# Concordat to Support Research Integrity

## Annual Statement

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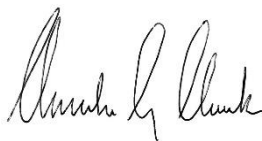Date:        31/10/2023

## Executive Summary

The Concordat Annual Statement on Research Integrity highlights how UCEM has promoted high standards of research integrity, a positive research culture, developments over the past year and for the future and how UCEM addresses allegations of research misconduct.

## Background

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity, otherwise known as the Research Integrity Concordat, aims to provide a national framework for good research conduct and its governance. It makes sure government, business, international partners and the public can continue to have confidence in UK research and its world-leading researchers. The statement, which will be submitted to Universities UK and published on our website, will:

- publicly demonstrate our commitment to high quality and ethical research, by declaring the practical measures undertaken to enhance research integrity;

- reflect on successes and consider areas for improvement to help themselves and the sector continuously improve over time;

- provide research funders with assurance information in an 'ask once' statement that is publicly available. This aims to reduce bureaucracy for organisations and to help meet funders' terms and conditions.

Signed:

Name:        Amanda Clack

Position:    Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date:        30 November 2023

# Section 1: Key contact information

| Question | Response |
|---|---|
| **1A. Name of organisation** | University College of Estate Management (UCEM) |
| **1B. Type of organisation:**<br><br>**higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)** | UCEM was founded in 1919, incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000125) on 22 August 1922 and has been a registered independent charitable institution (Registered Charity Number 313223) in England and Wales since 24 May 1963.<br><br>We are a Higher Education Provider registered with the Office for Students. |
| **1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)** | UCEM Board of Trustees 30/11/2023 |
| **1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)** | Policies - University College of Estate Management (ucem.ac.uk) *(see Research Policies section)* |
| **1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity** | Name: Professor Angela Lee |
| | Email address: a.lee@ucem.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: Sharon Youngson-Baines |
| | Email address: s.youngson@ucem.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;
- Communications and engagement;
- Culture, development and leadership;
- Monitoring and reporting.

UCEM is currently undertaking an ambitious approach to expanding research. Historically, UCEM has concentrated on providing education and training for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, including offering professional CPD (continuing professional development) programmes, and has had limited research staff output previously. We have over the past year, updated or developed several new policies and procedures, including a Research Strategy, Conflict of Interest, Intellectual Property and Code of Practice for Research to support our growth (see section 2B). The founding basis of all our policies promotes honesty, rigour, declaring research interests, and fundamentally, care and respect for research subjects and accountability to funding bodies. We have also established a Research Office, with the appointment of two experienced research staff who are leading these developments.

As we are growing research, we have developed an internal Microsoft Teams site as a safe discussion space for all things related to research (most of our academic staff work remotely). This includes sharing bidding opportunities, developing networks around central research themes, sharing calls for papers/events, sharing research news/successes, and/or asking for advice/input. The site also links to our internal Microsoft SharePoint site and serves as a document store for items relating to research. The site is actively used by those engaged in research. We also actively promote any research successes/news stories in our weekly online newsletter which is circulated to all staff. External news stories are generated by our marketing team.

We are aiming to cultivate a research approach that is supportive and inclusive, and therefore openly invite our staff to help develop this. Our Microsoft Teams site, and invitations to research events, are openly available to all staff across UCEM.

In terms of monitoring and reporting, as we have now established a Research Office who manages all research: data can readily be drawn on research activity (bidding and research outputs) at any point in time. We are also in the process of rolling out an Academic Operations database, which will link in with the PDR (professional development review) process, 2-year research plans, esteem factors, attendance to research events etc., thus, all research activity will be monitored and available for reporting. We collate all research activity to annually produce an annual report for our Trustees, which is also published on our website.

UCEM are also members of [GuildHE](#) and [ARMA](#); and also ensure we connected to [UKIRO](#), [UKRI](#), [Vitae](#), [UK Parliament Knowledge Exchange Unit](#) etc; so that we stay abreast of policy changes nationally and internationally.

**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.

With an ambition to offer post graduate research degrees in the future and rapidly growing staff research, UCEM is going through a process of reviewing and expanding its processes and policies to support an improved research culture. Changes include:

- A new Research Strategy 2022-30 has been developed, replacing the previous strategy, and resulted in the closure of 2 Research Centres and the emergence of a new Research Centre. Research training provision under this new centre has commenced, including training sessions on staff undertaking a PhD, teaching and research nexus, research ethics/ integrity etc. In addition, a new research webpage has been developed.

