Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2025-26 – Middlesex University

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Middlesex 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)	15th October 2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.mdx.ac.uk/research/research-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Klaus Dodds, Exec Lead for Research and Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
	Email address: K.Dodds@mdx.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: Dr Nico Pizzolato, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange
	Email address: N.Pizzolato@mdx.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

The University was an early adopter of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and continues to adhere to the principles and practices set out in that document. All staff and students engaged in research are required to conduct their activities in line with the Concordat and our Code of Practice for Research, including any visitors who make use of, or are supported by, the University and/or its facilities. Staff are reminded of their obligations in respect of research integrity at induction and on subsequent occasions, and Concordat awareness, responsibilities and principles of research are delivered as a series of regular workshops by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) annually.

In May 2025 the University signed the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. A cross-representative working group has been established to develop an institutional action plan to build support for researchers, to be published in 2026, and we shall strategically align our activities to build support across career trajectories at all stages. The University is part of the London cluster of the Early Career Researcher network supported by the British Academy, and continues to provide bespoke training and support on research security (FIRS), good governance of research practice (UK CORI), and international research collaboration, closely following guidance from UK DSIT and the National Security Act 2023. Our Code of Practice for Research remains aligned to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

Policies and systems

The University's research and ethics policies are overseen by the University

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), which reports to the University's Academic Board and, in turn, to the Board of Governors. Policy development and enhancement is the result of periodic review, with regular field reviews of policies and their interaction; faculties have their own RKECs, which report to the university RKEC and act as a key mechanism for distilling themes in the operation of research integrity and ethics policy.

The University's Director of Student Life manages processes for the reporting and investigation of allegations of research misconduct in research degrees through a clear and well-publicised Policy and Procedures for Academic Integrity and Misconduct, which presumes and inculcates the positive virtue and value of academic integrity as a fundamental characteristic of an academic community, rather than merely outlining procedures and penalties for misconduct. Our approach derives from a notion of 'positive integrity' – the celebration of good practice as an essential characteristic of good academic conduct. Investigations are coordinated by teams led by the Faculty Dean, and research students are also subject to the University's Code of Practice for Research.

Researchers are also expected to comply with the University's Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy (HRPS35), which requires disclosure of any affiliation, financial interest or other relationship that could compromise the objectivity of research. This sits alongside the Code of Practice for Research as part of the wider policy landscape supporting research integrity, and complements the disclosure and management process for potential conflicts of interest already set out in the Code.

Ethics committees at faculty and subject level report to a University Research Ethics Committee, which in turn reports to RKEC and Academic Board. Our ethics processes for staff and students are implemented through an integrated ethics system (Ethics Monitor), associated with our research information system, and the University's Ethics Framework sets out the guiding principles, expectations and machinery for the operation of this policy. The University undertakes ethics training for all new staff on joining; training for PGRs on ethics forms part of our Researcher Development programme, and research ethics is a core unit of our Researcher Training Programme, providing a robust underpinning of key debates within research ethics, including but not limited to notions of integrity, equity and inclusion in research.

Communications and engagement

Communications and engagement are essential to embedding research integrity at the University. A regularly updated intranet site holds periodically reviewed policy documents, guidance, procedure guides and an Academic Staff Handbook. Expectations regarding research integrity and ethical conduct are communicated on appointment through induction, mentoring, training and engagement with

faculty and university committees.

Student engagement begins at induction and assignment briefing and continues throughout the academic lifecycle; we promote staff and student awareness through workshops, documentation, briefings and resources, including integrating academic integrity within student success essentials in Programme Induction activities. For staff, we run regular briefings on the University's Regulations and Policies, supervision guidance, and preparatory content within taught elements of research degrees. Undergraduate and postgraduate student tutorial and pastoral support provide further opportunities to communicate the importance of these subjects.

Culture, development and leadership

The development of a culture of research integrity is led by the University Executive Team, which places integrity at the heart of research practice. The Exec Lead for Research and Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee leads assurance and governance through the mechanisms described above – chairing the RKEC and setting the framework for research governance across the University. Development of the research integrity framework is taken forward through RKEC, the ethics committees, and periodic policy review by Academic Board, with reports on research integrity matters made to the University Executive Team and Board of Governors periodically.

The Exec Lead is supported in ensuring fit-for-purpose governance of research integrity by faculty Deputy Deans (Research & KE) and by the Directors of Research, Knowledge Exchange and Postgraduate Research. Ethics committee chairs receive training and contribute to the development of the research integrity landscape at faculty and university level. Our research culture is enhanced through a rich and diverse range of lectures, workshops, training sessions, and regularly updated intranet resources. In 2026 we streamlined these activities to find resonance and complementarity with our work on REF2029, including its REF Code of Practice; REF2029 governance frameworks and strategy are closely aligned with our principles and values of integrity in research.

