Annual research integrity statement template

2024

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity **sets out five fundamental commitments to support good research practice and a healthy research culture. Commitment 5 requires employers of researchers to produce a short annual statement setting out what work they have undertaken to support research integrity, as well as policies/processes and actions to address any concerns about research conducted under their auspices.**

This template, produced by the UK Research Integrity Office on behalf of the Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group, provides guidance on how to complete such an annual statement. Annual statements should be seen as *"an opportunity to demonstrate publicly a commitment to high quality and ethical research, by declaring the practical measures an institution has undertaken to enhance research integrity. When read as a series, an institution's annual statements should illustrate how it has continually developed its support for good research practice over time."* [i] They are also valuable opportunities for internal review and reflection[ii].

Completing the template:

- When creating your institution's annual statement, please add the information requested in the tables below.
- Required information in this template is indicated [with square brackets].
- Text giving guidance on how to complete the template's questions *is written in italics*.

Name of institution: Bishop Grosseteste University	
Period under review: September 2023 – end August 2024	
Date approved by governing body: [21st March 2025]	**Date made publicly available:** [1st May 2025]
Web address of statement: Research ethics & integrity | Bishop Grosseteste University (bgu.ac.uk)	
Web address of institutional research integrity page: Research ethics & integrity | Bishop Grosseteste University (bgu.ac.uk)	
Named contact points for: • **Questions/ information on research integrity:** Prof. Caroline Horton, Chair of Research Ethics Committee • **Concerns about research integrity/ research misconduct:** Prof. Andrew Jackson, Executive Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange (EDR)	
Date statement sent to Concordat Signatories via RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk: [date]	

The template continues on the following pages

Annual research integrity statement template

2024

ANNUAL RESEARCH INTEGRITY STATEMENT

1. Summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support research integrity: …

The summary given in this section should include enough information to give a balance in the completed annual statement between the focus of this section (good practice; research culture) and sections 2-6 (which relate to addressing research misconduct).

- During the period under review, did you have a named contact point for queries about research integrity?

Yes – for questions/ information on research integrity: Prof. Caroline Horton, Chair of Research Ethics Committee caroline.horton@bishopg.ac.uk

Yes – for concerns about research integrity/ research misconduct: Prof. Andrew Jackson, Executive Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange Andrew.jackson@bishopg.ac.uk

The summary should include exploration of the following topics:

- *A reflection of the previous year's activity including a review of progress relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement.*
- *Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.*
- *How does the institution maintain high standards of research integrity – a high level statement on ethos and research culture (this could be a standard statement to set the scene, updated in subsequent annual statements to reflect any changes)?*
- *What support is provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours – training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages?*
- *Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat: 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.*
- *How you evaluate systems to ensure that policies relating to research, research integrity and researcher behaviour are implemented?*
- *How do you raise and maintain awareness among researchers of the standards and behaviours that are expected of them?*
- *If you wish, you may include case studies about new initiatives or developments, whether covering the entire institution or smaller scale.*

Training in research ethics, research design and wider research development skills are well supported at BGU. Staff training is offered at two time-points in the year – at the beginning of each semester – separately for staff needing to know about the essentials of research ethics and integrity, and for those acting in a capacity as an ethics reviewer, subject representative or Research Ethics Committee (REC) member. The sessions are delivered as essential annual training opportunities within the Centre for Enhancement in Learning and Teaching (CELT) staff development schedule. Research ethics training sessions cover the policy and procedural elements to the application, review and support processes at BGU as well as the wider drivers and documents that underpin them. Increasingly, case studies and wider issues of integrity are referred to, to enhance engagement and comprehension. Tailored sessions were delivered for research postgraduate students, within doctoral weekend programmes, to increase

engagement with part time students. Recordings of prior training sessions are available, with colleagues sign-posted to these if they could not attend in-person sessions, within the dedicated Research Ethics BlackBoard site (VLE). In addition, drop-in sessions are offered at five points across the year, and local-level support sessions can be made available upon request.

Specific optional workshops on research integrity were offered again this year, delivered at the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference. Specifically, a session for all staff was offered exploring: "*Open data and reproducibility: opportunities to support students with their research projects*", which was well-received. Drop-in sessions have been made available for staff and research postgraduate students, to discuss specific cases or queries that may have arisen. Whilst engagement with these has been somewhat limited, it is hoped that this will increase as ways to advertise the sessions will be broadened. Following the Learning and Teaching Conference, an additional Research Ethics Update training session was offered, which was very well attended. Moving forwards, this session will be repeated annually, in place of semester 2 refresher training opportunities, in order to reach a greater number of staff.

