UKRIO UK Research Integrity Office

Self-Assessment Tool for

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

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UK Research Integrity Office

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Version 1.0

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Introduction

This self-assessment tool has been developed to help institutions identify areas of their research practices, systems and policies, researcher development and monitoring that may need revision in order to adhere to the requirements and recommendations of *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. While the Concordat addresses three key stakeholders involved with research – the researcher, employer and funder – this self-assessment tool focuses on the responsibilities of institutions that employ researchers.

It is a long-standing expectation that all involved in research must meet the highest standards of good practice and ethical conduct. Research integrity is an inherent part of professional conduct. It goes beyond meeting the standards of regulatory and contractual requirements. The Concordat recognises this and was not created to encourage a 'tick box' approach to these issues. Accordingly, UKRIO believes strongly that individual and institutional responses to the Concordat should not focus solely on fulfilling contractual and other obligations. While these obligations must be met, the aim should be the broader implementation of the Concordat's commitments.

This self-assessment tool will allow institutions to consider how they might carry out such a broad implementation, building on their existing activities. Guidance is given on every aspect of the Concordat but particular attention has been paid to areas where UKRIO has most often been approached for guidance, in the hope of passing on lessons learned to the research community. Use of the self-assessment questions will not only help with the implementation of the Concordat, but also enhance an institution's overall approach to research integrity and help ensure that important issues have not been overlooked.

Thematic approach

The Concordat sets out five high-level commitments which all involved in research must meet. Rather than repeat the Concordat verbatim, this document identifies five key themes which cut across those commitments. Taking each of these key themes in turn, this document poses self-assessment questions for institutions, each mapped onto one or more commitments of the Concordat (summarised in the next section). For each question, this document also introduces practical ways in which they might be met under the heading 'possible evidence'.

This approach groups related issues together, allowing a focus on strong recommendations and broad areas for action. It also reduces duplication, as there is a degree of overlap between the broad commitments of the Concordat.

Advisory, not prescriptive

A national, high-level framework such as the Concordat must be implemented with regard to local research environments and conditions. Our aim is **not** to suggest a 'one size fits all' approach or impose inflexible solutions. Rather, we hope that this self-assessment tool will help institutions consider how the Concordat can best be implemented in their particular settings, and how it might be used to promote and sustain research integrity.

An opportunity for review and reflection

The Concordat was developed to sustain and enhance the integrity of UK research in the long term, and to make current institutional assurance more visible. It builds upon existing standards and guidance for research practice and, consequently, much of what it says may appear familiar. However, organisations should not assume that they are already adhering to its commitments.

Not only does the Concordat contain new requirements and recommendations, but UKRIO has observed that there can often be gaps in existing institutional provisions for research integrity. Institutions might fall short of meeting certain standards or lack information on whether all of their provisions are effective. In our experience, a strong professional ethos drives most research in the UK. But there is no reason for complacency. Institutions must satisfy themselves that their existing measures are effective. The Concordat also provides them with an opportunity to consider how these measures might be built upon, to ensure a more visible and joined-up approach to supporting research integrity.

Annual statement

The final commitment of the Concordat recommends that institutions make an annual statement on research integrity to their governing body. It also recommends that this statement be made public. **Annex 1** discusses what might be included in the annual statement. It is intended as a guide to inform the drafting of an annual statement, rather than instructions that 'must' be followed. It is up to institutions to determine what their statements will contain.

A 'living document'

As organisations develop their research practices to implement the Concordat, and funding bodies develop processes to assess compliance, we expect this self-assessment tool to evolve. The intent is that it will be a 'living document', subject to periodic review and revision to reflect emerging best practice in this area. UKRIO welcomes feedback on the content and use of this document. Please submit any comments or suggestions via our website www.ukrio.org .

Footnote

Please note that this self-assessment tool was developed independently by UKRIO. It does not necessarily represent the views of the Concordat's authors or signatories, nor is it endorsed or warranted by them.

Five key themes of the Concordat

The five key themes we have identified in the Concordat are:

- Policies and systems
- Dissemination
- Culture and development
- Addressing research misconduct
- Monitoring and reporting

Taking each of these key themes in turn, this document poses self-assessment questions for institutions, each mapped onto one or more commitments of the Concordat. For each question, the document also introduces practical ways in which they might be met under the heading 'possible evidence'.

