

UKCEH Annual Research Integrity Statement 2025

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
1B. Type of organisation:	Independent Research Organisation A registered charity, limited by guarantee
1C. Date statement approved by SRO	02/02/2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	https://www.ceh.ac.uk/research-integrity
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Dr Doug Wilson (until Nov 2025); Dr Dan Read (November 2025-February 2026)
	Email address: Daniel.read@ceh.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: Anita Petrie, Science Directorate Business Manager
	Email address: Anit@ceh.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

UKCEH remains committed to the principles set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, embedding these within our core values of Teamwork, Excellence, and Integrity. Demonstrable commitment to our values, including Integrity, are a key part of our performance, reward and recruitment frameworks, with 4.54% of employee-nominated rewards issued under the Integrity value in 2025. Research integrity continues to underpin all our research activities, with honesty, transparency, accountability, rigour, and respect at the forefront. Our strategy, *Ambition 2030*, outlines our commitment to Integrity and research culture, and our adherence to UKRI's Good Research and Trusted Research Policies and Processes, remain central to our operations.

The Science Director has overarching oversight for research integrity as a member of the Executive Committee. Associate Science Directors, and the Science Leadership Committee, cascade relevant communications through their Science Areas. Research Culture is reviewed quarterly by the Science Leadership committee- any activities/discussion to enhance. Two Associate Science Directors have oversight of research culture reporting to the Science Leadership Committee.

We operate with a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures specifically relating to aspects of research integrity, including our Research Integrity, Research Ethics, Misconduct in Research, and Open Research. We maintain general policies where the scope includes relevant aspect, including Code of Ethics, Whistleblowing, Bullying, Conflicts of Interest, Due Diligence, Modern Slavery, Fraud and Bribery, Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (EEDI), Safeguarding, Quality, and Intellectual Property. Our internal website provides access to all relevant policies, guidance, and links to external resources, including UKRIO guidance and events.

Our two Research Ethics Committees (covering non-clinical human and non-ASPA animal research) continue to operate, with regular training for members who also act as advocates and champions for research ethics and are available to staff to discuss issues or queries. These both produce annual reports subject to review by their governing body the Science Leadership Committee. All committees include at least one external member and include lay members, in line with best practice.

- In 2025, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) team undertook specialist training on ethics of AI in research and added two additional external reviewers from West Africa to assist UKCEH in reviewing ethics applications relevant to research in the region.

- UKCEH has a Home Office Establishment licence for specific activities in ecological research on wild populations and operates an Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body as required under that licence.
- UKCEH continued engage externally to lead and contribute to sector-level forums relating to research ethics, including the cross-NERC Research Ethics and Integrity Forum, as well as regular discussions on integrity and ethics with other peer organisations

A new/revised Open Research policy was published, accompanied by training on open data, FAIR and open access, and a new hub landing page for Open Research was launched.

- We utilise the NERC Open Research Archive (NORA) as our institutional repository for research publications and other outputs, and our Open Access performance is monitored, and staff are supported, by the Library and Archive Service with >85% of publications openly available in 2025.
- UKCEH hosts the Core Trust Seal accredited Environmental Information Data Centre (EIDC), the national data centre for terrestrial and freshwater science and one of the five data centres that forms the NERC Environmental Data Service. Most of the datasets are freely provided under the Open Government License and they include comprehensive metadata and supporting documentation. UKCEH utilises the EIDC as a repository for its research data.
- Staff are supported by the UKCEH Data Stewardship team who develop and provide up-to-date guidance and training through an in-person network and online Research Data Management Hub. They manage, develop and provide user support for the *Data Stewardship Wizard*. This is a key tool that helps researchers consider research integrity throughout the life of a project, ultimately enabling the creation of consistent and robust Data Management Plans.