Matters concerning research ethics are coordinated by the Research Ethics Committee (REC). The REC Chair is also responsible for coordinating training and handling the review processes, and any other ethics matters that arise, for the institution. The Chair is supported by a range of subject representatives, who act as reviewers for staff and research PG applications, and committee members. Membership is regularly reviewed to ensure that the REC is representative and inclusive of all relevant sectors of university business, as well as externally, including the Lincolnshire Open Research and Innovation Centre (LORIC) and other external partnerships, CELT, as well as the core portfolio areas for teaching and research across BGU (Education; Education, Health and Lifelong learning; Humanities).

Consideration and review of wider institutional matters pertaining to research development and integrity are governed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), to which the REC reports. Over the course of the year, a committee re-structure has meant that the REC formally became a sub-committee, given its reporting responsibility to the RKEC.

At BGU, a small and specialist institution, colleagues are well-supported individually with questions and matters relating to research ethics and integrity. Bespoke sessions can be offered upon request to relevant teams of colleagues, either at a subject- or Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit level. Such requests were taken up over the past year to support colleagues at some of BGU's partner institutions, including ICON College of Technology and Management London; and Grantham College, and within specific subject groups, including Music, Education, and Psychology, to facilitate and consider appropriate subject-specific local level review processes, and to ensure that staff were able to apply research ethics knowledge when supporting their students' empirical research projects.

Relevant support documents, recordings of discussions and training sessions, and links to other guidance documents such as integrity blogs, funding council repositories on ethics and integrity, and workshops on offer, are available to all staff and students (at all levels) within the dedicated Research Ethics BlackBoard site, which is updated and managed by the Chair of REC, and supported by CELT.

As of last year (2023), the annual staff research audit requests information about ethics training, to allow monitoring of training engagement. New staff are offered a brief introduction to the Research Ethics VLE site, and are personally welcomed by the Chair of the REC, to ensure that research ethics can be supported in both teaching support (i.e. project supervision), research student supervision, and personal research roles.

Core staff development sessions around ethics and integrity continue to be delivered for all staff twice a year, drop-in sessions are offered at five points across the year, and local-level support sessions can be offered upon request in addition. There has been another decline in the number of applications from staff members over 2023-24 relative to previous years, likely reflecting an institutional reduction of research "units" within workloads due to other areas of core business being prioritised, however, an increase in the number of applications from research postgraduate (PG) students has been evident.

The research ethics clearance form and associated review processes are regularly reviewed and have been implemented smoothly. Staff and students have not reported concerns with the form over the past year, and staff are increasingly familiar with its requirements. Where the form has been somewhat onerous for students to complete, individual subject group leads have been given the opportunity to modify the form, via partial-completion as a template. This has been taken up by the PGCE courses and some other education-focused local level subject groups, as well as an external partner for whom BGU accredits their degrees, to help with local level approval. In each case, partial-completions have been discussed with subject representatives, reviewed and recorded, to ensure that any amendments to the form are applied consistently and appropriately. Colleagues have reported that this process has been supportive for students.

Specific recent initiatives:
Over the past year, much work has been undertaken to consider the use and implementation of generative AI within the academic community, and to review procedures supporting academic integrity. BGU commissioned the Academic Integrity Group to review existing processes, policies and procedures for academic misconduct, ensuring that AI detection, support and consequence are outlined explicitly. Much of this work concerns student (UG and taught PG programmes) assignment activity, with research student work being covered by some existing policies for research student programmes (PhD/EdD).

However, it was identified that research students, as well as staff, can be further supported in the following ways, all of which were implemented in 2023:

- Offering opportunities for work to be submitted through Turnitin prior to doctoral thesis submission and/or publication
- Ensure that research ethics training includes reference to AI misconduct, with a particular emphasis on originality, authorship, data falsification and fabrication.
- The statement, "the use of text drawn down from digital technologies", has been adopted across a number of institutional policies and guidance documents, to differentiate between using assistive tools such as Grammarly or Quillbot to support writing, from using generative AI tools such as ChatGPT to create new material.

