



UKRI 2022-2023 annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: RIsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Government research funding and research performing organisation.
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	17/05/2024
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Due to the Structure of UKRI and the many centres, units, and institutes the website below signposts colleagues to the correct disciplinary contact. https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/good-research-resource-hub/research-integrity/
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/good-research-resource-hub/research-integrity/ Email addresses can be found on the webpage: https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/research-integrity/

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 to maintain high standards of research integrity and promote positive research culture.
1. Policies and systems
1.1. External
1.2. UKRI policy on the governance of good research practice (GRP)¹
1.3. The policy and associated guidance documented aims to support best practice in managing research and research misconduct allegations for UKRI funded activities.
1.4. UKRI people and teams plan²

¹ UKRI policy on the governance of good research practice (GRP): <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-policy-on-the-governance-of-good-research-practice/>

² UKRI people and teams action plan <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/UKRI-20032023-UKRI-people-and-teams-action-plan.pdf>

The UKRI people and teams action plan was launched in March 2023 and sets out how it will support the development of skilled people and teams in research and innovation and aims to reduce precarity in research careers.

1.5. Internal

1.6. Investigating allegations of misconduct in research policy³

1.7. The policy contains guidance for managers, employees, and the relevant HR teams in the handling of allegations of misconduct in research.

2. Communications and engagement

2.1. External

2.2. Good research resource hub⁴

2.3. UKRI aims to foster a research and innovation system where diverse people and ideas can thrive. The good research resource hub helps achieve UKRI aims, by bringing together policies, standards and guidance to support researchers, innovators and organisations. The hub is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the materials are up to date and fit for purpose.

3. Culture, development and leadership

3.1. Internal

3.2. Good Research Conduct network (GRECON)

3.3. The good research conduct network contains representatives and research integrity leads from across UKRI, including the research councils, Innovate UK and Research England. The group meets quarterly to discuss trends, processes, and activities, inform relevant UKRI work, and provide support for colleagues.

4. Monitoring and reporting

4.1. Information relating to Research Integrity collected by the UKRI Funding Assurance Programme⁵

4.2. During Financial Year 2022-23, 33 Research Organisations were subject to a Funding Assurance review. Their compliance with UKRI terms and conditions, encompassing research integrity and ethics, was examined. The 2022-23 Funding Assurance workplan included a mixture of Higher Education Institutions, Independent Research Organisations and Research Institutes across the UK, and six international Research Organisations. Assurance activity for Research Organisations is informed by the value of Research Council funding they receive. Those that feature in the top 40-funded Research Organisations are subject to an assurance assignment every three years; those in the top 40-100 on a five-to-six-year cycle. Research Organisations with lower volumes of funding are approached on a risk basis.

4.3. As part of the Funding Assurance review, Research Organisations must complete a Funding Assurance self-assessment questionnaire.⁶ Of the 33 Research Organisations reviewed, one had failed to produce and publish an Annual Statement, whilst a further two were found to have issues with the content of their Annual Statement not aligning to the requirements of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity⁷.

4.4. Issues relating to the timely review of policies concerning research integrity (including investigating allegations of research misconduct) were identified across four Research Organisations.

³ Investigating allegations of misconduct in research policy: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/investigating-allegations-of-misconduct-in-research-policy/>

⁴ Good research resource hub; <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/>

⁵ Funding assurance programme webpage: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/funding-assurance-programme/>

⁶ Funding assurance guidance programme <https://www.ukri.org/publications/funding-assurance-programme/>

⁷ Concordat To Support Research Integrity <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>

- 4.5. The funding assurance team may make requests for remedial action to address identified issues, and these are followed up on until acceptably resolved.
- 4.6. **Records of research misconduct allegations, as reported to UKRI (including research misconduct allegations reported in organisations that are a legal part of UKRI)**
- 4.7. Under commitment 5 of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, employers of researchers must provide a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken and include data on the number of investigations.⁸ UKRI chooses to include additional data from research organisations it funds, recognising that the more data that is publicly available the greater the insight into the health of the sector.
- 4.8. Summary information for allegations reported to UKRI is given in **section 3** for the Financial Year 2022-2023⁹. Any discernable upward trend in numbers of cases may reflect increased awareness of UKRI policy requirements and better reporting. UKRI does not investigate allegations of research misconduct in the research performing organisations that UKRI funds unless those organisations are part of UKRI in legal terms¹⁰.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

This section provides an update on changes made during the period, such as examples of new initiatives, training, developments, also some examples of ongoing changes that are still underway. The sections are further divided into externally facing activities undertaken by UKRI to support the research community, and internal activity to support UKRI work as a research organisation.

