University of Westminster Research Integrity Annual Narrative Statement, February 2025

Section 1: Key contact information	
1A. Name of organisation	University of Westminster
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/ industry/ independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher Education Institution (HEI)
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	Approved by Research Committee on 11/02/2025 Noted by Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee 26/02/2025 Noted by Court of Governors 12/03/2025 Noted by Academic Council on 02/04/2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Andrew Linn, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange) Email address: A.Linn@westminster.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: Huzma Kelly, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) Email address: H.Kelly01@westminster.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. This section described key 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.

Research Integrity Training module

The University is participating in the UKRIO Introduction to Research Integrity training module pilot. The limited spaces on the online module pilot provided per subscriber institution to the University, were prioritised amongst all those researchers who were in receipt of external research funding awarded to the University. This meant all principal investigators and co-investigators in this category, were advised to carry out the UKRIO Research Integrity training module, as a minimum requirement. In additional all Directors of Studies (lead supervisors) of doctoral research degree students were also requested to carry out the module. All University-level research-related committee members were added to the module participation, as well as the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO).

Research Integrity: Trusted Research and Innovation agenda

The University continues to build on its work around developing the [Trusted Research and Innovation area](#).

"Trusted research' is a research and innovation sector term for protecting the UK's intellectual property, sensitive research, people and infrastructure from potential theft, manipulation and exploitation, including as a result of interference by hostile actors.", [UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) website.](#)

RKEO colleagues (i.e. those managing and supporting research) are participating in various external events and training activities, including [The Higher Education Export Controls Association (HEECA)](#)/[Export Control Joint Unit (UK Govt)](#) Export Controls 2025 Workshop, [Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA)](#) Introduction to Trusted Research, and, Due Diligence Workshops. The RKEO is raising awareness amongst other colleagues involved in the research life cycle, including data security and data compliance teams, Safety, Health and Wellbeing teams, environment and communication teams through sharing information, guidelines and materials.

The Head of RKEO has presented an update report (January 2025) to the University's Global Engagement Strategy Board on the [Trusted Research and Innovation agenda](#) and International Research and Knowledge Exchange Partnerships.

Research Integrity conduct:

The University is preparing to review and revise its *[Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct (staff)](#)* which would also impact the review and revision of the current *[Research Student Misconduct Regulations](#)* (applying to doctoral students). The University welcomes the UKRIO's *Procedure for the Investigation of Research Misconduct* (published UKRIO, March 2023) and has been closely familiarising with this.

In line with requirements of best practice contained within the *[Concordat](#),* the University has produced a new *[Appeals Procedure](#)* to use alongside the *[Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)*, which allows for an appeal by any and all parties at any stage of the Procedure where there may be an outcome decision. The new *[Appeals Procedure](#)* closely follows UKRIO's template.

The University is continuing to follow developments in the sector, such as [UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI's) *survey and analysis; Review of Annual Statements on Research Integrity (2023),*](#) and UKRIO's publication following its own research and surveys; *[Barriers to Reporting and Investigating Research Misconduct' (UKRIO, published 2024](#)).* More recently the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (REIO) provided feedback on request to UKRIO advisors around the new 'discussion-paper' publication '*[De-stigmatising language in research misconduct investigations'](#)* (now published, November 2024).

The RKEO also participates in the [Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA)](#) special interest groups for subscriber members.

The REIO works with the Named Person and Alternative Named Person (as appropriate) around best practice in fair, equitable, transparent and timely *[procedures around research integrity conduct](#).* Seeking expert guidance and sharing best practice regularly with UKRIO expert advisors, and internal colleagues in Academic Standards (taught student academic misconduct team) as well as working with People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW) Team. The University actively uses the UKRIO subscriber portal for guidance, discussion points, training and development needs.

Universities UK (UUK) Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The University has played a pro-active role in the consultation carried out by UUK in preparation for UUK's review and revision of the *[Concordat](#)* (due to be published March 2025). This included participation in the London Higher group's own response to the UUK's consultation survey.

Code of Research Good Practice

The *[University's Code of Research Good Practice (published, September 2020)](#)* is undergoing review and revision starting this academic year, and is being informed by the sector and internal developments around research good practice (e.g. research integrity), including the anticipated new *[Concordat](#)*.

Research Ethics: In-house Introduction to Research Ethics Training module

The University has released its own ***Introduction to Research Ethics online training module***, as a minimum requirement for its research ethics reviewers, which will help provide

assurance to researchers, participants, funders and others, and also provide a level of consistency in approach across a multi-discipline and diverse institution. The module is seen as a refresher for more experienced reviewers. The module builds on the University's needs including around fair and equitable research participant selection and recruitment, as well as research activity in global or resource-poor settings. It builds on the recognition that research without human or animal participants still requires ethical considerations, and points to the environment, communities, historic and cultural sites and objects as needing protection as well. Reviewers' completion of this module will be monitored for completion, and feedback considered to build on future needs.

