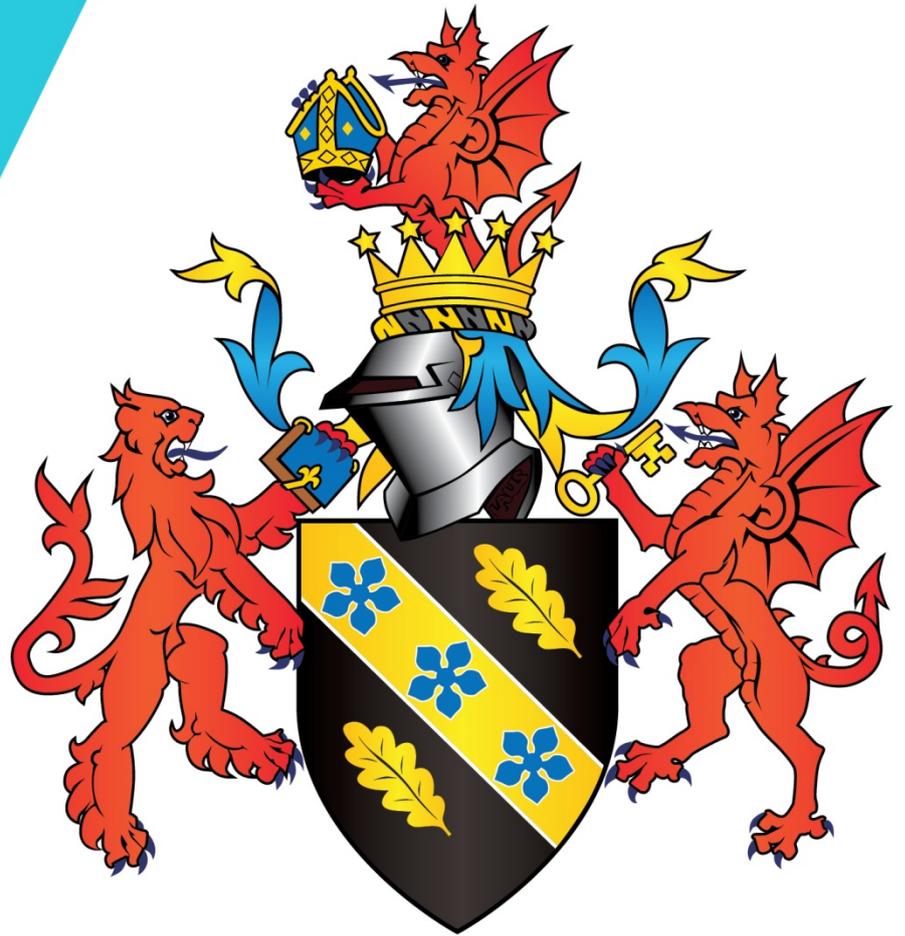




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University of Wales  
Trinity Saint David



# Annual Research Integrity Report 2019-2020

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Annual Research Integrity Report 2019-2020



## Introduction

The University of Wales Trinity St. David is a signatory to the **Concordat to Support Research Integrity** and, as a result, is deeply committed to the principles and ideas set out within this framework. This document is the University's annual research integrity statement for the academic year 2019-2021.

This report pertains to research undertaken by academic staff and by postgraduate research students. Any research undertaken by undergraduate and taught postgraduate students is regulated under the University's regulations for taught courses, which are administered by the Academic Office through the Unfair Practice Procedures.

The University believes that research ethics review and approval are important for the following reasons:

- To enhance the quality and integrity of research;
- To protect the rights and welfare of anyone taking part in a research study and minimise the risk of physical and mental discomfort, harm and danger from research procedures;
- To protect the welfare of researchers and their right to carry out legitimate investigations;
- To minimise the potential for claims of negligence made against the University, its researchers and any collaborating individual or organisation;
- To ensure the reputation of the University for the research it conducts and sponsors;
- To ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
- To support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers;
- To ensure that transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- To work together with other institutions as required from time to time to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

The procedures and guidelines outlined in the [Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice](#) apply to all academic and administrative staff, those holding honorary positions at the University, and all students conducting research projects and related activities as part of undergraduate, postgraduate and short courses and research programmes in which students are enrolled/registered at, and/or supervised by staff at the University. The exception shall be cases where the Principal Researcher is registered elsewhere providing that the research project has been approved by an equivalent ethics committee following a comparable level of ethics review.

## Governance

The Research Ethics Committee (REC) is a subcommittee of the University Research Committee with members from each of the University's Institutes and the UWTSD London campus, together with representatives from the University's Research Degrees Committee and Research and Innovation Services. Its terms of reference are as follows:



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Y Drindod Dewi Sant

**University of Wales**

Trinity Saint David

1. To provide advice and guidance on established and evolving ethical issues and contribute to ethical awareness and training;
2. To ensure that Institute procedures for dealing with ethical issues raised by staff or student research are appropriate, and to monitor their effective and consistent implementation;
3. To consult whatever evidence and opinions it considers appropriate to ensure that decisions relating to approval of ethical aspects of research methods are based solely on ethical grounds;
4. To provide written approval for all relevant University research projects or research degree programme proposals with conditions or requirements where appropriate, or to provide written refusal with justification;
5. To receive regular reports from Institutes on ethical issues and to make recommendations in relation to ethical issues;
6. To consider and provide formal responses to cases referred to it in response to requests from Institutes;
7. To report annually to the Research Committee and Research Degrees Committee on actions taken and decisions made during the preceding year.