5. Externally facing activities undertaken on behalf of the sector, or to support the research community

- 5.1. **UK Committee on Research Integrity**
- 5.2. As part of its commitment to supporting high integrity across the research system, UKRI continues to host the UK Committee on Research Integrity. Information about the committee's workplan and activities are available on their website¹¹.
- 5.3. **Revised UKRI policy on the governance of good research practice guidance document**
- 5.4. In consultation with relevant internal teams, external stakeholders and external feedback, the guidance document associated with the UKRI governance of good research practice policy was reviewed.
- 5.5. Revisions included:
- Improving the clarity of the definitions surrounding investigation types.
 - Improving clarity on how the policy is related to funding.
 - Signposting to the Global Mobility Team for those carrying out formal investigations involving international researchers on the Global Talent Visa route.
- 5.6. **UKRI Review of peer review**
- 5.7. To ensure that UKRI continues to make the best choices of what and whom to fund it commissioned a Review of Peer Review¹² in 2022. The work, published in Summer

⁸ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf> pg 16

⁹ It should be noted that some cases may be duplicated, where reported to more than one research council. The councils are working towards eliminating such 'double counting'.

¹⁰ This refers to UKRI owned Centres, Institutes and Units where UKRI employs researchers, for example the MRC London Institute of Medical Sciences, NERC's British Antarctic Survey and STFC labs (non-exhaustive list).

¹¹ UK Committee on Research Integrity webpage, <https://ukcori.org/>

¹² Review of peer review <https://www.ukri.org/blog/peer-review-critical-to-our-success/>

2023, is intended as a resource for R&I funders across the globe looking to optimise and innovate their award-making processes¹³. Peer review is an underpinning process supporting quality and rigour in research and innovation. It is important peer review processes are robust and developed on an evidence base that protects quality and respects the time and resource of those involved in peer review.

5.8. MRC sex in experimental design requirement and webinar

5.9. New expectations for MRC applicants to use both sexes in the experimental design of studies involving animals, and human and animal tissues or cells, were announced and came into force for applications submitted from September 2022. The new expectations were developed to support good research practice, rigour and reproducibility in biomedical research. In July 2022 MRC and the National Centre for the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) hosted a joint webinar to offer guidance to applicants on implementing the new requirement in their research¹⁴.

5.10. Embedding diversity in research design working group

5.11. The MRC embedding diversity in research design working group met in May 2022 to consider the wider aspects of inclusive research design in studies involving human participation. The group considered evidence from a review of international funder activities, a survey of the research community and an analysis of research grant proposals submitted to MRC and provided their recommendations for the MRC Policy team. MRC is also working with the cross-UKRI EDI implementation group to consider wider policy.

5.12. UKRI has worked in collaboration with the Future Leadership Fellows Development Network (FLFDN) on inclusive research and innovation design. There was a jointly published blog as well as facilitated roundtable discussions and workshops to help conceptualise inclusive research and innovation design in different disciplines and environments. As part of this work, it was also explored where good practice exists and what support might be needed to inform wider policy supporting our ambition for a research and innovation system, 'by everyone, for everyone'.

5.13. NERC Responsible Business Statement

5.14. The NERC Responsible business statement now prioritises responsible research, which is one of the four NERC responsible business pillars (responsible research, environmental responsibility, social responsibility and responsible strategic decisions). The responsible research pillar includes research integrity; research ethics; partnerships for research and sustainable scientific method.

6. Internally facing activities to support UKRI staff, strategy and processes

6.1. Operationalising the Concordat to Support Research Integrity workshops

6.2. Over winter 2022-2023, a series of workshops were delivered that targeted UKRI centres, institutes and units to consider how UKRI can share best practice and continue to promote research integrity across our organisation. The workshops aimed to increase engagement across UKRI's research establishments to further our research integrity related aspirations and commitments as set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

6.3. MRC Institutes

6.4. The MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology (MRC LMB) holds two postdoc induction days per year. The events in November 2022 and March 2023 included topics on

¹³ Review of peer review published summer 2023 – UKRI <https://www.ukri.org/news/review-of-peer-review-published/>

¹⁴ MRC/NC3Rs webinar: Using both sexes in animal experiments webinar <https://nc3rs.org.uk/3rs-resources/mrc-nc3rs-webinar-using-both-sexes-animal-experiments>

Research Integrity and Good Research Practice. MRC LMB hosts a range of internal seminars and workshops on various research techniques and technology platforms which contribute to supporting research integrity and best research practice. Furthermore, MRC LMB has a Culture of Care commitment to improve animal welfare, scientific quality, care of staff, and transparency for stakeholders, including the public, with which researchers pledge to comply. LMB operates an open, “no-blame culture” where staff are encouraged to raise concerns or suggestions for improvements. There is a form on the institute intranet where concerns or observations can be raised anonymously.

