

Concordat to Support Research Integrity Statement 2023/2024

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Approval History

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Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	University College of Estate Management (UCEM)
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	<p>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.</p> <p>We are a Higher Education Provider registered with the Office for Students.</p>
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	UCEM Board of Trustees 19/09/24
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	Concordat to Support Research Integrity - University College of Estate Management (ucem.ac.uk)
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 committed to excellent research with integrity. We promote individual researcher accountability for good research practice, supporting this through our policies and processes and by fostering culture of transparency, respect, honesty and rigour. This statement outlines our commitment to promote and fulfil the requirements of the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity. UCEM's Research Committee reviews and approves the content of this statement for publication, and it is then reviewed and approved by Academic Board, and finally the Board of Trustees.

We are continuing on our ambitious approach to expanding research. We review all policies and procedures in line with the internal review schedule, and therefore under this process, the following policies and procedures have been reviewed this year:

Research Data Management;

Research Strategy;

Research Misconduct;

And Research Ethics Procedure (and accompanying supplementary documentations).

The following have also been created:

Research Implementation Plan;

Embedding Sustainability in Research Practices Guidance;

External Research Strategy;

and Authorship and Publication Policy.

The founding basis of all UCEM policies promote honesty, rigour, declaring research interests, and fundamentally, care and respect for research subjects and accountability to funding bodies.

As with all our policies, we circulated /re-circulated to staff and students via the appropriate communication channels, provided training and/or information sessions, and ensured they were uploaded onto our policy webpages for ease of access.

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Staff are continuing to use and engage with our internal Microsoft Teams site 'Research@UCEM' as a safe discussion space for all things related to research (the majority of UCEM 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 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 'Bulletin' newsletter which is circulated to all staff. External news stories are generated by our marketing team.

This year we have introduced monthly virtual 'research coffee mornings', to encourage informal discussions amongst colleagues to support collaboration. So far these have been very well attended, and colleagues have started to share ideas and work together. This year we also held our second annual RED (Research and Scholarship Engagement Day) event, to support staff collaboration. We included a specific session for Early Career Researchers (as well as our experienced Research staff) and held a discussion session on AI (Artificial Intelligence) in research as a means to pre-empt our AI in Research policy that we will draft in 2025.

We are aiming to cultivate a research approach that is supportive and inclusive, and therefore openly invite all staff across UCEM to attend and engage in research.

In terms of monitoring and reporting, our Research Office administers research: data and can readily be drawn on research activity (bidding and research outputs) at any point in time. This year, we have rolled out an Academic Operations database, which will collate research related data from academic colleagues including: 2-year research plans, esteem factors, attendance to research events etc. All research activity is being monitored and is available for reporting and is feeding into the PDR (Professional Development Review) process. We collate all research activity to produce an annual report for our Trustees, which is also published on our website. Separately, we also use this information to produce annual Mock REF report which summarises our current progress and action plan as we prepare for our first REF submission in 2029.

UCEM is a member of [GuildHE](#) and [ARMA](#); and is also connected to [UKIRO](#), [UKRI](#), [Vitae](#), [UK Parliament Knowledge Exchange Unit](#) etc; so that staff 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.

We have introduced several initiatives over the past year to foster a collaborative and supportive research environment within our institution:

- Virtual Research Coffee Mornings: We have implemented virtual 'research coffee mornings' as an informal monthly discussion opportunity for colleagues to catch up and share ideas.

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These sessions have been well attended and have led to new research collaboration opportunities, as well as increased general awareness of current research work.