The REC is supported in its role by the Postgraduate Research Office and the Academic Office. It receives reports from the individual Institutes and independent research groups within the University.

All academic staff and postgraduate researchers are required to submit an ethics form for review by the REC at the start of their research project. No data collection may commence until this review has been successfully completed. During the academic year 2019-2020 the REC scrutinised 236 ethics forms (215 from postgraduate students, 21 from academic staff), an increase of 58% on the previous year.

### **Actions and Activities**

The REC plays a large role leading the provision of support and training in the area of ethics. Members provide a point of contact for their Institutes so that all researchers, staff or students, can discuss the ethical issues related to their work with someone who understands the ethical context of their field. This contextualised approach also makes it possible to provide a range of seminars at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that encourages staff and students to engage with ethical issues outside of the immediate context of their research.

Programmes of seminars are also held that focus on ethical issues and University processes for all postgraduate research students, research-active staff and PhD supervisors. These are supported by resources made available on the University's research webpages and link to the University's Researcher Development Programme and the annual Postgraduate Research Summer School. This teaching of research integrity and ethical conduct is also embedded within the undergraduate curriculum, in accordance with the requirements of external accreditation bodies such as the British Psychological Society and the British Computing Society.

Over the past several years REC members have been involved with the University's NEXUS teaching conference, and have presented a number of papers on the pedagogy of developing ethical thinking in both undergraduate and postgraduate audiences.

During this academic year the emergence of Covid-19 required many researchers to reconsider their data collection methods to implement social distancing. The REC supported this by providing information on alternatives to face-to-face interviews and questionnaires,



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Y Drindod Dewi Sant

**University of Wales**

Trinity Saint David

together with information on how to ensure that such changes remain in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. This required several researchers to undertake a second ethical review for their new methods of data collection and many researchers at the start of their project have been careful to allow for this new approach.

It is envisaged that during the academic year 2020-2021 the REC will coordinate further training opportunities for researchers and research supervisors focussing on data management and data protection in a world of online data collection. This will occur in parallel with a review of the current ethical review process to ensure that all researchers have an understanding of the areas of digital ethics relevant to their fields of research.

### **University Procedures**

The University has a number of procedures and policies that support research integrity and provide effective mechanisms for staff and students to report any concerns or queries. Any such reports are investigated in a fair and transparent manner.

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

[Fitness to Practice Policy](#)

[Research Data Management Policy](#)

[Student Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[Staff Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[Whistleblowing Policy](#)

These policies are regularly reviewed and updated.

### **Research Misconduct**

Any cases of research misconduct are dealt with by the University under provision 7c in the University's ordinances.

#### c) Investigations into Allegations of Research Misconduct

(i) Investigations into allegations of research misconduct will be undertaken according to University procedures, as amended from time to time.

(ii) Allegations of research misconduct may be brought to the attention of the University internally or externally by an individual or by an organisation. Whatever the source of the allegation, the University will endeavour to ensure that justice is done, and also is seen to be done, to both the complaining and the accused parties. Bona fide complaints will be pursued with integrity and confidentiality and every attempt made to ensure that the investigation proceeds without detriment to the complainant or the accused. Staff are entitled to expect that their research work will be regarded as being honest, until shown to be otherwise, and that they will be protected against ill-founded, frivolous, mischievous or malicious complaints; this principle will guide the University's procedures.



**Prifysgol Cymru**

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

**University of Wales**

Trinity Saint David

(iii) The University will ensure that, as far as possible, the proceedings of any investigation are treated as confidential. However, where there is a conflict between the need for confidentiality and the need to seek the truth, the latter must prevail.

Research misconduct within postgraduate research projects is handled via the University's [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

A more detailed policy and process for dealing with research misconduct is currently being developed and is expected to be published during the academic year 2020-2021.

There have been no reports of research misconduct brought before the University in the academic year 2019-2020.

### **Contact Details**

All queries relating to this annual statement or to any activities taken by the University in regards to the Concordat should be directed to one of the following contacts:

- [Associate Professor Nik Whitehead](#) – Co-chair, Research Ethics Committee
- [Dr Stuart Jones](#) – Co-chair, Research Ethics Committee
- [Dr Kyle Erickson](#) – Director of Academic Enhancement, Academic Experience

If anyone reading this document has concerns relating to the conduct of a University of Wales Trinity St. David researcher, they should first consult the appropriate policy or procedure. If you are unsure of which policy or procedure applies in your case, or you are a participant in a research project, please consult the [Research Ethics](#) team.