The module is an example of the University leading in the sector by creating an in-house online training tool in the area of research ethics.

Research Ethics Governance Framework, and new Research Ethics Guidance

The University Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (UREC) has produced a new Research Ethics Governance Framework, with associated Research Ethics Guidance (new and existing) Approved by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee in June 2024, to replace its *Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research (2020)*.

The Framework and Guidance is based on best practice from the *UKRIO/ARMA Research Ethics Support and Review guidance (published, 2020)*. It introduces further enhancements of the University's existing provision of research ethics policy, principles and procedures for research ethics review, and further resources and guides for researchers, to help them achieve favourable ethics opinion.

Research Governance and Ethics Virtual Research Environment (VRE) System

The University is undertaking a review of its research management and ethics and governance review module, in the online VRE system. The system assists researchers and reviewers, as well as those managing research ethics or research compliance and governance to manage, monitor and audit research. A stakeholder group is being organised by the RKEO. The University's current VRE system was one of the first in the UK to manage research ethics review through an automated and electronic work-flow system.

Open Research, Open Access, and Research Data Management (RDM)

In addition to updating guidance on its public Researcher Support webpages, the University's Research Environment and Scholarly Communications Team ran training sessions delivered via the Researcher Development Programme on the topic of Open Research (June 2024), and the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme on the topics of Open Access (May 2024) and Research Data Management (February 2025). The University continues to advocate for improved recognition of a more diverse range of research outputs and contributors via its practice research infrastructure work - see PRVoices dissemination activities.

The University Westminster Press has reviewed its guidance on Research Integrity as part of its review of content as part of its migration to a new platform.

Resources and Guidelines for the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research

The Associate Heads of College for Research and Knowledge Exchange, on behalf of Research Committee carried out research into resources and guidelines for AI and research. They held a series of Workshops open to all colleagues where they gathered information on the use of AI in research and the needs of researchers.

They used this information and other relevant guidance to inform the development of a resources and guidelines document to help researchers use AI responsibly.

The document is undergoing internal consultation with research colleagues and committees and is aimed at all University researchers to inform them of guidance in using AI for research purposes.

Training session: Human Tissue and Informed Consent for the acquisition of human tissue and cells for research purposes

The University's Human Tissue Authority Designated Individual (HTA DI) organised a compulsory training session for all colleagues working in the area of human tissue research in July 2024 facilitated by the King's College London (KCL) Head of Tissue Banking and an external research consultant. The session was well attended. Participation and attendance of the session is recorded by the HTA DI on behalf of the University's Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Operations Group via a certificate of completion, for monitoring and audit purposes in line with Human Tissue Authority (HTA) requirements for research.

2A. Description of current systems and culture.

> *This section describes how the University maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It includes information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines.*

Policies and systems

- The University has a suite of policies, strategies and procedures relating to research and knowledge exchange (KE) for use by colleagues and students in order 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

- Dedicated public facing webpages for Research Integrity (including misconduct), research ethics, research governance, researcher support and guidance, research data management and open access research, all provide an open and transparent source of the University's research policies and systems.

- The Virtual Research Environment (VRE) online research management system is a single portal for use by researchers and those managing research, covering areas

around research funding, research repository, research governance and ethics, and doctoral student degrees management.

- SharePoint and Egress for private and restricted systems to manage research governance and procedures or sensitive research.

Communications and engagement

- RKEO Newsletter across the University, public web-pages and internal communications site. Similar resource for Graduate School dedicated to doctoral research students and their supervisors.

- Blackboard internal information, resource and guidance sites from Early and Mid-Career Researchers, as well as Human Tissue research.

- College and School Research Leads providing local advice and support as well as regular updates from College and University-level research-related committees they are represented on.

Culture, development, and leadership

- Sessions with senior management leading and supporting research, i.e. Research Community Leads, Research Group and Centre Leads, Professors and Readers Network, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, run throughout the year across all sites.

- World Culture Cafes were held following good practice in the sector for all researchers and were well attended.

- Regular training, development and drop-in discussion sessions facilitated cross University for research, by College leaders, RKEO, and other professional colleagues. Key colleagues such as the RKEO Researcher Development Manager and their counterpart new role in the Graduate School, lead with senior management on the University's communications strategy for research and knowledge exchange.

- Researcher Development website and Hub with a range of resources available for researchers.

Monitoring and reporting

- The University's VRE System provides monitoring and reporting functions for research and knowledge exchange managers, including research ethics committee representatives.

- Dedicated confidential points of contact for reporting allegations of potential research misconduct or questionable research practice.

- University Sponsor authorisations processes in place to manage regulated research with audit, monitoring and reporting requirements, with dedicated support from RKEO Governance and Contracts colleagues.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

This section *provides an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.)*

Policies and systems

- The major review and revision of the University's existing *[Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research (2020)](#)* to produce a new high-level *Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Policy (to be published in the second semester of the academic year 2024/2025)*, which acts as a front-facing policy statement regarding the University's principles of research ethics, standards its sets, and expectations of its researchers and itself, as a research organisation producing high quality research.

- The *Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Policy (to be published [here](#)* is part of the new *Research Ethics Governance Framework* (*to be published [here](#)*) which is benchmarked to the best practice standards set out in the *[UKRIO/ARMA Research Ethics Review and Support Guidance for Research Organisations (2020)](#)*.

- An important aspect of the *Research Ethics Governance Framework* is to ensure that there are clear and high standards of research ethics review and a positive culture of research ethics. An ethics review should be independent, competent, facilitative, and transparent and accountable, this includes proportionate reviews. It brings together expectations of the University with those of funders, the government, and other good practice.

- The *Research Ethics Governance Framework* includes new standard operating procedures to ensure a better operating system for research ethics review, as well as one that is supportive of researchers and facilitative of research. The new *Framework* includes procedures for Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees (RECs) around: 'Service Delivery levels', 'Expedited (fast track)Review', 'Appeals Procedure', 'Guidance for Reviewers and an Indicative checklist'. The Guidance for Reviewers aims to provide consistency of review with clear expectations of what is in the remit of a REC, it also aims to make responding to a REC clearer for a researcher.

- The *Research Ethics Governance Framework* will sit alongside researcher guidance resources (see below) and be available to all researchers to help them prepare for the ethics review of their research, by providing them with clear parameters and areas considered by an ethics review body, to help them succeed in securing a

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favourable ethical opinion and carry out their work ethically.

Communications and engagement

- The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange has been carrying out a number of visits to all sites for all researchers to come and speak about any research-related topics, including any advice or support the researchers may need from the University.

- The RKEO provide a researcher induction at the University level to ensure new researchers reach the guidance, policies, and provisions of support they need to conduct high quality research.

Culture, development and leadership

- After the representation at university executive level by the creation of and, appointment to, a dedicated Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange role, occurred last year, which included bringing together of research and knowledge exchange into one strategy: Research Strategy and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. The University has further recognised the need for representation of research at the College Leadership level, via creation of the Associate Heads of College roles, for Research and Knowledge Exchange. This is in line with existing institutional leadership roles at the College level, for Education and External Relations.

- The University has continued to invest in the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO). This has involved the creation of a Senior Research Excellence and Governance Manager post (now recruited since November 2024) which is dedicated resource at a senior level. The RKEO has also recruited and appointed a Senior Contracts Manager. In addition, there will be support at College-level from the RKEO in the form of new College Research Managers (now recruited since February 2025). These colleagues will further enhance the provision of information and support from the University to local research managers and leaders.

- The University's Graduate School and Graduate School Office now form part of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange's team and sit alongside the RKEO hereby enhancing the cross working between them to enhance the University's research support provision across all levels of research.

- The Graduate School Office has a new senior role of a Doctoral Researcher Development Manager dedicated to research student and supervisor development and training.

- The new online training modules help researchers understand ethical and good practice values in research and KE, and the principles and standards of the University, through the Introduction to Research Ethics (in-house) and the Introduction to Research Integrity (UKRIO) modules, launched in June 2024 and May 2024 respectively.

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- The new *Research Ethics Guidance (to be published [here](#))* is designed to complement the Research Ethics Governance Framework) and builds on the University's needs around applying research ethics considerations to all disciplines, by researchers at all levels.

- A range of guidance in various mediums (such as online training modules, guidance notes, web-pages) have been developed to enhance existing provisions for researchers. This includes participant information and consent guidance notes, independent participant complaints point of contact and procedure, resources around understanding ethical implications of research with humans.

- The University has developed additional guidance, to complement existing video resources around ethics, research data management, open access, already available on the [Hub](#). This includes easy access to compliance and governance teams' resources around safety, health and wellbeing, research fieldwork risk assessment and insurance requirements.

Monitoring and reporting

- A secure and restricted system for recording any allegations of research misconduct relating to research colleagues (staff) has been created.

- The University continues to report updates in line with regulatory requirements to the Health Research Authority, Research Tissue Banks, Human Tissue Authority, funders, collaborators and others as may be legally or contractually required. This is primarily managed through the University Sponsor, via the Head of RKEO.

- The University continues to guide its doctoral research students that they can report any suspected allegations of research misconduct to an independent intermediary, who would progress this to the Named Person or Alternative Named Person.

- The University's [Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Operations Group](#) led by the University's Human Tissue Authority Designated Individual (HTA DI) has conducted lab and sample level audits using the standards required of the Human Tissue Authority. Any corrective and preventative actions will be noted and managed by the HTA DI and Group. Progress will be reported to the [University's HTA Governance and Oversight Committee](#).

- The University's [HTA Governance and Oversight Committee](#) now reports directly to the [University Executive Board](#), which provides it with a means to seek support and resources from the University's highest governance body. It will continue to provide Minutes of its meetings to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee for information.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This section includes a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues)

Policies and systems

- The University plans to review its online research management system, the Virtual Research Environment (VRE). Stakeholder groups will be set up to progress this, led by the RKEO new post of the Research Information and Systems Manager.

- Trusted Research needs including possible policies and procedures, and guidance for researchers are being considered through the training and development of RKEO and others managing research.

- The University's public-facing *Research Integrity webpage* which includes a range of Research Integrity (including research misconduct) policies, will be reviewed and revised.

- The University's public facing *Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics webpage* is undergoing review and revision, and the new *Research Ethics Governance Framework* and *Research Ethics Guidance* will be easily accessible to all researchers, reviewers, funders, collaborators, participants and the public through this *webpage*.

- The following policies will be under review in the next period, Code of Research Practice, and Research Misconduct Procedures.

Communications and engagement

- Following the EDI recommendations and creation of the EDI sub-committee of University Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee, the previously committed plan to gain the Athena Swan charter marks is progressing, led by the Associate Head of College (Liberal Arts and Sciences) for Research and Knowledge Exchange and the Researcher Development Manager (RKEO).

Culture, development and leadership

- Safeguarding in research developments are being undertaken by RKEO, UREC and the University's Safeguarding team.

- RKEO/Graduate School working towards enhanced supervisor training and development in area of research integrity and research ethics.

- *UREC Chair's Research Ethics Plans:* to introduce further autonomy of researchers in applying ethical principles, reflective diaries and streamlining of process.

- Associate Head of College (Liberal Arts and Sciences) for Research and Knowledge Exchange includes the research culture portfolio in their remit. They will work with colleagues in the University and beyond to lead on the University's research culture

strategy.

- The Associate Head of College (Digital, Design and Creative Industries) will have the portfolio of Researcher Development in their remit, they will work with the Researcher Development Managers and other key research colleagues.

- The Associate Head of College (Westminster Business School) will have the portfolio of Research Impact in their remit, they will work with Research Excellence, Knowledge Exchange, and other key research colleagues.

Monitoring and reporting

- The University plans to further publicise its mechanisms for reporting allegations of potential research misconduct, or questionable research practices via enhanced communication and support going forward. The University will be guided by expertise from UKRIO and the UKRIO publications, as well as the forthcoming *UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (due to be published March 2025).*

- Work will be ongoing to develop systems to ensure that all research work is reported internally and externally as may be required to allow audit, monitoring and reporting.

Section 3. Addressing Research misconduct

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

The University has clear and public processes in place for those with concerns about the integrity of research to raise these concerns in a confidential manner:

- **[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 are the University's *Code of Research Good Practice* (September 2020) *Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research* (September 2020) – the latter to be replaced by the new *Research and Knowledge Exchange Policy* (as part of the new *Research Ethics Governance Framework*, to be published here soon).

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:

3B. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (containing research good practice and research misconduct information)	https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance/research-integrity
3C. Named Person contact details for receiving allegations of suspected research misconduct	Name: Professor Andrew Linn, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange) Email: A.Linn@westminster.ac.uk
3C.i. Alternative Named Person contact details for receiving allegations of suspected research misconduct	Name: Professor Christos Kalantaridis, Pro Vice Chancellor (Teaching Excellence and Student Experience) and Head of College: Westminster Business School Email: C.Kalantaridis@westminster.ac.uk

3D. First Point of Contact for information and queries about the staff (colleague) misconduct procedure	Department: Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) Email: research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk
3E. First Point of Contact for information and queries about the student misconduct regulations	Department: Academic Standards (Academic Registrar's Department) Email: academicstandards@westminster.ac.uk

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.

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). **Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted:***

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	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Falsification	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Plagiarism	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*

Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Other*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total:	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Further information

This statement was prepared by Huzma Kelly, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (REIO) on behalf of Research Committee (11 February 2025) and was noted by the University's supreme governing body: the Court of Governors on 12 March 2025.

More details can be sought from the REIO by email to research-knowledge-exchange-office@westminster.ac.uk