- Annual RED (Research and Scholarship Engagement Day) Event: We held our 2nd annual RED event in a hybrid format, which was attended by 39 colleagues. This event provided a platform for both early-career and experienced research staff to present their current research projects and future ambitions, facilitating networking and knowledge sharing among participants.
- Research Training and Information Events: We have delivered a variety of research training and information sessions, covering topics such as what constitutes a quality research output, how to publish a book, the role of AI in research, understanding REF (Research Excellence Framework) and UCEM's REF ambitions, and the process of obtaining a PhD. These events aim to enhance the research skills and knowledge of our staff. We have also continued to offer staff research mentoring: this is optional, and at the time of writing, six staff are currently being mentored.
- Expanded Research Ethics Panel: We have broadened our Research Ethics Panel to include colleagues from safeguarding, student support, and digital education teams. Staff were invited to listen in on a session before officially joining, and one-to-one support training has been provided by the Ethics Panel Chair. This expansion has brought diverse perspectives to the scrutiny of our research ethics, proving beneficial as the new panel members have provided unique insights and comments that may have otherwise been overlooked.
- Sustainable Research Guidance: We have introduced a sustainable research guidance note to promote environmentally friendly research practices. While not a formal policy, this guidance offers suggestions such as serving vegetarian food at research events, providing digital delegate packs, and hiring research equipment when appropriate. This initiative encourages colleagues to adopt more sustainable approaches in their research activities.

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 second statement on research integrity.

We feel that we are continuing to make significant strides towards developing our research culture at UCEM. This progress is evidenced by the increased engagement of staff in research activities, which has shown a marked improvement over the past year.

For instance, the number of research bids submitted in the academic year 2023 / 2024 has risen significantly, with 17 applications compared to 11 applications submitted in 2022 / 2023.

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This increase not only reflects the growing interest in research among our staff but also demonstrates their proactive efforts in seeking research funding and opportunities. Furthermore, with this we have observed an increase in the number of staff members participating in the research bidding process.

Specifically, three additional staff members have become actively involved in preparing and submitting research proposals. This expanded participation indicates a broader institutional commitment to advancing our research agenda and highlights our success in fostering a supportive environment that encourages staff to pursue research initiatives. We have continually involved staff in the drafting/reviewing of policies and procedures, inviting comments via email or on our dedicated Teams discussion space.

Overall, these developments underscore our commitment to cultivating a vibrant and dynamic research culture at UCEM, where staff feel empowered to engage in research activities and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their respective fields. Next year we aim to progress with our RDAP plans and will develop new PGR policies and procedures in support of this ambition. In addition, we hope to develop guidance on AI in Research, which is an emergent issue and concern that needs to be addressed, and an academic promotions procedure to support advancement to Associate Professor and Professor (this will be carefully integrated with a new Academic Career Framework).

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.

This year, we have significantly contributed to the development of a more robust ethics process for one of our research partners. By sharing our comprehensive policy and detailed forms, we have provided them with valuable resources and guidance to enhance their own ethical review procedures. This collaboration involved a series of consultations, where we discussed best practices, identified areas for improvement, and aided the customisation of our templates to better fit their specific needs. As a result, our research partner now has a strengthened ethics framework that ensures higher standards of research integrity and compliance, fostering a more ethical and transparent research environment.

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).

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- 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.

UCEM's [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) sets forth the expected standards for good research conduct and informs members of UCEM about activities or behaviours that constitute research misconduct. The Policy outlines the process for making and managing allegations of research misconduct, detailing how such matters will be addressed when research conduct falls short of the expected standards. Formally approved in September 2023, our [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) has been adapted from the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) 2023 Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research. The definitions of research misconduct are aligned with UKRIO's [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), including a formal investigation stage with external membership and an appeals stage. The procedure features several appendices that provide additional guidance for conducting investigations that cross institutional and national boundaries, as well as potential actions that may result from these investigations. Additionally, we have other policies to support research integrity (such as Data Management and Authorship and Publication), which can be found via [Policies - University College of Estate Management \(ucem.ac.uk\)](#)

Overall responsibility for research integrity, governance and academic ethics sits with the Associate Dean (Research) and may be addressed as the first point of contact on research integrity matters. The Associate Dean (Research) is also the Named Person for reports of allegations of misconduct in research, with contact details available on UCEM's public and intranet websites.

We have existing policies and procedures in place for whistleblowing and bullying/harassment, with clear guidance on how these policies interrelate. For instance, allegations of research misconduct made under the Whistleblowing Policy will be investigated under the Research Misconduct Procedure.

Given the relatively small number of research projects to date, there have been no reported instances of misconduct.

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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 (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 received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	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.				
N/A				