UKCEH delivers Trusted Research & Innovation through a structured approach. Partner suitability is checked through formal due diligence and supporting elements of Trusted Research are covered by policies and procedures on integrity, data protection, risk, conflicts of interest, cybersecurity, research ethics, IP, licensing and contracts. Compliance is reviewed at key stages of a project, including bid development, contract drafting, travel risk review, and arrangements for hosting/onboarding visitors and students. Commercial and non-commercial use follow an IP policy that balances economic opportunity with openness. A single point of contact and central mailbox help staff navigate requirements under Export

Control, the National Security and Investment Act, and the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, with checks built into collaboration processes

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

In 2025, UKCEH undertook several research integrity-related developments:

- In 2025, the Research Ethics Policy was updated to include explicit guidance on AI in research and enhanced safeguarding measures, particularly for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH).
- The safeguarding policy and procedures were revised, and a dedicated email address was established for external reporting of safeguarding concerns. Our safeguarding policy now includes clear procedures for individuals outside UKCEH to report concerns via a dedicated safeguarding email address.
- A new/revised Open Research policy was published, with training delivered on data management and Open Access through the year. A new internal website landing page for Open Research was launched to improve accessibility.
- We continue to raise awareness across the organisation by delivering presentations to all staff, including science and professional services staffs. Colleagues responsible for managing the Trusted Research mailbox are actively engaging in ongoing training and remain subscribed to government webpage alert services to stay informed of the latest requirements and guidance.
- We published our research culture action plan.
- The HREC team completed training on AI in research, and ASPA training was delivered for those working with animals as well as committee members. New reviewers from West Africa were inducted.
- We initiated an internal project to develop authorship guidelines and began work towards signing the Technician Commitment.
- Training for staff was provided via the UKRIO research integrity programme. Training on research integrity is mandatory for all research staff; the current rate of completion for staff is 69%.
- We embedded our proposal-stage ethics check within our Data Stewardship Wizard tool, streamlining the process and improving visibility and compliance of ethics requirements for all projects. This replaces previous manual Word forms and allows for easier tracking.
- UKCEH representatives contributed to the UKRI GPEX forum and UKRIO's authorship guidance project.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

UKCEH has made substantial progress in strengthening research integrity provision over recent years. Much of our progress has arisen through centralising oversight - previously dispersed compliance activities are now more visible and coordinated.

In 2025, we began a review of our practices in line with the updated Concordat, using the UKRIO Self-Assessment Tool. This review will continue throughout 2026. One of the main challenges we have faced is the limited availability of research colleagues to participate in co-design and co-delivery of initiatives. To address this, we have allocated dedicated time in 2026 specifically for activities related to research integrity and research culture.

Looking ahead to 2026, our priorities include:

- Implementing any necessary changes relating to the updated Concordat.
- Further developing our approach to AI and integrity, recognising the rapidly evolving landscape.
- Continuing our networking and shared learning with peer organisations.
- Reviewing and refreshing our training and resources for research ethics; We are investigating the UKRIO research ethics training offer for future adoption.
- Increasing the visibility of research ethics and integrity in staff inductions.
- Progressing the authorship guidelines project and the Technician Commitment preparations.
- Reviewing our reproducibility awareness activities and how we better quality assure data analysis.
- Quarterly reporting on open science indicators
- We will continue to develop and monitor progress towards the delivery against Trusted Research including leadership training
- We will continue to develop our SEAH Safeguarding provision, including training at leaderships level, focal point level and research staff level
- Develop case studies in good research culture.
- Testing an approach for improving how software/methods/tools are described, made accessible and citable, as well as mechanisms for providing credit to all contributors

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

NA

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

UKCEH maintains robust policies and procedures for Research Integrity and Misconduct in Research. Our Behaviour Framework and rewards system reinforce our commitment to a culture centred on Excellence, Teamwork, and Integrity.

No issues of research misconduct were reported in 2025. We continue to monitor and review our processes to ensure they remain effective and responsive to emerging challenges.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

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	0	0	0	0
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
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0

***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.**

NA