

**Nottingham Trent University**  
**Annual Statement on Research Integrity, 2017/18**

**A) Overview**

NTU continues to be a strong advocate of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the commitments that underpin it. The University will engage fully in the nationwide review of the Concordat, which is scheduled to take place in the 2018/19 academic year.

While the importance of the Concordat is recognised, in particular its usefulness in helping frame research integrity matters, NTU retains its belief that research integrity goes much further and deeper than compliance with a single document. The University recognises that the highest standards of research integrity form a key component of a thriving institutional research culture. In line with this understanding, the University Research Committee commissioned an institutional review of research integrity. The review straddled two academic years of 2017/18 and 2018/19. A synopsis of the outcomes of the review is included in this statement, which is the fifth consecutive year that NTU has published such a publically available document.

**B) Review of institutional policies**

A review of relevant institutional research integrity policies was included in the institutional review of research integrity, detailed below.

**C) Institutional Review of Research Integrity**

In March 2018 the University Research Committee commissioned an enhanced institutional review of the management of research integrity at NTU. The review was split into two discrete parts (details below), with each chaired by a member of the University professoriate.

- Institutional policies and procedures supporting research integrity
- Management of research ethics oversight and review processes

Chairs of each of the above were selected for their knowledge of research integrity matters as well as independence from current structures and systems. Findings from the review, undertaken between March-November 2018, were presented to and adopted by the University Research Committee in December 2018. A summary of the key findings is provided below.

*Advocacy and Discoverability*

A finding common to both parts of the review coalesced around discoverability and advocacy of existing research integrity policies, procedures, structures and resources. Established arrangements to support research integrity were, in general, found to be apt. Discoverability and understanding of relevant support information for researchers was identified as an area that would benefit from enhancement. To that end, the review recommended that a programme of advocacy activities be undertaken to improve understanding and awareness of research integrity policies, procedures, structures and resources. Additionally, relevant sections of the NTU website and intranet should be updated to reflect the full breadth of available research integrity resources, guidance, structures and requirements.

*Institutional policies and procedures supporting research integrity*

While policies and procedures supporting research integrity were found to be broadly appropriate to underpin a rigorous culture of research integrity, a number of enhancements were identified. A summary of these are noted below.

- Provision of enhanced guidance and clarity on publishing, research data management and development of projects seeking external sources of funding in the Code of Practice for Research.
- Research integrity to assume greater prominence in staff induction programmes.
- Development of additional resources to support collaborative research projects and managing conflicts of interest in research.
- Enhancing systems of auditing research projects.

#### *Management of research ethics oversight and review processes*

- The establishment of a University Research Integrity Committee, reporting to the University Research Committee, to provide greater institutional oversight and cohesion of research integrity matters.
- Refinement of Research Ethics Committee structures, particularly in the College of Science and Technology.
- Enhancing the provision of research integrity training, in particular for supervisors of Doctoral students.
- Clarifying internal guidance on applications submitted to external research ethics committees.

Enhancements to the University's research integrity culture, as identified in the review, will be overseen by the newly established University Research Integrity Committee. The University Research Committee will be kept informed of developments through regular reporting.

#### **D) Inclusion of relevant external requirements and guidance into institutional or local process**

No external requirements were incorporated during the 2017/18 year.

#### **E) Dissemination and awareness-raising activities that have been undertaken, including any training or education provision and the audiences that have been reached**

Guidance provided by individual research ethics committees is continually updated to maintain currency. Training sessions at a local level are provided to meet demand. Postgraduate research students are provided with appropriate training upon enrolment at the University.

#### **F) Description of internal auditing and monitoring processes, including information on any revisions or developments, plus summary data**

See recommendation on auditing in section C.

Annual summary reports from numerous research ethics committees will be presented to the University Research Committee. In the future oversight will be maintained and developed by the University Research Integrity Committee.

#### **G) Summary of outcomes of any external inspections/audits**

No significant outcomes were reported during the 2017/18 academic year.

#### **H) Research Misconduct**

NTU is committed to a policy of openness on research misconduct. On the rare occasions where those acting under the auspices of NTU, whether staff or students, are alleged to have committed research misconduct these allegations are rigorously investigated. Where such allegations have been upheld NTU will publish anonymised top-level information on these cases, in addition to any resulting policy or procedural enhancements.

- PGR Student Research Misconduct

Allegations of research misconduct are investigated under the Procedure for Investigating Alleged Research Misconduct, as detailed in the NTU Quality Handbook. The procedure applies to all postgraduate research students undertaking a research degree (MPhil, MProf, PhD and Professional Doctorate courses).

Over the period August 2017-July 2018 one case was considered under the Procedure for Investigating Alleged Research Misconduct. The case concerned an alleged collection of research data after an application to the relevant research ethics committee had been made, but before approval had been granted. The allegation was investigated thoroughly and it was determined that while there was no deliberate intention to deceive on the part of the researcher, the allegation did have substance to it. Consequently, the data collected in the period before ethical approval was obtained was removed from the study and destroyed. Additionally, the researcher was required to undertake additional research integrity training to reiterate key principles of research ethics and institutional requirements on researchers.

- Staff Research Misconduct

Allegations of staff misconduct are investigated under the NTU Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, which is maintained and subjected to annual review and update by Corporate HR.

Over the period August 2017-July 2018 no cases were considered under the NTU Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.