



Nottingham Trent
University

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2024/25

Introduction

This is the twelfth Annual Statement on Research Integrity produced by Nottingham Trent University (NTU). It covers the academic year of 2024/25.

NTU maintains its strong advocacy of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the commitments that underpin it and is proactively responding to the revised Concordat issued in April 2025. The University requires that all staff, visiting staff and doctoral candidates involved in research either at or in the name of NTU, irrespective of the discipline/field of research, adhere at all times to the institutional Code of Practice for Research.

The Annual Statement for 2024/25 is provided on the template developed by the UK Research Integrity Office with the Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group.

1. Commitment 1: Key contact information

Name of organisation	Nottingham Trent University
Type of organisation	Higher Education Institution
Date statement approved by governing body	University Open Research and Research Integrity Committee (11/09/2025) University Research and Innovation Committee (25/09/2025)
Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.ntu.ac.uk/research/research-and-impact/research-integrity
Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Richard Emes, Pro Vice-Chancellor – Research & International
	Email address: Richard.emes@ntu.ac.uk

Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Anton Muszanskyj, Head of Research Governance & Policy
	Email address: anton.muszanskyj@ntu.ac.uk

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

2A. Description of current systems and culture

- Policies and systems

Two key documents underpin NTU's system and culture of research integrity and ethics. These are:

1. The Code of Practice for Research, available on [NTU's website](#). The Code is applicable to all staff, visiting staff and doctoral candidates involved in research in the name of the University, with the exception of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, irrespective of the discipline or field of research. It set out the principles of practice and conduct by which the University expects research to be carried out either at or in the name of NTU and covers a range of subjects including personal and professional research integrity, research funding, research data, research authorship, training and development and research misconduct. The Code is highlighted in the researcher induction programme for new researchers at NTU. It is subject to regular review and update and was last updated in September 2025 to reflect the University's position on freedom of speech.
2. Research Ethics Policy and Procedure, also available on [NTU's website](#). The Policy and Procedure applies to all individuals conducting research within or on behalf of the University. The intention of the Policy and Procedure is to provide an overarching framework of principles designed to promote a quality research culture, clarify internal procedures and structures relating to research ethics, and mandate that all research projects carried out within or in the name of NTU involving primary research with human beings should be subject to ethical review. As with the Code of Practice for Research, it is highlighted in the researcher induction programme for new researchers at NTU. It is subject to regular review and update and was updated twice in 2025, in January to clarify the University's position on ethical review of service evaluation and in September to reflect the University's position on freedom of speech.

The University has robust procedures in place to investigate instances of unacceptable behaviour in the conduct of research and also operates a Whistle-Blowing Policy. Please see section 3 for further details.

The University operates a Research Data Management Policy that sets out expectations around, and support for, research data management throughout the data lifecycle. It is an expectation that every research project has a data management plan. The Library-based Open Research Team provides extensive support to researchers in completing data management plans. Data management plans must be included as part of research ethics applications submitted to all research ethics committees (RECs) and may also be required for projects that do not require ethical review including as part of project approval for all doctoral candidates.

The University conducts research with animals and is a signatory of the Concordat for Openness in Animal Research. The Concordat informs the University's standard and governance and is NTU's pledge of working towards a more transparent and engaged approach to animal research. The University also promote the use of the [Animal Research: Reporting in Vivo Experiments \(ARRIVE\)](#) guidelines. This is a checklist for researchers designed to improve the quality, reliability and reproducibility of their published research.

- Communications and engagement

The Doctoral School runs workshops in the Project Approval series for new starters; the first of these provides guidance to doctoral candidates on what ethical research looks like, how to consider ethical dimensions of research in projects and what it means to do rigorous research, while the second focuses on completing project approval and a further review of research ethics and data management. These workshops tie in with workshops offered by the Open Research Team on data management and creating a data management plan. Ethical issues are also raised and considered in various workshops in the Research Methods and Analysis series, linked to different methodological approaches for example in relation to participatory research, ethnographic research or research with vulnerable people. Plagiarism, falsification and fabrication are also covered in training and development sessions provided to doctoral candidates.

The NTU Researcher Induction and the NTU Research Induction Checklist, overseen by the Researcher Development Team, highlight researcher responsibilities for research conducted at NTU. The Individual Research Plan and Research Development Roadmap reinforce researcher responsibilities, including research integrity (open research). Together, they ensure researchers are familiar with specific NTU policy and procedure: the Code of Practice for Research, Research Ethics Policy and Procedure, Annual Statements and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, NTU Publication and Research Data Management policies and developments aligned with the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment. This provides a foundation for NTU research that fosters research integrity and promotes a positive research culture in practice.