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting of student misconduct is undertaken by the Academic Misconduct Team within the Student Life Directorate, which has considerable experience in both the 'positive integrity' messaging described above and the enforcement action necessary to ensure compliance with policy. Annual reporting on research integrity at university level is coordinated through RKEC and routed onward to Academic Board.

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.

During the period under review, the following developments are of particular note:

- In 2026 the University released the PGR and GenAI Guidelines, aligned to our Code of Practice for Research, providing detailed support for research students, supervisors and examiners on the ethical use of generative AI in research degrees.
- The cross-representative working group established to develop our institutional action plan under the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (signed May 2025) has continued its work, with publication due in 2026.
- Our current research information system (CRIS) has continued to develop, with the repository module now live and public-facing, supporting greater transparency of Open Research outputs.
- Preparations for REF2029 have continued, with REF2029 governance frameworks and strategy closely aligned to our principles and values of integrity in research.

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.

Progress against last year's priorities has been considerable, not least because our governance review has brought to light ways in which the design of mechanisms to support academic and research integrity can be improved. A review of policies with relevant updates, and the capturing of progress within the CRIS modules – of which the repository module is now live and public-facing – has progressed well, as has cross-referenced underpinning work on data systems and open access as UKRI brings out new, updated policies.

Building on this progress, and reflecting directly on the lessons learned from this year's plagiarism investigations (see Section 3A), our priorities for 2026/27 include:

- Introducing mandatory Turnitin similarity checks at every PGR milestone (including upgrade/transfer and thesis submission), so that similarity is checked proactively at key points across the research degree journey rather than relying on a single check at submission.
- Drafting a set of GenAI in Research guidelines to supplement our existing PGR and GenAI Guidelines (2026), extending clear, principles-based guidance on the ethical use of generative AI beyond postgraduate research to staff-led and externally funded research.
- Recommending UKRIO's Authorship Integrity Toolkit as part of our research integrity training offer, to strengthen support for researchers and supervisors in preventing and resolving authorship disputes at an early stage.

More broadly, a large portfolio of training will continue to be rolled out across 2026/27 for research and knowledge exchange, providing up-to-date, easy-to-access, regular training sessions for staff and students. The University also plans to activate a roadmap of research impact enabling a thriving programme of engagement and dissemination for internal and external audiences, in line with our 2031 Strategy, and welcomes the launch of research content on our new external website (https://www.mdx.ac.uk/research/), which showcases the depth and breadth of excellence in our research.

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).

- 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, whistle-blowing, 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.

The policy architecture of the University is set out on the University website and mirrored within the intranet. The University continues to maintain and deliver the Research Development Programme, a comprehensive training package for research students. For postgraduate researchers, research ethics and integrity are covered both in the research induction course ('Kickstarting series') and in regular researcher development sessions focusing on 'Planning and organising research', 'Being a resilient researcher', 'Ethics', 'University processes and research', 'Working across Boundaries: Multi and Trans Disciplinary research', and 'Research integrity in practice'. Postgraduate researchers are also invited to use the app Dilemma, which gamifies engagement with research ethics issues. At both University and departmental level, staff and students are trained in the use of Ethics Monitor on the CRIS system, through which ethical approval for research projects is submitted.

Courses for academic staff covering research integrity include 'Managing externally funded research', 'Viva Chair Training', 'Viva panel training', 'Research supervisor training' and 'The role of the supervisor'. These courses, together with the

communication and engagement arrangements described in Section 2A and informal mechanisms for discussing good practice, foster an openness toward matters of good conduct and misconduct. Genuine errors are accepted; self-critical practice is celebrated and supported.

Anonymised key lessons learned

The plagiarism investigations completed this year (see Section 3B) – two of which were dismissed following investigation, and three of which were upheld in full – highlighted the value of checking similarity proactively at multiple points in the postgraduate research journey, rather than relying on a single check at thesis submission. This finding directly informed our decision to introduce mandatory Turnitin similarity checks at every PGR milestone from 2026/27 (see Section 2C). We are also strengthening our support for the informal resolution of authorship disputes and, as set out in Section 2C, plan to recommend UKRIO's Authorship Integrity Toolkit as part of our research integrity training offer.

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	*5*	*5*	*0*	*3*
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Misrepresentation (eg 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*
*Other**	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total:	**5**	**5**	**0**	**3**

***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.
Not applicable – no allegations were recorded under the 'Other' category this year.