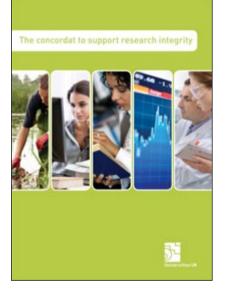## Annual Research Integrity Statement

1st August 2018 – 31st July 2019

Aberystwyth University is firmly committed to the principles found within the **Concordat to Support Research Integrity.** This annual statement sets out the University's position in relation to research integrity, including what actions are undertaken to achieve compliance, as well as full disclosure of any allegations of research misconduct.

This public statement concerns research undertaken by academic staff and postgraduate research students. Research undertaken by undergraduate and **taught postgraduate** *students is administered by the Academic Registry under the Unacceptable Academic Practice regulations.*

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Research is an integral part of Aberystwyth University's mission and work. As a recipient of public funding, the University recognises the need to be innovative and ambitious yet responsible and professional. This is encapsulated in the **University Strategic Plan 2018-23.**

95% of the research activity submitted to REF2014 by Aberystwyth University is of an internationally recognised standard. In order to maintain and build upon the university's successful research portfolio, it is important that we are committed to maintaining the highest standards in our research, from design through to dissemination, by demonstrating openness, rigour and integrity in all of our research activity.

We achieve this through underpinning our research with a number of quality processes and by providing relevant support, policies and guidance in a widely-accessible format.

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Governance

Embedded within its terms of reference, the **University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)** holds overall responsibility for overseeing and implementing the Concordat, as well as overall ethics, integrity and governance related policies, and procedures.

UREC reports to Senate. The Committee is chaired by Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation.   UREC also has oversight of and / or receives reports from the following committees:

- Research Ethics Panel
- Sponsorship Panel (to consider and approve sponsorship for NHS ethics applications)
- Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB)

Operationally, the **Department of Research, Business & Innovation** (RBI) provides day-to-day support for all matters relating to ethics, integrity and governance. This includes providing advice and delivery number of training and awareness raising events across all levels of the research community. In addition, RBI also supports UREC and the Research Ethics Panels.

Equally, academic Faculties and Departments play an important role in ensuring that the research conducted by its staff and PGR students is conducted appropriately and to the highest standard. Each Faculty has an Associate Dean for Research**,** who is an academic member of staff, whose role includes overseeing and championing a range of research-related issues.

Tailored for PGR students, the **Graduate School** oversees and supports the further development of postgraduates through the provision of training, such as the *Researcher Development Programme* and a series of induction events throughout the academic year.

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Policies and Procedures

The University hosts a number of [policies and procedures](#) to not only ensure that research is conducted appropriately, but to also ensure that effective mechanisms exist for the reporting of any concerns or queries. These policies are regularly reviewed and monitored by the appropriate [University Governance](#) committee:

- [Research Ethics Framework](#)	- [Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy](#)
- [Sensitive Research Policy](#)	- [Professional Integrity Protocol](#)
- [Publication and Authorship Guidance](#)	- [Data Protection, Processing & Retention Policies](#)
- [Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research](#)	- [Research Data Management Policy](#)

Training

Training and awareness raising in the areas of ethics and integrity plays an important role in facilitating good research practice. Training and awareness raising events at Aberystwyth are aimed at all levels of researchers and are delivered in a variety of formats.

To date, there has been a drive to ensure that student and early career researchers are aware of their responsibilities towards maintaining the highest ethical standards when undertaking their research.

At an UG and PGT level, module co-ordinators and other departmental staff are encouraged to embed the appropriate University processes and procedures into the delivery of their teaching. Undergraduate training on research ethics is organised on a departmental level. At a PGR

level, RBI delivers the '*Ethics, Plagiarism and Academic Practice'* module, which is facilitated by the Graduate School. This module is compulsory for all new research students (PhD & MPhil). This module must be passed in order for the student to progress on to study year two. We are also pleased to have welcomed and engaged with a number of our Professional Doctorate students at a number of residential schools which have taken place this year.

Early career researchers and newly-appointed academic staff are invited and encouraged to attend a number of sessions which are tailored and delivered throughout the academic year. Existing research staff members are also able to attend any of the available sessions. We continue to participate in the rolling programme of AU-wide *Research Good Practice* sessions facilitated by RB&I, which were delivered to a range of new and existing research staff.

A range of external training has also been provided to researchers. In the last 12 months, the University has made available a number of Home Office training modules for researchers who require a regulatory licence to work with animals. Supported by UKRIO we also ran a 1 day Research Ethics Reviewer training session (6th March 2019) for members of our REP provided by Dr David Carpenter (UKRIO).

The University remains pleased with the levels of engagement from the research community and will continue to develop and refine its training offering ready for the 2019/20 academic year.

External Memberships

RBI continues to actively participate in the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA).

The University is a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). This has enabled the University to receive support in matters of research integrity and misconduct, consistent with the principles and expectations found within the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

All queries relating to this statement or any of the University's activities undertaken in relation to the Concordat should be direct to one of the following contacts:

Dr Jennifer Deaville – Research Development Manager, Research, Business & Innovation

Lisa Fisher – Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, Research, Business & Innovation

If anyone reading this document has concerns relating the conduct of an Aberystwyth University researcher, they should first consult the appropriate policy and procedure (see page 3). If you are unsure which policy applies or if you are a participant in a research project, please contact the Research Ethics team who will be able to advise:

✉ ethics@aber.ac.uk
☎ 01970 621694

Summary of Research Misconduct Investigations

Based on the Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research, the University can report that for 2018-19 there have been **NO high level (formal)** investigations in relation to research misconduct.

2018/19	Number of allegation for which an investigation has been undertaken		Number of allegation upheld (in whole or in part)	
	Staff	**PGR**	**Staff**	**PGR**
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Misrepresentation		NIL RETURN		
Breach of Duty of Care				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct etc				
Other (e.g. ethical breach or unprofessional behaviour)				

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