Name of institution: Swansea University	
Period under review: August 2021- July 2022	
Date approved by governing bodies: 1. University Research Integrity Ethics & Governance committee: October 2022. Approved by email circulation. 2. University Research Impact & Innovation Committee: October 2022. Approval by email circulation. 3. University Senior Leadership Team: November 2022. 4. University Senate: Nov 2022	**Date made publicly available:** To be confirmed
Web address of statement: Research Integrity - Swansea University	
Web address of institutional research integrity page: Research Integrity: Ethics and Governance - Swansea University	
Named contact points for: • **Concerns about research integrity/ research misconduct:** Professor Helen Griffiths (Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation) researchmisconduct@swansea.ac.uk or pvcresearch@swansea.ac.uk • **Questions/ information on research integrity:** Mrs Anjana Choudhuri. researchintegrity@swansea.ac.uk	
Date statement sent to HEFCW: To be confirmed.	

INTRODUCTION

This is the 7th Annual Research Integrity Statement for Swansea University, covering the academic period of 2021/22. This report provides a short summary of the activities undertaken by the University to demonstrate its commitment to the 5 principles of the ***Concordat to Support Research Integrity***. The statement provides assurance that the processes the University has in place for dealing with allegations of research misconduct are transparent, robust, and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation. Data on research misconduct allegations and any investigations are included in the report along with a statement on lessons learnt to prevent recurrence.

The statement also includes evidence of how the institution is creating and embedding a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct. The University expects its staff (including honorary staff), students, visitors, and collaborators to undertake research, in accordance with the research integrity policies and processes published on the University Research webpages. (Research Integrity: Ethics and Governance - Swansea University).

Further guidance and training on research ethics and governance processes are available to University Staff and Students through the University's Intranet pages. The University continues to be a subscriber to UKRIO.

1. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE RESEARCH INTEGRITY

➤ **Governance & Leadership:**

The University is committed to a diverse and inclusive research environment in which everyone can thrive and produce high quality research. The University's commitment to research integrity is embedded within its institutional systems and culture, with this being one of the key priority areas of the University's Research & Innovation Strategy.

The University underwent a restructuring exercise in 2020-21 to form Faculties and Schools. The restructuring coincided with changes to the University Senior Leadership Team. This exercise provided an opportunity to highlight areas of strength and review areas for improvement where best practice to embrace change could be incorporated.

- **Appointment of a Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Culture):** In 2021-2022, the Faculty structures were further embedded with some appointments to Senior positions and changes to processes. The University was very proactive during this year in improving its Research Culture. This work is being driven by the recently appointed Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture, responsible for providing academic leadership in implementing the *Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers* and for creating a dialogue around improvements including promoting the adopting Open Research practices and other relevant initiatives.

  In January 2022, Swansea University signed the *Technician Commitment*. The Technician Commitment is a sector-wide initiative led by the Science Council, supported by the Gatsby Foundation to help address key challenges facing technical staff working in research. The technical community is a vital part of our research culture. By becoming a signatory of the commitment, the University will enact specific and measurable actions and initiatives that will enable the technical community to flourish. The implementation of the commitment is overseen by a steering group, comprising of Academics, Technical leads, Technicians, Faculty Directors of Operations and Leads of Professional units. The technical community inputs into the commitment through the newly formed Technician Forum, which is represented in the steering group by its Leadership Team. Stemming from the commitment, in July 2022 Swansea University organised its first Technician Symposium, which had participation from over 60 technicians across the Faculties and Professional Services units. In May 2022, at the University Research and Innovation Awards, a new category (Outstanding Technicians contributions Award) was added to recognise technicians. The **event** celebrated the wide range of research and innovation activities and achievements carried out at Swansea University.

- **Appointment of a Research Culture Manager:** To support the DPVC Research culture a new role of a Research Culture Manager is being recruited to. The postholder will work with colleagues from Human Resources, (Development and Training Services & Equality & Diversity), Researchers, and Technicians to put in place a research culture plan, an institutional statement on expected and unacceptable research practices and a comprehensive action plan for improvements in researcher working conditions and career development opportunities.

- **Appointment of Faculty Leads of Ethics and Governance & Chairs of School Ethics sub-committees:** The Faculty restructuring process created new roles of Ethics Leads for each Faculty. The Ethics Leads are Chairs of the Faculty Research Ethics & Governance sub-committees and members to the Faculty Research Impact & Innovation Committees. New appointments to the roles of Chairs of School Ethics sub-committees have also been made. Each Faculty Ethics Lead and Chairs of School Ethics sub-committees are members of the University *Research Integrity: Ethics & Governance committee* which reports of Senate (Academic Governance) and the Council (University Governance).

