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| **Board of Governors** | |
| Thursday 23 November 2023 | |
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| Paper title | **Annual Report on Research Ethics and Integrity 2022-23** |
| Presenter(s) | **PVC: Research & International** |
| Author(s) | **Head of Research Office** |
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| Communication Status | **Open** |

**Proposed resolution**

The Board of Governors is asked to receive the report and:

1. **approve** the Research Ethics and Integrity annual report 2022-23

**Previous and future consideration**

University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-committee - 12th September 2023

University Research Committee - 11th October 2023

Academic Board - 25 October 2023

**Appendices**

None.

1. **Executive Summary**

As part of the University’s commitment to the Concordat on Research Ethics and Integrity, York St John is required each year to provide details of actions and improvements to its ethics processes, and to formally record any misconduct investigations.

Academic Board recommended the report for approval by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 25 October 2023.

1. **Strategic context**

The report demonstrates publicly our commitment to robust research ethics procedures and is a valuable opportunity for internal reflection on our measures to support research integrity.

1. **Next steps**

The report will be published on the University’s [website](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/ethics-and-integrity/policies-and-reports/).

1. **Further information**

For further information, please contact [gov.compliance@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:gov.compliance@yorksj.ac.uk)

1. **Report**

Attached.

**Annual Research Ethics Report for York St John University**

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: [RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk).

**Section 1: Key contact information**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| **1A. Name of organisation** | York St John University |
| **1B. Type of organisation:**  **higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)** | Higher Education Institution |
| **1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)** | 23/11/23 (TBC) |
| **1D. Web address of organisation’s research integrity page (if applicable)** | <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/ethics-and-integrity/> |
| **1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity** | Name: Prof. Robert Mortimer |
| Email address: r.mortimer@yorksj.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: Elizabeth Goodwin-Andersson |
| Email address: e.goodwinandersson@yorksj.ac.uk |

**Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken**

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| **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: |
| Each school is supported by a School Research Ethics Committee (SREC) comprised of a chair, deputy chair and usually around five committee members. Overall responsibility for the committees lies within the leadership role of School Research and Knowledge Transfer Lead.  The chairs run annual CPD training for all staff on research and integrity and we regularly call on external consultants to provide training. The SRECs report to the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-committee (UREISC) which is comprised of the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and International (chair), the Head of Research Office, the SREC chairs and several co-opted members to attend when their expertise is required, and a lay member of the public. The UREISC meets four times a year to discuss policy and regulatory updates and it reviews all applications which work with the NHS as well as cases where there is not a majority verdict in the SRECs and it offers advice.  Our committees are governed by our Code of Practice for Research and our Research Ethics Policy. The University treats all allegations of misconduct seriously in accordance with our Research Misconduct Policy and our Whistleblowing Policy. We have a Research Data Management Policy which requires researchers to deposit their data into our repository, RaYDaR (unless otherwise specified in the data management plan for legal, ethical or commercial reasons). Finally, we have an Open Access Policy which closely follows guidance from UKRI and requires researchers to deposit outputs in our repository RaY **immediately** uponacceptance.  Each year, during the summer, we request annual reports from each of the SRECs to monitor engagement and feed into the university-level annual report.  The following statistics on applications (approved and pending) are provided below:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Total number of approved applications | 141 | | Total number of applications (approved and pending) | 164 | | Number of approved by school | 139 | | Number pending by school | 12 |      |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | School | Approved | Pending | | ARTS | 16 | 3 | | Education, Language, Psychology | 68 | 5 | | Humanities | 14 | 1 | | Science, Technology, Health | 22 | 1 | | York Business School | 19 | 2 | |

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| **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. |
| This year we introduced a new software-based system for applying for and approving research ethics. The new Ethics Monitor system has received positive feedback from colleagues for making the process simpler and easier to use than old paper-based forms. The system has inbuilt guidance to explain the questions to colleagues and is tailored to ensure that applications requiring greater scrutiny receive this from the committee.  Our School of Education, Language and Psychology ran a symposium on democratising ethics which was attended by both internal and external participants. The symposium *Democratising Ethics: perceptions of vulnerability and the possibilities for participatory research* was borne out of researchers in the Participatory Enquiry, Action Research, and Democratic Methodologies (PAD) group regularly running into problems with Ethics Committees when it came to participatory work with so called vulnerable participants. Such participants may be children, young people, students, and or be disabled, neurodiverse, have poor mental health, or be part of a vulnerable group e.g., refugees. We invited Dr Kate Brown who is a vulnerability researcher as a keynote speaker to problematise the concept of vulnerability. There was then a workshop with four researchers offering very short provocations, before attendees were asked to grapple with issues and possibly come up with actions for change.  We had about 30 attendees, mainly from YSJ. Some were professors, some other levels of academics, some PGRs and a couple of taught masters students. The whole event was very well received with some very rich and important conversations. One key outcome was to pilot an “ethics buddies” system. As the event was organised by PAD, we are piloting this as a group. 12 researchers (staff and PGRs) are meeting in groups of three to discuss ongoing ethical conundrums. We have been invited by Support for Learning to edit a special issue on the theme, and invited to run the same event at Edge Hill University.  This year we employed the services of a lay member to the university-level committee who is the Chief Executive of a registered charity from the social care sector, which brings extra scrutiny and expert analysis to our proceedings. |

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| **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 year we hope to strengthen our training programme by offering another external consultant session and a session to provide training on the different principles of research ethics: ethics, integrity and governance. We will also integrate all masters by research projects into our Ethics Monitor for increased monitoring. This is currently conducted at programme level via a paper form. |

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| **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. |
| The example of good practice we would like to share concerns the composition of our school level committees, rather than a specific case. This year our School of Education, Language and Psychology piloted a scheme to involve postgraduate researchers in the review of ethics applications. The two PGRs were post transfer; both had also gone through their own ethical approval process successfully. The PGRs both made incredibly insightful comments and were fantastic reviewers.  In September 2023, we aim to write to all the PGRs in this school and invite them to be ad hoc reviewers. We believe this would really enrich their own research and our review process. The next logical step would be to have PGRs on the committee. |

**Section 3: Addressing research misconduct**

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| **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) |
| York St John University is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in research carried out by its staff and students. Its approach to research integrity complies with the Concordat to support research integrity (the Concordat). The University treats all allegations of misconduct seriously and is committed to ensuring that allegations are investigated with thoroughness and rigour.  We have a [policy](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/media/content-assets/registry/research-degrees/complaints-appeals-and-disciplinary/Research-Misconduct-Policy-and-Procedures.docx) on research misconduct which applies to allegations of misconduct made against staff and research students. Allegations against research students may also be dealt with under our [academic misconduct procedure](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/staff/learning-and-teaching/academic-misconduct/), in cases of plagiarism or against taught elements of the programme. Staff and research students may also report cases via our [whistle-blowing policy](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/whistleblowing/).  Our whistle-blowing and misconduct policies are both under review at present and were discussed and approved at the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-committee meeting on 12th September 2023.  A report on research misconduct cases and their outcomes will be produced annually and submitted to the Strategic Leadership Team. A summary report will be considered by Research Committee (for staff) and Quality & Standards Committee (for students) and then provided to Academic Board and Board of Governors. This process will ensure appropriate monitoring of all research misconduct cases and related outcomes.  In 2022-23 there was one case of academic research misconduct by a research student (plagiarism) which was upheld and the studies terminated. |
| **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. |