6.5. MRC Laboratory of Medical Sciences developed a campaign to Promote Positive Culture across the Institute, which currently focuses on the causes of bullying and harassment and the support provided within the Institute. The focus is to encourage researchers to speak up if they encounter such behaviours, including research conduct concerns.

6.6. STFC research integrity subgroup

6.7. To ensure that STFC’s national laboratories and facilities uphold the expectations set out in the concordat, in the 2022- 2023 reporting year a subgroup was organised across the directors of the STFC national laboratories and facilities. The aim of the National Labs Research Integrity Group (RIG) is to oversee and promote the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of research across STFC’s national laboratories and facilities, including knowledge sharing and recognising good practice.

6.8. NERC Culture Forum

6.9. The NERC Culture Forum continues to facilitate collaboration and sharing between NERC Centres and wider NC partners, online and via a team SharePoint site and will meet by exception going forward. The Forum is an informal group for knowledge sharing and celebrating best practice relating to research culture and integrity across NERC’s Centres and National Capability Partners.

6.10. NERC Strategic Relationship and Assurance Meetings

6.11. Centres now must provide a Research Integrity update as part of the yearly Strategic Relationship and Assurance Meetings (SRAM) to encourage greater transparency and enable discussion of research integrity practice during the meetings.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

The following activities are evidence based and developed with careful consideration to ensure they do not create unnecessary bureaucracy through our processes.

7. Internally facing activities to support UKRI staff, strategy and processes

7.1. Reflections on STFC open science steering committee

7.2. Open science and open research practice have an integral role in supporting reproducibility and research integrity. The STFC Open Science Steering Committee provides a formal mechanism within STFC to highlight issues and facilitate the discussion of open science practices, policies and services relating to the business of the National Laboratories across all sites. It was set up to respond to evidence of the changing external and internal landscape regarding open access, open data and access to information.

Alongside this formal mechanism are more informal channels of awareness raising amongst researchers and research supporting roles across the organisation. The Open Science Café webinar series delivers a monthly programme of short webinars on topical issues relating to open science.

8. Externally facing activities undertaken on behalf of the sector, or to support the research community**8.1. Résumé for Research and Innovation**

8.2. The Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) is a flexible narrative CV template. R4RI is based on the Royal Society's Résumé for Researchers (R4R) but has been adapted to be more inclusive of UKRI's research and innovation communities. Throughout 2022 and 2023, UKRI rolled out the format across funding opportunities that require track record information. By the end of 2023, UKRI aims to use the R4RI in all its funding opportunities that run on its new Funding Service and that require track record information. Module 3 of the template creates space for applicants to demonstrate their contributions to the wider research and innovation community which can include activities in support of research integrity. It is hoped that recognition of such activity will act as an incentive.

8.3. MRC advancing discipline rigour

8.4. The centres at MRC Harwell will continue development of further processes for the validation of genetics of animals used in research to ensure rigour and reproducibility of the data obtained using these animals. Developing validation processes will support improving the rigour of methodology within the discipline. New mouse models are subject to strict quality control processes before the mice are released to the community. Alongside this work, MRC Harwell conducts a programme aimed to enhance efficiency and employ new technologies to modify genomes and plans to co-develop new assays and strategies for allele validation. The MRC Harwell Mary Lyon Centre launched ADVANCE training programs for researchers in March 2022¹⁵. The workshops cover genetic quality validation skills essential for supporting the reproducibility of research.

¹⁵ Further details and dates of previous and upcoming workshops are available on the website <https://www.har.mrc.ac.uk/training/>



Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3B1. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken where UKRI is recognised as the employer

MRC, NERC and STFC are the only councils where UKRI has employees that are covered by the scope of this reporting. There were no reports from NERC or STFC from this period.