As noted in the introduction, this self-assessment tool should not be seen as prescriptive but as a guide to inform the implementation of the Concordat. It is up to employers and their researchers to determine the best way to do so in their particular research environment

It should also be noted that the 'possible evidence' is for use by institutions as part of the self-assessment process. It is **not** suggested that this level of information must be collated and provided to external bodies. Rather, it can be used to inform institutional statements on the implementation of the Concordat and, indeed, other internal and external requirements for assurance about research integrity.

Summary of the Concordat's commitments

1. Maintaining standards

Commitment #1: We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.

2. Ethical and other frameworks

Commitment #2: We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

3. Culture of integrity

Commitment #3: We are committed to supporting 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.

4. Research misconduct

Commitment #4: We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.

5. Strengthening integrity

Commitment #5: We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

Policies and systems

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 4. Research misconduct	• Do you have an institutional policy for research integrity?	• Relevant policy or policies. • Publicly-accessible web link to policy or policies.

1. Maintaining standards
2. Ethical and other frameworks
4. Research misconduct
	• Do the research integrity policy and other related policies include:
	  ○ Principles which describe the values and responsibilities relevant to research?
	  ○ Standards required for the conduct of research, also known as accepted or 'good' practice?
	  ○ A definition of research misconduct and all other unacceptable research practices?
		• Relevant sections of research integrity policy or related policies.

1. Maintaining standards
2. Ethical and other frameworks
4. Research misconduct
	• Does the research integrity policy:
	  ○ Apply to anyone conducting research under the auspices of the institution? For example: research students, employees, independent contractors and consultants, visiting or emeritus staff, staff on joint clinical or honorary contracts, or anyone conducting research using institutional facilities or on institutional premises?
	  ○ Apply to all research projects conducted under the auspices of your institution, regardless of whether they are externally-funded or not (e.g. student research or non-externally funded research by staff)?
		• Relevant provisions in research integrity policy or related policies.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 4. Research misconduct	• Is the research integrity policy applicable to all disciplines of research? Is it sensitive to different disciplinary norms? • Does the research integrity policy make it clear that its principles and standards apply to all stages of a research project, from beginning to end?	• Relevant provisions in research integrity policy.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 4. Research misconduct	• Does your research integrity policy (or related policies) address the following broad areas? ○ Research involving human participants, human tissue or remains, or personal data, including provisions for vulnerable participants. ○ Clinical trials and device trials falling under UK and EU legislation. ○ Other types of health and social care research. ○ Research involving animal subjects. ○ Trials that do not involve humans or animals, e.g. environmental research. ○ Conflicts of interest (including an institutional due diligence process). ○ Signposting to the ethical review requirements. ○ Publication and authorship. ○ Research misconduct: reporting and investigation.	• Relevant provisions in research integrity policy or related policies/ guidance.
1. Maintaining standards	• Do your research integrity policy and related policies (e.g. policy for ethical approval, research misconduct procedure)	• Relevant provisions in research integrity policy and other policies/ guidance.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
2. Ethical and other frameworks **4. Research misconduct**	set out: ○ Acceptable conduct for research involving: human participants; human tissue, material or remains; personal data, animal research subjects; and any other types of research as required by your institution? ○ What conduct is unacceptable in the above types of research?	
1. Maintaining standards	• Does your institution have policies/ guidance on issues which can affect research integrity? For example: ○ Collaborative research. ○ Data protection and security for collection, retention and sharing of (sensitive) data. ○ Environmental/ societal impact of research. ○ Financial management in relation to research projects. ○ Intellectual property. ○ Peer review. ○ Possible future use and dual-use. ○ Public engagement and impact. ○ Research design. ○ Risk management processes, e.g. health and safety.	• Relevant policies/ guidance and/or information on how research integrity is addressed in these areas by other means. • Publicly-accessible web link to policies/ guidance where they exist.
2. Ethical and other frameworks	• Do you have a policy and system for the ethical review and approval of research projects?	• Policy for ethical approval and associated systems. • Publicly-accessible web link to policy.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence

	• Does it apply to:
	  ○ Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the institution, including but not limited to: research students; employees; independent contractors and consultants; visiting or emeritus staff; staff on joint clinical or honorary contracts; or anyone conducting research using institutional facilities or on institutional premises?
	  ○ Research involving: human participants; human tissue, material or remains; personal data, animal research subjects; and any other types of research as required by your institution (i.e. that might not involve humans or animals)?
	• Does it apply to undergraduate research? If so, what provisions exist to ensure that the process is proportionate?
	• Does it set out:
	  ○ Principles underpinning the ethical conduct of research? For example: autonomy, beneficence, confidentiality, integrity and non-maleficence.
	  ○ A process for the objective and rigorous ethical review of research which falls within the scope of the ethics policy?
	  ○ Principles which inform that review process? For example: competence, facilitation, independence and openness.
	  ○ The various approaches to ethical review which are in use at your institution and when they are relevant to a research project? For example, university ethics approval, NHS or social care.
		• Relevant provisions in ethics policy.
		• Description of the university's system for seeking ethical approval.
		• Ethics policy includes information on relevant external systems for ethical review and when they apply. For example, NHS and social care.
		• Structure and remit of institutional ethics committees.
		• Sources of advice and resources available to researchers.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	○ An overview of your institution's ethics committees and their relationship? ○ Sources of help and training available to researchers? ○ Appeals process? ○ Annual reporting and review?	
2. Ethical and other frameworks	• Does your institution have specific policies or guidance on: ○ Studies that require a review under the *HRA Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees* (GAfREC) (e.g. human clinical trials or research involving human tissue)? ○ Other health and social care research? ○ Research involving animal subjects, including implementation of the '3Rs' – Replacement, Refinement and Reduction?	• Relevant policies or guidance. • Publicly-accessible web link to policies/ guidance.
1. Maintaining standards **4. Research misconduct**	• Has your organisation considered whether guidance on research integrity is needed for research-related areas such as consultancy and knowledge exchange/ transfer?	• Relevant policies and/or information on how research integrity is addressed in these areas by other means. ○ For example, responsible consultancy and innovation, ethical licencing, review of funding sources.
1. Maintaining standards **2. Ethical and other frameworks** **4. Research misconduct**	• Do your various policies on research integrity and related issues cross-reference each other? • Do they contain consistent expectations and avoid contradicting each other? • Do they fit in with student regulations? Are they consistent,	• Relevant cross-referencing in research integrity policy and other policies/ guidance. • Wording checked during design and revision of policies to ensure clarity and avoid contradictions.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	and do policies and regulations use the same definitions for expected standards and unacceptable behaviours?	
1. Maintaining standards **2. Ethical and other frameworks** **4. Research misconduct**	• Have you reviewed your policies and systems against external standards? For example: ○ Requirements of regulatory and statutory bodies. ○ *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. ○ Higher education funding councils. ○ Research funders. ○ UK Departments of Health (e.g. the four UK Research Governance Frameworks for Health and Social/ Community Care). ○ NHS Health Research Authority (e.g. *HRA Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees*). ○ *An Institutional Framework for the 3Rs* ○ *The Concordat on Openness in Animal Research in the UK* ○ Learned societies and professional bodies. ○ Committee on Publication Ethics (e.g. *Cooperation Between Research Institutions and Journals on Research Integrity Cases*). ○ Association for Research Ethics (e.g. *A Framework of Policies and Procedures for University Research Ethics Committees*). ○ UK Research Integrity Office (e.g. *Code of Practice for Research* and *Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in*	• Information on how policies were developed and how they will be reviewed.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	Research). ○ International bodies (e.g. *European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*, *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity* and *Montreal Statement on Research Integrity*	
1. Maintaining standards **2. Ethical and other frameworks** **4. Research misconduct**	• Have you liaised with Human Resources, Staff / Student Development, Doctoral Training Centre, Registry, Governance etc. as necessary, to ensure research integrity policies are in line with relevant legislation, statutes and ordinances, and other institutional policies and systems?	• Information on how policies were developed and how they will be reviewed.

Dissemination

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Have you publicised your research integrity policy and related guidance to all staff, students and others who conduct research under the auspices of your institution? • Have you publicised the following to all staff, students and others who conduct research under the auspices of your institution? ○ Policy for ethical approval and associated systems, and that it applies to all research involving: human participants; human tissue, material or remains; personal data, animal research subjects; and any other types of research as required. ○ Research misconduct policy. ○ Policies on human clinical trials; health and social care research; research involving human tissue, material or remains; and research involving animal subjects. ○ Policies on issues which can affect research integrity (see 'Policies and systems', above, for examples). ○ Sources of help, training and advice (institutional and external) available on issues of research integrity.	• Central institutional web page(s) on research integrity and/or links to research integrity resources from College/ Faculty/ School/ Departmental website areas. ○ Includes publicly-accessible links to research integrity policy, policy and systems for ethical approval, and research misconduct procedure. • Presentations at inductions, PGR committees, Faculty/ School/ Departmental committees and meetings. • Lectures and workshops for research staff and students, including any recordings put on institutional website. • Research integrity component of institutional e-learning package. • Promotional material, such as leaflets, summarising the institution's approach to research integrity and available policies and resources.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity	• Do you make information on your institution's approach to research integrity and the standards required available to researchers (including research students) when they join the organisation?	• Research integrity component of staff inductions: ○ For early-career researchers. ○ For Principal Investigators, supervisors, managerial and other