- **Research Integrity Audit and Appointments to Key positions:** An internal Research Integrity Audit undertaken in 2020-2021 highlighted the requirement of further oversight and monitoring of University Sponsored Research. It also highlighted the lack of resources to support the research undertaken with Human Tissue. The following roles were recruited to in 2021-2022:
  - Research Quality Assurance Officer

- Human Tissue Research Compliance Officer

➢ **Committees and Working Groups supporting research integrity:**

- University Research Integrity: Ethics and Governance Committee (URIEGC): The University Research Integrity: Ethics & Governance committee provides transparency and accountability to all matters of research integrity and governance. This committee, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) has, as members, the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture, Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Research, Academic representations from the various Faculties & Schools and representation from the Professional Services Units. Each of the Faculty Research Ethics sub-committees report directly to URIEGC as does the University's Sponsorship & Oversight Committee (SUSOC). The Secretariat function for these Committee is delivered by a dedicated Research Integrity and Governance Team situated within Research Engagement & Innovation Services (REIS), which also provides support to research staff and students with regards to all matters of research integrity.

- Sponsorship oversight Committee: To ensure that staff and student studies sponsored by Swansea University comply with the requirements of the *UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research* (2017), the *Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004* and the standards of Good Clinical Practice (GCP), a Sponsorship Oversight Committee was established in 2021-22. The committee undertakes a robust risk-assessment of each sponsored project prior to the approval of an application for University Sponsorship. Each project is thereafter monitored to manage and mitigate risks.

- Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB): The University AWERB screened 18 applications ethically in 2021-22. The University has two Home Office project licences and is listed as secondary availability on one other. In the summer of 2021, the Animals in Science Regulations Unit (ASRU) initiated a change programme with the aim of aligning ASRUs activities with the purpose of protecting animals in science by maintaining compliance with ASPA. These changes will impact on how licenced establishments are regulated by the Home Office and their reporting and compliance obligations. The University continues to monitor the position and act on guidance received from the Home Office to ensure compliance with ASPA. In 2021-22, the University did not receive any Freedom of Information requests on numbers of "animals used in experiments" and on the nature of their use.

➢ **Policies, Processes, and Systems to support research Integrity:**

- **Revisions to Existing Policies, Processes & Guidance:**
  The Research Integrity Policy Framework was revised in 2021-22 to reflect changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, and research practices. The Policy Framework incorporates the recently updated University Policy on Public Disclosure (Whistleblowing)

- **Creation of new research policies:**
  ❖ Security Sensitive Research Policy: To comply with the UUK requirements of storage and circulation of security-sensitive research material, the University Senate, in June 2022 approved the Security Sensitive Research Policy.
  ❖ Trusted Research Policy and Policy Framework for International Research Collaborations: Secondary to the publication of the revised National Security Act (NSI) and revised Export Control Regulations, the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure | CPNI published its guidance for Universities and the Academic Community on the risks of undertaking international research collaborations with 'hostile actors'. To operationalise Trusted Research and raise awareness amongst researchers of the requirements for compliance with external regulations, including those relating to dual-use and sensitive research, an institutional 'Trusted

Research Policy' and a 'Policy Framework for International Collaborations' was created post consultation with a Task and Finish group comprising of members from all Faculties and Professional Services Units.

- **Online Ethical Review System:** The University has purchased from an external company (Infonetica Ethics Research Management), an online system for the ethical review of research. A project board set up has been working with the relevant users of the system with a view to implement the system across all Faculties in November 2022. It is envisaged that having an online system would streamline the processes of ethics assessment, categorise research risks and bring transparency so that risks can be monitored and reported regularly.
- **Human Tissue Institutional license**: In 2020-21, the University Research Integrity: Ethics and Governance committee considered some shortcomings with the ongoing Human Tissue License agreements that the University had with the local NHS Trust. Options of obtaining a single license for the University to enable human tissue research, in both its campuses was considered. It was agreed that decoupling the current license for the Trust license and applying for a pan University licence was the best approach. The University is preparing to apply for an institutional HTA license in 2022-23. As an interim measure, the University will apply to the HTA for a repurposed application for the Swansea University Medical School. The repurposed application will cover Human tissue research activities undertaken at all sites of the University until an institutional license is secured.
- **UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN):** In the past year under the leadership of Dr Laura Wilkinson, the University has been consolidating the activities of the local UKRN group. In September 2022, the University started the formal process to become a full member of the UKRN, with Prof. Lucini taking the role of institutional lead and Dr Wilkinson as the local group lead.
- **Research Integrity webpages**: Information on the Research Integrity and Research Governance webpages have been regularly updated with relevant policies, protocols, and standard operating procedures.