The Research Support SharePoint site acts as a home and signpost for research integrity-related guidance and resources, including the Code of Practice for

Research Ethics Policy and Procedure. The site was refreshed and content on new areas added as part of an institutional project focused on improving support for researchers during the 2024/5 academic year, on which more details are included in Section 2B. All NTU staff and doctoral candidates have access to the SharePoint site.

The Research Newsletter, distributed on a monthly basis, and direct news alerts are both mechanisms utilised to communicate with researchers updates on research integrity-related matters. NTU's Open Research Week 2025, a spotlight on research integrity and open research, new resource on safeguarding in the context of research, requirements on securing consent from children and young people in research projects, the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, revised Concordat for Research Integrity and requirements for ethical review of studies using only secondary data were all communicated to researchers through the newsletter and/or direct news alerts.

The Thrive professional development platform is used to house training and development resource. The Researcher Development Team are responsible for creating and commissioning research-focused content for Thrive. All NTU members of staff have access to the platform.

Training on specific matters of research ethics and integrity are provided as and when required at local level, often orchestrated by RECs.

The NTU Researcher Network is an inclusive network for researchers and has now completed its second year of operation. It includes researchers across the full range of career stages, from Recognised Researcher to Established Researcher and Leading Researcher. Workshops on a range of areas were held in 2024/25. Narrative CV Writing Workshops enabled researchers to explore and demonstrate responsible researcher practices under different headings. Under contributions to knowledge, researchers highlight ethical design, open research, and data management; under development of others, they evidence mentoring or training on integrity and reproducibility; under contributions to the community, researchers cover roles in ethics committees or reproducibility networks; and under broader society, showcase awareness of ethical and societal responsibilities in impact. Integrity is therefore presented through examples of behaviours and contributions that show transparency, responsibility, and ethical leadership in research.

The University Research & Innovation Committee (UR&IC) has overall responsibility for research integrity at NTU. It has delegated powers to the University Open Research and Research Integrity Committee (UORRIC) to provide strategic oversight and leadership of research integrity and the ecosystem which supports it. Further details on the terms of reference and membership of UR&IC are available on the University's [Research Governance web pages](#). Corresponding information on UORRIC is available on the University's [Research Integrity web pages](#).

The post of Director of Research Culture and Environment heads the Department of Research Culture and Environment and chairs the University's Research Culture and Environment Group, which is made up of staff from different departments and which

has responsibility for delivering on the research culture and environment workstream of the University's Strategic Plan. The research culture and environment work is complemented by compliance and regulatory matters supported by the Research Strategy and Operations Department, headed by the Director of Research Strategy and Operations. The activities supported by these two departments combine to create an environment and culture underpinned by strong principles of research integrity which are then born out in research practice.

- Monitoring and reporting

The University requires that each REC reporting into UORRIC generates an annual report based on a standardised template. The reports contain details on the number of applications received and the outcome of reviews undertaken, as well as summary information on key developments in the REC relating to training, guidance and processes. Through the reports, institutional monitoring of research ethics is undertaken, and allows for points of challenge or query to be raised.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

One of the key mechanisms through which the University provides guidance to researchers on matters of integrity is through the issuance of Position Notes. Position Notes on the following topics were produced or updated in the 2024/25 academic year:

- Consent from Children and Young People in Research: This Note was produced to provide guidance on obtaining consent and assent from children and young people, as well as their parents and guardians, in the context of research. It sets out the standard expectations as well as circumstances in which it might be acceptable for these expectations not to be met.
- Requirements on ethical review of studies using only secondary data: This Note was created to provide additional definition on what constitutes secondary data and guidance on when research projects using only secondary data should be submitted for ethical review by a Research Ethics Committee. This was produced in response to internal conversations on the use of institutional data in projects which traversed service evaluation and into research.

The University has held a Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Licence since October 2022. The Licence is overseen by the University HTA Steering Group, which has a dotted line to the Human Invasive Research Ethics Committee based in NTU's School of Science and Technology. Licence information is displayed in all locations where human tissue is stored. Mandatory two-hour training for those wishing to work under the License continues to be delivered, while a quarterly system of internal audit has been operationalised.

As of August 2025, over 240 researchers have now received the mandatory HTA training and refresher training for those who completed the mandatory training in 2022. Mandatory training is now offered on a monthly basis, the refresher training

continues to be offered four times a year and sessions for small groups can also be arranged outside of these scheduled sessions should the need arise.