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	Number not upheld
MRC					
Fabrication	1	1	0	1	0
Falsification	4	4	0	2	2
<i>Total number of investigations/allegations</i>	5	5	0	3	2
Total:	5	5	0	3	2

3B2. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken where UKRI is recognised as the employer, which were ongoing during previous statements but concluded during financial year 2022-23

MRC, NERC and STFC are the only councils where UKRI has employees that are covered by the scope of this reporting. There were no reports from STFC from this period.

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	Number not upheld
MRC					
Fabrication	2	2	0	2	0
Falsification	1	1	0	0	0
<i>Total number of investigations/allegations</i>	3	3	0	2	0
NERC					
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Total number of investigations/allegations</i>	1	0	0	0	1
Total:	4	3	0	2	1

3C. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been reported to UKRI by institutions in receipt of UKRI funding in line with the UKRI FEC grants standard terms and conditions of grant.¹⁶

Records of misconduct allegations information held by UKRI from Financial Years 2015-16 to 2021-22¹⁷ are available on the UKRI website.

UKRI encourages research performing organisations to conduct investigations into research misconduct allegations in a timely manner. This is to limit the impact these investigations have on the individuals involved and the research being conducted. However, UKRI recognises that the complexity of these cases can sometimes result in longer than recommended timelines.

In accordance with UK data protection legislation, UKRI does not normally disclose the identity of any individuals involved in any research misconduct allegations reported to UKRI. Information relating to the amount of funding in **Tables 3B and 3C** also cannot be provided, as to do so may result in individual award holders being identified.

Definitions of intentional research misconduct

UKRI, as a signatory to The Concordat to Support Research Integrity uses the descriptions of intentional research misconduct as defined in The Concordat, see commitment 4 for full definitions (fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations; misrepresentation; improper dealing with allegations of misconduct)¹⁸

¹⁶ <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UKRI-021122-fECGrantTermsAndConditions.pdf>

¹⁷ Research England records of misconduct allegation information are included in reports from Financial Year on the UKRI website - <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-integrity/>

¹⁸ Commitment 4 of the concordat lists descriptions of the forms of intentional misconduct <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>



Table 3C1: Records of research misconduct allegations information first reported to UKRI in its role as a funder in financial year 2022-23

AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC and RE funded work is in scope. MRC, NERC, STFC or RE were not informed of any allegations during this period.

Type of allegation	Number of formal investigations reported to the organisation	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation	Number not upheld	Number still ongoing
AHRC					
Plagiarism	1	0	0	0	1
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	0	0	0	1
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	1	0	0	0	1
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	1	0	0	0	1
BBSRC					
Plagiarism	1	1	0	0	0
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	1	1	0	0	0
EPSRC					
Plagiarism	5	0	2	0	3
Other*	1**	0	0	0	0
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	6	0	2	0	4
ESRC					
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	1	0	0	0	1
Total:	9	1	2	0	6

***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.**

EPSRC, other*: This was a case of alleged financial Fraud by a student who left the RO before disciplinary action could be taken; details were passed to police and the case closed by the organisation** without an outcome being reported.



Table 3C2: Investigations into Research Misconduct cases which were ongoing during previous statements, but concluded or remained ongoing during financial year 2022-23

AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC and RE funded work is in scope. ESRC, MRC, NERC, or STFC were not informed of any allegations that were ongoing during this period.

Type of allegation	Number of formal investigations reported to the organisation	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation	Number not upheld	Number still ongoing
AHRC					
Plagiarism	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	1	0	0	0	1
BBSRC					
Falsification	1	0	0	1	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0	1
Other*	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	1	0	0	1	2
EPSRC					
Falsification	1	0	1	0	0
Plagiarism	3	1		1	1
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	4	1	1	1	1
RE					
Plagiarism	3	0	1	2	0
<i>Total number of formal investigations</i>	3	0	1	2	0
Total:	9	1	2	4	4

***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.**

BBSRC Other: Breach of human tissue policy.*



FUNDING ASSURANCE QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS

Questionnaires were received from the following 33 organisations.

Research Organisation
Addis Ababa University
American University of Beirut
British Antarctic Survey
British Geological Survey
Cardiff University
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
De Montfort University
EMBL European Bioinformatics Institute
George Institute of Global Health of Australia
International Institute for Environment and Development
Loughborough University
National Film and Television School
Queen Mary, University of London
Rhodes University
Royal Holloway, University of London
Stellenbosch University
STFC Laboratories
University College London
University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Central Lancashire
University of East Anglia
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
University of Lagos
University of Leicester
University of Lincoln
University of Nottingham
University of Sheffield
University of Stirling
University of Sussex
University of The West of England, Bristol
University of Warwick