2. Supporting the development of Researchers.

➢ **Training/Awareness & Development:**

- Research Integrity Online Training: In 2022, the University renewed its Institutional license of the online Research Integrity Training with Oxford University Press (Epigeum). Secondary to changes in Government regulations and to raise awareness amongst researchers of the risks of undertaking collaborations with 'hostile actors and partners', the 'Export Control' module within the Epigeum research integrity training was made a 'mandatory' module.
  In 2022, the Postgraduate Research office purchased a 'Research skills toolkit' programme from Oxford University Press (Epigeum). Comprising of 5 modules, the toolkit is a flexible programme that build the knowledge and skills essential to become a first-class researcher. This online toolkit would initially be used for training Postgraduate Research students with an eventual aim of rolling it out to final year undergraduate and Postgraduate taught masters students to train them on research skills.

- Training on Due Diligence and Trusted Research : Earlier in the year, awareness raising sessions were held with Senior Academics from Faculties on Due Diligence and Trusted Research. These training sessions (Topic: 'What foreign interference might look like') were delivered face-to face and via zoom by an external training provider.

- Online Training on Safeguarding: All researchers working with children and vulnerable adults are expected to undertake the online training on Safeguarding prior to the approval of their project application. A system to monitor training completion and compliance has been put in place.

- Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and Human Tissue research: All researchers working with Human Tissue and on projects with the NHS staff, patients and data are expected to complete the GCP training. Completion of this training prior to submission of an ethics application is monitored closely by the Research Governance Team.

- UKRIO Webinar Series: Members of the University Research Integrity: Ethics & Governance Committee received regularly, information from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) on monthly research integrity webinars. Many staff attending these sessions found them useful.

3. Dealing with allegations of research misconduct transparently, fairly & robustly

- ➤ **Research Misconduct:**

  The Policy on receiving Allegation of Research Misconduct and details of how to raise a concern are displayed on the University webpages and can be accessed by an individual wishing to raise a concern ([Research Misconduct - Swansea University](#)). A confidential email service (researchmisconduct@swansea.ac.uk) is set up for those wishing to raise a concern in writing. The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) is the 'named contact' for the University. The Research Integrity Manager is the designated third party coordinating this confidential processes. All research misconduct screening and investigations are undertaken in accordance with the University Policy and the investigation panels always consist of an external member from another UK Higher Education Institution.

  In 2021/22, the University received and processed the following allegations in accordance with its policy:

Month/Year	Allegation	Nature of alleged misconduct	Outcome
Dec 2021	Denial of Authorship	Misrepresentation of authorship in a deliverable.	No prima facie evidence of research misconduct could be established. The matter was resolved through a meetings of both parties with the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation)
Jan 2022	Ethics & Research Integrity	Poor research practice. (Nonadherence to Equality Act (2010), Quality of ethical approval and research survey questionnaire).	Screening Panel. No prima facie evidence of research misconduct could be established. Study amendments undertaken.

4. Reviewing processes regularly and openly – Lessons learnt

The University has not had any formal investigations in 2021-2022 as described within the [UKRI guidelines](#). Secondary to the complaints received, the University is taking steps to identify and implement improvements that reduce the risk of recurrence by reviewing some of its policies. The University expects any other issues arising from ethical approval of research projects including transparency, continued monitoring and reporting to be better addressed by the online system of ethical approval coming on board in November 2022.

5. Challenges for 2022/23:

- Effective Implementation and Support for the online system of ethics review.
- Raising awareness of Due diligence of International collaborative Research (Trusted Research)
- Raising awareness about reporting cases of Research Misconduct, Bullying & Harassment.
- Human Tissue Institutional license

Further information: *This statement has been prepared by the Research Integrity Manager and approved by the University Research Integrity: Ethics & Governance Committee (URIEGC) on 12 October 2022. The report will be submitted to University's*

Research Impact & Innovation Committee (RIIC), Senate and Council with a copy provided to the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales (HEFCW). The report will thereafter be published on the University Research pages as per the requirements of the UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and Concordat to Support Research Integrity. For any queries and information on research integrity matters, please contact *researchintegrity@swansea.ac.uk*