A key development during the 2024/25 academic year was the formation of a Research and Innovation Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Working Group. Whilst safeguarding measures across the institution are well established, the intention of the Working Group is to ensure that an effective framework is in place for managing safeguarding as it relates to research and innovation. The Working Group met twice in 2024/25 and oversaw the creation of safeguarding-related guidance for researchers, providing detail on the definition of safeguarding, how safeguarding relates to research and how it can be managed. It also clarifies how to check whether a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks required and the correct level of check.

Following extensive discussion at the University Open Research and Research Integrity Committee, guidance for Research Ethics Committee reviewers was created and disseminated to Research Ethics Committees across the institution. The guidance had been created to set parameters for reviewers rather than as a blueprint for a review process. It makes clear that reviewers should be mindful of adopting a facilitatory approach to the review process, that there should be no assumption, one way or the other, as to whether the project will receive favourable ethical opinion at the commencement of the review process, and that comments and suggestions regarding aspects of research design can be made but must not interfere in the decision-making process regarding ethical dimensions of the project.

A mapping exercise has been completed against the 16 indicators of research integrity issued by the UK Committee on Research Integrity. While the overall picture was positive, 10 actions to foster further alignment with the indicators were agreed and prioritised in order of need, with the indicators on risk management and monitoring and reporting on research integrity training requiring particular attention.

Following the agreement of the actions, research integrity has now been recognised within the University's risk profile and levels of engagement with and interest in research integrity training have been captured through the 2025 Culture, Employment and Development of Academic Researchers Survey (CEDARS) and Postgraduate Research Environment Survey (PRES). Data from CEDARS showed 47% of respondents had completed research integrity training and a further 36% would like to, giving an overall engagement and interest rate of 84%. Data from PRES relayed a similar picture, with 56% definitely agreeing that their understanding of research integrity had improved and 35% mostly agreeing, leading to an overall understanding rate of 91%. Expanded training will be a focus of activity in the next academic year, with more detail provided in Section 2C.

An approach to auditing applications given favourable opinion by RECs in operation across the University was piloted during the academic year. The pilot selected 25 projects, both those which were in progress and which had concluded, from five different RECs and asked them to complete a short self-assessment. No issues were identified through the audit, and the option to repeat the process will be considered by the University Open Research and Research Integrity Committee.

Participant information sheet and consent form templates have been created and deposited on the ethics section of the University's Research Support SharePoint site. These adaptable templates were produced for use by researchers who were collecting or handling personal data. The intention is to develop examples of information sheets to show how the template can be adapted in various scenarios.

A mapping exercise was conducted against the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity to allow for an understanding to emerge of any steps the University may need to take to ensure full alignment. The exercise found that priority areas for action around better internal promotion of the Concordat, including the updated version from April 2025, and development of an approach to allow for the reporting of honest errors in research. The former has been addressed through the addition of text to the University's Research Support SharePoint site and the latter is under development, with a formal process to be presented in the next academic year. See Section 2C for more details.

The NTU Open Research Week and Open Research Awards were held for the second time in 2025. Open Research Week ran in early March 2025 and built on the success of the previous year, offering an expanded array of sessions co-delivered by academics, professional service colleagues, and external Open Research practitioners. Overall, the week saw 534 individual session registrations with session attendance totalling 239, resulting in an increase in attendance of over 740% from Open Research Week 2024.

The NTU Research Awards 2025 saw four projects based in three of NTU's academic schools receive full awards. A further seven projects based in five of NTU's academic schools received special commendations, providing evidence that Open Research practices are both gaining traction and having genuine impact across academic multiple disciplines.

Guidance for lone working in research has been developed and is in the final stages of revision before issuance next academic year. The need for this specific guidance arose from a doctoral project which required researchers to enter people's homes to collect data. While some guidance on lone working exists, this focuses more on working 'out of hours' in an office than lone working 'in the field'.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Developments that the University has supported over the last twelve months span a broad range of areas and activities, including continued strong support for the Open Research agenda. NTU has quickly and proactively engaged with the changing external landscape, in particular through conducting mapping exercises and identifying priority areas of action following the publication of the 16 indicators of research integrity by the UK Committee on Research Integrity and the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Actions flowing from these either have or will enhance the University's research integrity environment. The focus on safeguarding in the context of research has provided a single resource and guidance platform for researchers who need to consider safeguarding in the context of their research. More detail on this is included in Section 2D. Open Research has

continued to be a key priority and engagement has grown considerably since the previous academic year, evidenced by the huge increase in attendance at Open Research Week 2025 and figures from CEDARS which showed that 79% of respondents had or would like to undertake training on Open Research, and that of the Open Research Practices listed in the survey, only 17% of respondents had not engaged with any within the last twelve months.