A core action for BGU over this academic period was to update all relevant institutional policies and guidance documents to reflect the enhanced focus on academic integrity in the widest sense. Research ethics training continued to focus on research integrity within this domain, and referred to the use of AI technologies in research, in how it may contribute to data falsification and plagiarism, as well as broader integrity issues. A single question asking whether AI is to be used within research prospects is being added to the Research Ethics Clearance Form, for implementation in September 2024.

The Research Ethics Policy was again reviewed (December 2023) to ensure that any possible misconduct that could relate to the unlawful use of AI is outlined clearly, in relation to work produced by staff and research PG students, as well as students on taught programmes, whose work is already covered within academic misconduct policies. No changes to the wording of the policy was required, as potential misconduct relating to wilful misinterpretation, data falsification and/or plagiarism were already outlined in detail.

Training now covers not only traditional research considerations, but also projects relating to KE and impact activity.

Training from September 2023 onwards included information about reproducibility and replicability, as per recommendations from the Reproducibility and Research Integrity: HoC S&T Committee Report (2023; GuildHE). The training on reproducibility also explored transparency of methods and data, and highlighted open access outputs as being indicative of best practice for academics researching within the social sciences, recognising that humanities research, and/or research that does not involve primary data collection, may be less affected by this mission. BG Research Online (BGRO) is able to support the deposit of research materials including methodological information and datasets. Guidance on using

BGRO for open access sharing of all research materials, rather than just the output, is being drawn up and will be shared with all academic staff and research PGs when complete.

Taken together, research ethics is well-supported at BGU through a network of trained subject representatives. There is an increasing focus on the importance of wider issues of research integrity, across all disciplines (including those for which completion of an ethics clearance form is sometimes not required, such as within the Humanities), and this focus will continue to be reviewed as a priority area in 2023-24.

2. Statement on processes that the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct:

Include all relevant Policies in place during the period under review (inclusive of postgraduate student research misconduct)

- *The above should include a brief summary of relevant general institutional policies/ processes (e.g. does the institution have a whistle-blowing policy or a bullying/harassment policy; has it appointed a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns?).*

BGU has accessible policies on misconduct for both staff and students, which outlines how allegations of such misconduct can be raised and are subsequently handled. [The Code of Practice for Academic Misconduct](#) is subjected to regular review to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Research misconduct is addressed explicitly within the Research Ethics Policy. Furthermore, concerns regarding misconduct, complaints, training requests or broader queries regarding integrity and ethics are directed to the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee: Prof. Caroline Horton (caroline.horton@bishopg.ac.uk). Independent concerns can be raised to the Head of Research, Prof. Andrew Jackson (Andrew.jackson@bishopg.ac.uk), via BGU's complaints process for [students](#) or for [staff](#) via the whistleblowing policy.

The Participant Information Sheet template includes a recommendation that participants in research projects can be directed to an independent contact point, should that be required.

Researchers are also offered the opportunity to have a critical friend appointed whom, following ethical review and approval, can discuss an ongoing project and offer peer support.

An audit of compliance with research ethics training and policy compliance took place in 2021, whereby subject representatives reported on engagement (for their subject groups) with local level review

processes. At least one member of staff per subject group attended ethics training in person over the past year and, in the two cases where this had not happened, colleagues were requested to engage with recordings of training sessions (engagement was monitored). This review of engagement will continue and should be further supported by the information from the research audit.

The template continues on the following pages

Annual research integrity statement template

2024

3. High-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken: please complete the three nested tables below.

Please note:

- a 'formal investigation' refers to any use of an institution's formal process for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct or equivalent (such as processes for allegations involving postgraduate research students)
- it does **not** refer solely to the 'full investigation/ formal investigation/ formal hearing' stage of such a process; instead it covers any use of any stag(es) of the institution's formal process for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct.

In 2023-24, as previously, there were no formal incidents of research misconduct or complaints of process raised or investigated at Bishop Grosseteste University.

Drop-in sessions gave colleagues the opportunity to check whether, for instance, ethical approval was required to be sought for particular projects, and/or whether approval sought from collaborating institutions would be sufficient. These discussions likely supported compliance with ethical and integrity policy.

