Hartpury University: Annual statement on research integrity

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Hartpury University
1B. Type of organisation: **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)**	Higher Education Institute
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	20-11-2024
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/university/research-innovation/research-governance/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Stephen Draper
	Email address: Stephen.draper@hartpury.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: Rosie Scott-Ward
	Email address: Rosie.Scott-Ward@hartpury.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

Research at Hartpury University takes place in the context of its academic structure, with research managed within Departments. The governance of the research uses this structure along with that of the formal committee structure, in particular the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and the Ethics Committee, reporting to Academic Board and Corporation.

The Code of Research Practice provides a framework for the highest standards of personal conduct in research. These minimum standards are applicable to all researchers and those who support research in addition to their professional or funding body requirements and legislation.

The University's policies and guidance relevant to research, its governance, research integrity and ethics are available from the University's governance web page: https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/university/postgraduate/research-and-knowledge-exchange/research-governance/

University policies applicable to wider matters of institutional governance are available from: https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/about-us/governance-leadership/policies-regulation-and-information

Staff and postgraduate students are made aware of relevant policies and processes when they join the University as part of their induction, and updates are communicated through Heads of Department, as well as through general communication mechanisms, where relevant. Specific aspects of research governance, good practice or other requirements are highlighted on a project-by-project basis as needed, and within delivery for modules that embed research, so that they can be actively addressed in research design or delivery, as appropriate.

The University's Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct serves to ensure institutional attention and that relevant actions can be taken if allegations of research misconduct arise overseen by a senior member of staff. The Procedure provides some flexibility in the way in which an allegation might initially be raised, in order to allow staff, researchers, students and others to feel comfortable in reporting potential instances of misconduct. Whilst providing this

flexibility, the Procedure requires a full written statement of the allegation to be received by the senior member of staff to ensure that the process is transparent, timely, robust and fair.

The environment for research is created and sustained by the culture and behaviours of our researchers, those who support them, and the wider institution. Whilst seeking excellence and applicability in what we do we are also conscious of the need to enable and encourage good practice in research, as embodied in the Code of Research Practice. We seek to ensure that our research vision, strategy, operational plans, resource deployment and performance monitoring all take account of our commitment to research integrity and do not introduce inappropriate or perverse incentives. This is achieved through a variety of mechanisms including targeted annual continuing professional development in research integrity and ethics for staff and students.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

As reported below, two cases of alleged research misconduct were investigated in 2023-2024. The outcome of the first of these investigations raised concerns relating to a case of potential plagiarism or research misconduct (which was found to be unfounded), but which highlighted a further possible case of plagiarism (upheld). Our procedures and processes alongside the Hartpury Code of Research Practice and the Procedure to Investigate Allegations of Research Practice were put in place in 2020-2022. As aspects of our research integrity policies also apply to the broader organisation (subsidiary Further Education College and Commercial) these policies were approved by Hartpury Executive and are in place across all parts of the organisation.

We continue to provide research integrity training for all academic staff and research students through compulsory online training events and all post-graduate students (taught and research) receive research integrity training as part of their induction to Hartpury. The principles of research integrity and ethics are embedded within the delivery of undergraduate modules that include research activities. Alongside these training events the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee regularly holds staff briefings to ensure staff are up to date with developments in this area.

An audit of low-risk ethics applications is conducted annually by the Ethics Committee. The outcome of the audit is used to inform staff development sessions and in addition, where issues were identified, these were followed up with individual staff and their line managers.

The Ethics Committee manages all staff and student projects and received 201 applications for full scrutiny in 2023-24, an increase of 17% compared to 2022-23. The number of overall applications also increased to 734 (8% increase from 2022-23) and reflects the continued increase in research activities across the institution. Of the 201 applications received for full scrutiny, 54 were approved following the initial submission and a further 119 were approved following amendments. One application was rejected, ten were withdrawn and 14 are awaiting resubmission. There are fourteen applications which are currently under review at end academic year. No studies were suspended in the 2023-24 academic year.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

For the 2023/24 academic year, the Hartpury University Ethics Committee implemented new guidance on consideration of retrospective ethics applications, ethical review of literature reviews and consideration of ethics applications that have been approved by other institutions. These new processes were utilised successfully during the academic year.

In 2023/24, a system to consider ethics within teaching activities was also piloted across the Veterinary Nursing Department. This included the development of a new form and process. As the pilot was successful, this has now been implemented for all HE departments in 2024/25.

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

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

The University has in place a Procedure for the Investigation of [Allegations of Misconduct in Research](). The Procedure is based on the guidance produced by the UK Research Integrity Office, and also draws on a number of other institutions' procedures. The Named Person for allegations of research misconduct is the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Rosie Scott-Ward, [Rosie.Scott-Ward@hartpury.ac.uk](). Advice in relation to research policies, integrity and research misconduct is available from the Academic Dean (Research and Knowledge Exchange), Prof Stephen Draper, [Stephen.Draper@hartpury.ac.uk]().

The key policies and guidance related to research governance and conduct with the date of issue / adoption of the current versions are listed below:

- Code of Practice for Research (September 2023 v.2)

- Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research (September 2023 v.2.)

- Research Governance Standard Operating Procedures (March 2022)

- Intellectual Property Policy (October 2022 v.2.)

- Code of Professional Conduct (November 2023)

- Financial Regulations (March 2023 v.2)

- Public Interest Disclosure Procedure ('Whistle Blowing') (January 2024)

The University commits to engage constructively with other relevant organisations in their investigation of an allegation of research misconduct, and to alert other relevant organisations to potential cases of research misconduct of which it becomes aware.

The University creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct by embedding relevant procedures and policies including discussion of sector developments and emerging issues within induction and annual research integrity updates. This includes signposting of key contacts who can provide informal guidance in matters relating to research governance and misconduct.

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

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	*1*	*1*	*0*	*1*
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	*1*	*1*	*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:	**2**	**2**	**0**	**1**

*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.
NA