One slight disappointment in 2024/25 was the delay to the implementation of an open data repository. This remains a priority for the University, though its delivery timeline has been revised and is now targeted for launch in Spring 2026.

The picture emerging on research integrity through responses to PRES and CEDARS provides some assurance that the institutional research environment is underpinned by a strong understanding of and commitment to principles of research integrity. That being said, this cannot be taken for granted and the below actions will be progressed during the 2025/26 academic year.

- Rollout of the introduction to research integrity training recently produced by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), of which NTU is a long-standing subscriber. This will target researchers across the institution and at different career stages, from postgraduate researchers to professors.
- Finalisation of dissemination of guidance on lone working in research.
- Running the third iteration of the Open Research Awards and Open Research Week in 2026.
- Development of guidance on use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research.
- Development of a position and process on reporting of honest mistakes in research and improvement of mechanisms to report instances of research misconduct.

2D. Case study on good practice

In January 2025, the Research and Innovation Safeguarding Working Group was formed. This was in response to a central decision to ensure such Working Groups were in operation for every area of institutional activity where safeguarding issues may arise. At its first meeting the Working Group, led by the Chair of the University Open Research and Research Integrity Committee, agreed its terms of reference and membership and set about producing local guidance to contextualise safeguarding within research. The guidance was iterated until the final version was agreed, and this now sits on a central repository containing all local guidance.

The guidance produced was used as the basis for the creation of a SharePoint site, launched in mid-March 2025 and containing information on safeguarding and how it might be encountered and mitigated within research. Specifically, the site covers:

1. Definitions of children and adults at risk of harm
2. How safeguarding relates to research
3. Safeguarding risks in research
4. Measures in place and options available for researchers to ensure that safeguarding issues are appropriately considered in the context of research

5. How and when to report safeguarding concerns

A key early learning from the first two meetings of the Working Group was that very little new activity was required to address gaps in the space of safeguarding in the context of research. Discussions with key stakeholders, including researchers and those with expertise in safeguarding, revealed that the most pressing matter was, firstly, access to relevant information, for example on applying for DBS checks. This was followed by knowledge of safeguarding issues and how they might manifest in the context of research. These were both addressed through the development and dissemination of the SharePoint site. The site used a hub and spoke model to point to other parts of the University's intranet or internet to ensure currency and accuracy of information and was promoted via the institutional Research Newsletter.

This has been included as an example of good practice because it exemplifies what can be achieved without huge resource, both human and financial, simply by bringing together colleagues with a relevant interest in a subject and who are willing to work collegially to improve an environment.

3. Addressing research misconduct

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

The University has robust procedures in place to investigate instances of unacceptable behaviour in the conduct of research. For staff undertaking research at, or in the name of the University, any allegations of research misconduct are dealt with through the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. For research students undertaking research in the name of University, allegations of misconduct are dealt with through the [University's Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#) (Section 17D: University Procedure for Investigating Alleged Research Misconduct) while for taught students at the University, allegations relating to research misconduct are dealt through the [University's Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#) (Section 17C: Academic Irregularities).

The University operates a Whistle-Blowing (Public Interest Policy) which provides a means for genuine concerns around possible wrongdoing to be raised and a transparent and confidential process for dealing with those concerns. The University advertises a contact name and address to whom any enquiries relating to research integrity, including those of confidential nature, can be addressed. The individual listed as the contact has received several communications over multiple years concerning allegations of questionable research practice and misconduct, providing assurance that the reporting route does function.

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

There were no instances of potential research misconduct that were investigated in the 2024/25 academic year. One instance of misconduct relating to potential fabrication and misrepresentation was received. This relates to a co-authored output

which is close to twenty years old. The NTU authors have long since left, and the allegation is being reviewed by an institution of one of the other authors. NTU will work with the other institution conducting the investigation and take appropriate steps based on the outcome.

While the zero return below is an accurate reflection of the instances of misconduct formally investigated, the University recognises that it is unlikely to represent the number of actual instances of alleged or actual research misconduct or questionable practice. While many of these may be appropriately dealt with locally and at an early stage, i.e. before they have been put into practice and had any impact, the University will develop a position and process on reporting of honest mistakes in research and will seek to improve mechanisms to report instances of research misconduct.

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 (e.g. 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	0	0	0	0

received in a single allegation)				
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0