Allegations during the period under review	Number
Allegations received during the period under review	0
Allegations received during previous year/s that are concluded during the period under review	0
Allegations undergoing initial investigation/screening	0
Allegations undergoing full investigation	0
Allegations upheld in full after full investigation	0
Allegations upheld in part after full investigation	0
Allegations dismissed after full investigation	0
Allegations still under investigation at time of writing (whether received during the period under review or during previous years)	0

Annual research integrity statement template

2024

Breakdown of allegations received by subject/ discipline	Number
Health and biomedicine	0
Physical sciences and engineering	n/a
Social sciences	0
Mathematics	0
Computer sciences	0
Law	n/a
Arts and humanities	0
Multiple disciplines (when involved in a single allegation)	0
Unknown at time of writing	0

Breakdown of allegations by type *(see Commitment 4, Concordat to Support Research Integrity)*	Number
Fabrication	0
Falsification	0
Plagiarism	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0
Misrepresentation (e.g. of data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0
Unknown at time of writing	0
Other	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.]	

The template continues on the following pages

4. Lessons learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken:

- *Describe lessons learned from any aspect of a formal investigation where it identified gaps in the procedure or policy infrastructure in a specific instance of misconduct. Also, highlight where it was shown to work well.*

- *Reflection can include difficulties in following the process (e.g. recruiting panel members, time scales, resourcing, appeal process, breach in confidentiality, procedure prevented investigation); evidence of lack of training in a specific area of research integrity (e.g. publication ethics); communication with funder or publishers or other involved parties; confidentiality; pastoral care (responding to distressed individuals).*

- *Describe the necessary changes needed to establish lessons learned within policies, practices and procedures.*

Although no formal investigations of research misconduct have been undertaken over the past year, the REC has reviewed training opportunities and the Research Ethics Policy, and new associated Research Ethics Procedure, and demonstrated contentment with the range of support opportunities available for staff and students at BGU.

Two staff projects have been assigned a critical friend for ongoing review and support. This means of support, extending beyond the static period of ethical review across the life cycle of the project, is being promoted as good practice and is offered to all applicants of complex, lengthy and/or potentially sensitive projects. More superficial questions concerning applications are supported through regular direct email with the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee and/or the research administrator supporting ethics, and through regular drop in sessions.

5. Statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct: …

- During the period under review, did you have a named contact point for raising concerns about research integrity? [Name, job role and email address]
- *Describe the mechanism for providing support to researchers in need of assistance via policies, practices and procedures to support researchers (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.*
- *Reference to Q1 and 2.*

Policies are in place and are accessible for both staff, via the Whistleblowing Policy and associated procedures, and for students via the Complaints Procedure, to raise any issues of research integrity or concern.

Issues pertaining to research integrity continue to be supported and managed by the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee, Prof. Caroline Horton, in the first instance, in consultation with the Executive Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange (EDR), Prof. Andrew Jackson, as required.

As above, the small and supportive culture at BGU facilitates colleagues talking to one another should queries concerning ethics or integrity arise. All new members of staff are provided with a copy of the Research Ethics Policy at induction. They also meet for more focussed 1:1 R&KE inductions with the EDR, who also signposts relevant research ethics support on offer. The EDR also arranges annual 1:1 meetings with ECRs, in which the topic of ethics and integrity awareness, needs, and training is returned to. Students are, in general, known by name by staff and have several opportunities to raise any concerns either directly or via more formal channels, such as through student representatives, staff-student liaison meetings, or the Students' Union.

Template consent forms and participant information sheets are available to all staff and students. Within the latter, we recommend including the contact details for an independent contact, specific to the project. For instance, for an undergraduate project this might refer to the module leader. For a staff project this might refer to the EDR as the named integrity contact or, in cases of a conflict of interest, another senior member of staff within the Faculty.

Members of the Research Ethics Committee, comprising colleagues representing activity and disciplines across the University, have been asked to provide feedback on the suitability of processes by which staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct.

Taken together, there is confidence that BGU upholds high standards and expectations with research and supports it accordingly.

The template continues on the following page

6. Information on periodic review of research misconduct processes: … Date when processes last reviewed; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed.		
Contact details for queries:	Prof. Caroline Horton	Caroline.horton@bishopg.ac.uk
Version control: [insert: dates of any amendments post-publication; a <u>brief</u> description; date when revised version sent to Concordat Signatories via RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk]		

Template version: 1.8 **Publication date**: 11th February 2025

Further reading:

- *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, 2019. Universities UK. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf
- *Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, 2014 & 2021, UK Research Integrity Office. https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO.2021.02.self-assessment

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i Page 60, *Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, 2014 & 2021, UK Research Integrity Office. https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO.2021.02.self-assessment

ii Page 60, *Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, 2014 & 2021, UK Research Integrity Office. https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO.2021.02.self-assessment .