac.uk</a>
<b>3D. First Point of Contact for information and queries about the staff (colleague) misconduct procedure</b>	Department: Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) within the Student and Academic Services Department Email: <a href="mailto:research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk">research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk</a>
<b>3E. First Point of Contact for information and queries about the student misconduct regulations</b>	Department: Academic Standards Email: <a href="mailto:academicstandards@westminster.ac.uk">academicstandards@westminster.ac.uk</a>

The website provides information to easily allow confidential suspected research misconduct to be reported. We continue to signpost colleagues and students via the newly designed webpages, research newsletters, and doctoral training, as well as SOPs.

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

Below is a nil return for allegations and investigations (any stage) regarding staff (colleagues) or postgraduate research students (doctoral researchers):

Type of allegation	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
<b>Type of allegation</b>				
<b>Fabrication</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Falsification</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Plagiarism</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Other*</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

#### Further information

This statement was prepared by Huzma Kelly, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (REIO) on behalf of Research Committee (10 March 2023) and will be noted by Academic Council (29 March 2022 ).

More details can be sought from the REIO by email to [research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk)