Annual Statement on Research Integrity - 2022

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response	
1A. Name of organisation	Cranfield University	
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)	March 2023	
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	[Research ethics and integrity (cranfield.ac.uk)](cranfield.ac.uk)	
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Leon Terry	
	Email address: researchoffice@cranfield.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: Alicen Nickson	
	Email address: alicen.nickson@cranfield.ac.uk	

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

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include 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. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- *Policies and systems*

  The University has specific policies regarding ethics and integrity as well as a Process for implementing and monitoring research integrity, supported by Senate Handbooks for staff and students. Ethics and integrity related polices are reviewed on an annual basis. The University has a single online ethics system which is used across the University by staff and students undertaking research.

- *Communications and engagement*

  Regular communications to staff and students are undertaken reminding them of the University's requirement that all research must be submitted for ethical review prior to commencement of data collection. Online training courses on ethics and integrity and research data management are available for all staff and students.

- *Culture, development and leadership*

  The University aims to promote a positive research culture where all research is undertaken with integrity including the planning and conduct of research, the recording and reporting of results and the dissemination, application and exploitation of findings. Through the University's Ethics Committee and Research Committee policies are reviewed annually to ensure they remain current and fit for purpose.

  The new Research and Innovation Strategy sets out to encourage a research culture that promotes the articulation of intellectual contribution for useful application. This includes prioritising the integrity of our research and associated

data and will be addressed through the ongoing implementation of the new Strategy for 2022-2027.

- *Monitoring and reporting*

The University's Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) report bi-annually to Senate and provide an annual report to Council.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide 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.

In 2022 the University sought to attract new external members to the University's Ethics Committee and were successful in appointing three new external members.

The University's Ethics Committee have established a sub-committee who are undertaking a review of current processes and practices using the UKRIO Self-Assessment tool for the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The working group anticipate there will be a number of recommendations following completion of the self-assessment which will be taken forward to the University's Ethics Committee for consideration and implementation.

The University, working with the Chair of CUREC, have commenced a data integrity project which will involve a review of current practice, policies, processes and training. A project scope is in the early stages of development.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include 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.

Previous plans

1. CURES support will be implementing an auditing process that will include all risk levels (carried over from 2021). Due to reduced resource, this has not moved forward in 2022 but will now be prioritised in the first quarter of 2023.

2. Introduce a process enabling Masters' students to submit evidence of ethical approval with their thesis submission (carried over from 2021). In January 2023 work commenced on updating the Masters' students thesis hand-in form to enable them to provide evidence of ethical approval with their thesis submission. Amendments are also being proposed for the thesis template to have include a placeholder to insert evidence of ethical approval.

3. Develop more online video tutorials, particularly for Masters' students undertaking group and individual research projects (carried over from 2021). A short video presentation covering ethical approval for group projects for students has been developed and is starting to be shared with course teams.

4. Create new web content to better communicate Cranfield's approach to research ethics and integrity externally (ongoing).

5. Develop more detailed training for ethics reviewers (carried over from 2021 - ongoing).

6. Undertake a review of current CUREC membership to reflect the University's EDI ambitions which will involve consultation with the various staff networks at Cranfield. Following the publication of a job advert, three new external members of CUREC were appointed to the committee in 2022, expanding the diversity of the committee.

7. A review of the process relating to MODREC will be undertaken to determine if any changes are required. Updates to the MOD's JSP536 Governance of Research Involving Human Participants" has led to an ongoing review of how students should engage with the process.

8. Using the UKRIO Self-assessment tool for the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, CUREC have agreed to establish a working group to undertake an assessment which is designed to help institutions identify areas of research practices, policies and culture that may need revision in

order to comply with the Concordat. Following an initial meeting, staff are now working through the tool to undertake an initial assessment. This will be used to inform our ongoing develops.

9. Introduce a process to enable researchers to make amendments to applications where research projects may have changed following ethical approval. Where researchers project titles change, they will be able to add a title amendment to their application shortly. However, if the research involves changes more detailed changes it was subsequently decided they should submit a new application.

10. Implement a robust process to ensure that when changes to supervision teams happen, that all relevant documentation relating to a researchers progress is shared with the new team, which will include evidence of ethical approval. A process has been agreed by Research Committee and will be included in the next update to the Managing Research Students Handbook.

2D. Case study on good practice (==optional==)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

[Please insert response]

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

Please provide:

- a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).

- information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).

- anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

The University has in place a number of policies and procedures to deal with allegations of misconduct which are subject to annual review. In 2022 the University commissioned an external consultant to undertake a review of its research related policies and are now working through a number of recommendations.

The University Research Committee has made a recommendation to make research integrity and ethics training mandatory for all staff and students undertaking research. This recommendation will be taken to the University Executive for ratification and implemented for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year (subject to approval).

During 2022, there were two separate reported allegations of academic misconduct. Both allegations were investigated by two different Research Academic Misconduct Review Groups which resulted in the following

recommendations:

(1) The Quality Assurance/Quality Control policy and procedures used across the university are urgently reviewed and updated where appropriate to provide a more robust and transparent process for data collection and management. Followed by a wider review for all Schools.

Action: This has led to the commencement of a data integrity project to assess data management processes and practice across the University.

(2) The training and support provided by the university concerning appropriate data collection and management is reviewed including advice on ensuring effective communication between all parties involved in a specific piece of research.

Action: As part of the data integrity project, training, support and communications will be reviewed.

(3) A review is undertaken to ensure that all researchers are aware of and clear on the policy relating to Authorship including contributions and co-authorship.

Action: Discussions have commenced with Directors of Research to understand how the policy is enacted within their respective school. As part of the Excellence in Scholarship initiative, the policy will be promoted during feedback sessions which will involve all research staff.

(4) Changes are made to the Permission to Publish Policy to make it explicit that in the event that a researcher is included as an author on a publication without their knowledge, they should submit a post-hoc permission to publish on discovery.

Action: Minor changes are being looked at in light of issues raised during the misconduct review.

(5) Additional training on Export Control and Trusted Research

Action: The University has recently appointed a full time Security Commercial Director. Training on Export Control and Trusted Research has been delivered periodically but with a dedicated member of staff a review of training will be undertaken.

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

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

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	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
*Other**				
Total:	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**

*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.
[Please insert response if applicable]