

Annual Summary on Research Integrity 2024-25

Name of organisation: Heriot-Watt University

Type of organisation: Higher Education Institution

Date statement approved by governing body: 16th October 2025

Web address of organisation's [research integrity page](#)

Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity: Professor Chris Turney, Assistant Principal Research & Impact. Email: C.Turney@hw.ac.uk

Named member of staff who will act as first point of contact: Carolyn Brock, Head of Policy Strategy & Impact. Email: C.Brock@hw.ac.uk

Introduction

Heriot-Watt is committed to supporting and promoting the highest standards of research integrity across all disciplines. We align our policies and practices with the principles of the [UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(2025\)](#), ensuring that all research is conducted with honesty, rigour, transparency, care, and accountability.

This statement provides an overview of our activities during the reporting year, including training and development, governance arrangements, summary information on any formal investigations of research misconduct, and future priorities for strengthening research integrity.

2. Commitment to Research Integrity

Heriot-Watt University's commitment to research integrity is underpinned by a comprehensive framework of [guidance and policies](#), which are readily accessible to all staff and students. These policies provide a clear basis for ensuring that research is conducted to the highest standards of honesty, rigour, and accountability. Research integrity is embedded within the University's governance structures through its integration into all research governance and ethics approval processes, ensuring that responsible practice is considered at every stage of research activity.

In addition, the University maintains robust oversight and transparency by reporting to the University Committee for Research and Innovation, thereby supporting continuous monitoring and the ongoing development of a culture of integrity across all areas of research.

3. Support, Training, and Awareness

- Refreshed and comprehensive online resources, accessible to all staff and students, providing guidance on ethics approvals, data protection, and open research.

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- Mentoring and supervision guidance, to ensure early career researchers are supported in good practice.

4. Policies and Governance

- The University maintains and regularly reviews its Research Integrity and Ethics Policies, ensuring alignment with best practice and legal requirements.
- A Research Integrity and Ethics Committee provides institutional oversight and ensures consistency across Schools in relation to ethical approvals.

5. Research Misconduct Cases

During the reporting period four allegations of Research Misconduct were received by the Research Engagement Directorate, to whom all allegations of research misconduct are reported to (see *Annex 1 - Summary information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken*). The majority of the allegations received were in relation to an alleged case of plagiarisms, stemming from the mis-use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to misappropriation or use of others' ideas, including two cases in the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure & Society, one in the School Engineering & Physical Sciences (EPS) and one in the Mathematical & Computer Science). Professor Duncan Hand, as the named person oversaw the allegations.

5.1 Outcome

In the first case, involving an allegation of plagiarism, following a thorough review of the evidence in line with Research Integrity Procedures (section 7.1), the named person concluded that the allegation did not concern potential research misconduct under Section 7.3.1(c). The case was therefore dismissed without formal consideration.

The second and third cases both involved alleged misuse of AI. The named person deemed both serious enough for formal consideration, and Screening Panels were established. In both cases, respondents were advised of corrective actions.

The fourth case was also deemed serious enough for a Screening Panel. The panel concluded, however, that the plagiarism allegation, relating to misappropriation of ideas, was not valid and the allegation was dismissed.

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Where cases have been raised, the University has followed its established procedures, ensuring confidentiality, fairness, and appropriate resolution. The status of the reported cases are deemed to be concluded.

6. Future Priorities

Looking ahead, Heriot-Watt will focus on:

- Embedding mandatory training provision in Research Integrity
- Ensure comprehensive guidance is available on the safe, ethical, and effective use of AI by postgraduate researchers (PGRs), supervisors and others. This will include:
 - Clear standards and boundaries for appropriate AI use in research, writing, data analysis, and academic integrity.
 - Practical examples and case studies illustrating acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI tools.
 - Awareness-raising initiatives such as workshops, webinars, and online resources to ensure PGRs understand both the benefits and risks of AI use.
 - Integration with existing policies on research integrity, data protection, and academic misconduct to provide consistency and transparency.
- Continue embedding open research practices (open data, open access publishing, reproducibility initiatives) to strengthen transparency.
- Continue to promote reporting mechanisms to ensure staff and students feel confident in raising concerns.

7. Conclusion

Heriot-Watt University reaffirms its commitment to fostering a culture of research integrity that underpins the excellence and impact of our research. Through continued investment in training, governance, and engagement, we ensure that research conducted under our name is ethical, robust, and of the highest professional standard.

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Annex A: Summary information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Type of Allegation	Reported to organisations	Number of Screening Panels Convened	Number of Investigation Panels Convened	Named Person	Status
Fabrication					
Falsification					
Plagiarism	3	2	0	Professor Duncan Hand	Completed
Misrepresentation	1	1	0	Professor Duncan Hand	Completed
Breach of duty of care					
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct					
Other					