- A Research Office has been established, including the appointment of an Associate Dean (Research) and a Research Operations Lead. The Research Office have taken responsibility of developing/supporting/monitoring research applications/awarded projects, and research ethics and any conflicts of interest.

- We have revised our Research Ethics panel, accompanied by updated a policy and procedure. The outcomes for approval are recorded and reported to the Research Committee. Membership of the Ethics Panel is far reaching, from various roles within UCEM to ensure diversity and representation, meeting monthly as necessary to avoid any delay in any research work that requires ethical approval. We seek to ensure that all research gains ethical approval at the outset and are implementing the aforementioned Academic Operations Database as a robust system that will track all research applications submitted/awarded; this will be carefully managed by the Research Office ensure ethical approval compliance. This system directly feeds into the academic staff PDR process and will ensure we capture all research being undertaken. For non-funded research, we continually encourage staff to ensure that they follow the same ethical approval process.

- A new Data Management Policy, Authorship and Publication Policy, Research Misconduct Procedure have been drafted, approved and implemented.

- Our existing Conflict of Interest Policy, Code of Practice for Research, Intellectual Property Policy (and the aforementioned Research Ethics Procedure) have been updated.

- A new University repository has been set up and is currently being populated. The repository is linked to academic staff profile web pages and will be updated with any new publications.

- An informal research mentoring procedure has been developed. Our mentors are experienced researchers, and the guidelines we promote seek to remind our mentors/mentees of the importance of research integrity and the various policies we have in place.

- Research workload for academic staff has been introduced, aligned closely to a 2-year research plan and the PDR (professional development review) process.

**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.

This is our first statement on research integrity.

We feel that we have made significant strides towards developing our processes and procedures to match our ambitions to grow research at UCEM. We have used UKRIO templates on research misconduct, and the code of practice for research as the basis to develop our own policies, which we have found to be very helpful. We will continually review our policies to ensure they are timely and relevant, particularly with the use of generative-AI which is still an emerging field and where ethics, IP (intellectual property) and other issues are yet to be resolved in Higher Education.

We hope to concentrate on co-creating an improved research culture amongst staff in the coming year. As we grow our research, we will seek to develop plans for peer review process of our research grants and publications. This will also need to include a policy for open access research, which will need to be aligned to REF/UKRI requirements.

Whilst we actively ask for staff feedback during the drafting of new research policies and procedures, which are then taken to various committees for approval and subsequently published on our website, we will seek to ensure that they are fully embedded by all researchers in UCEM.

**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.

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## 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, whistleblowing, 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 Research Misconduct Policy highlights the University's expected standards for good research conduct and informs members of the University about the types of activity or behaviour that constitute research misconduct. The Research Misconduct Procedure outlines the process for making and managing allegations of research misconduct, and details how such matters will be addressed by the University when research conduct falls short of the expected standard. Our Research Misconduct Procedure was formally approved in September 2023; it has been adapted from UKRIO (2023) Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research. Available at Misconduct Investigation Procedure - UK Research Integrity Office (ukrio.org). The definitions of research misconduct are aligned with UKRIO's Concordat to Support Research Integrity: there is a formal investigation stage including external membership and an appeals stage. The procedure includes several appendices providing additional guidance to those conducting investigations that cross institutional and national boundaries, and potential actions as an outcome of investigations.

We do have existing policies and procedures in place for whistleblowing, bullying/harassment and there is clear guidance on how these policies and

procedures interrelate, for example, allegations of research misconduct made under the Whistleblowing Policy will be investigated under the Research Misconduct Procedure. Where necessary existing policies have also been expanded (Conflicts of Interests) or created (Data Management and Authorship and Publication [Research]) to support research integrity. We are in the process of providing training and education for colleagues on this new procedure and seek to ensure a culture of openness and transparency to ensure staff are comfortable to report any instances of research misconduct; as the number of research projects to date are small, there have been no instances of misconduct reported.

**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 | 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 (eg 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 received in a single allegation) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total:** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Concordat to Support Research Integrity**

**Continuation page**

| *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. |
|---|
| N/A |