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
4. Research misconduct	• Do you make sure that this information is communicated to experienced/ senior researchers when they join the organisation, and is not limited to early-career researchers?	senior positions. • Research integrity component of research student inductions.
	• Do you remind staff in leadership positions (at whatever level) that they have a responsibility to raise awareness of research integrity, the institution's requirements in this area, and sources of guidance and support?	• Presentations, circulars, and promotional material which highlight this responsibility • Examples of the material and resources that are made available to staff in leadership positions to assist them in raising awareness.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks	• Do you encourage researchers to familiarise themselves with the legal, ethical and other frameworks relevant to their work? • Do you signpost key developments in legal, ethical and other frameworks to your researchers?	• Relevant provisions in research integrity policy and ethical approval policy; guidance from Faculties/ Schools etc. on this issue. • Communications highlighting revisions or other changes to legal, ethical and other requirements for research.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Can members of the public, external researchers and representatives of other organisations access policies and contact points for research integrity and research misconduct?	• Research integrity policies, including those on research misconduct and 'whistleblowing', accessible on the organisation's external website. • Named contacts for research integrity and research misconduct identified on the organisation's external website and other appropriate places (e.g. UKRIO website).
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Do you provide information on research integrity to research participants, including patients and trial participants?	• Examples of information provided to research participants.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Do you integrate your dissemination activities with other institutional communications/ activities, so research integrity is not seen as something in isolation or an 'add-on'?	• Examples of how awareness-raising about research integrity has been incorporated into other institutional communications and activities.

Culture and development

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
3. Culture of integrity 5. Strengthening integrity	• How is research integrity recognised in your institution's research strategy? • Does research integrity feature in your institution's risk management matrix (i.e. is reviewed at senior level)?	• Relevant provisions in institutional research strategy. • Relevant provisions in institutional risk management matrix.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Does a senior group within your institution have strategic responsibility for the promotion and monitoring of research integrity? For example, research committee, ethics committee, governance and audit committee.	• Terms of reference for the group. • Group listed in research integrity policy and related institutional policies. • Examples of how you have publicised its remit and contact information.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Has your institution identified a senior member of staff to act as the operational lead on matters of research integrity and the first point of contact for anyone wanting more information? • If your institution has a collegiate or other devolved structure, do you also have other named points of contact at appropriate levels? For example, at college or divisional level. Do you publicise their role and contact information?	• Senior member of staff listed in research integrity policy and related institutional policies. • Examples of how you have publicised their role and contact information, internally and externally. • URL of a publicly-accessible web page listing relevant contact information. • Similar information for any other named points of contact.
3. Culture of integrity 5. Strengthening integrity	• Whether your institution has a collegiate or other devolved structure, or not, have you assessed: ○ If institutional research integrity standards are seen as practical and relevant by colleges/ faculties/ schools/ etc.	• Snapshot survey of colleges/ faculties/ schools/ etc. • Mapping exercise. • Any revision of policies, dissemination and training activities,

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	or if they view them as burdensome, 'one size fits all' or irrelevant? ○ If policies, sources of help, development opportunities etc. are sensitive to, and support, the working practices and disciplinary norms of colleges/ faculties/ schools/ etc.?	sources of help etc. made following the above.
3. Culture of integrity **5. Strengthening integrity**	• How have you captured the interest of researchers in research integrity? Especially senior researchers?	• Engage senior researchers/ managers as 'champions' to promote culture of research integrity amongst local research environment and to assist with implementation plan. • Incentivise engagement with research integrity through recognition in performance review, workforce/ workload model planning and other relevant staff development processes. • Incentivise engagement with research integrity through implementation and dissemination of clear policies on authorship and intellectual property. • Presentations on the importance of research integrity by speakers who hold senior research or leadership roles at other institutions. • Highlighting of good practice in relation to research integrity and the benefits it can bring to researchers. For example, better protection re. liability and institutional insurance constraints, greater assurance of continuing opportunities to seek funding, 'making sure you're all on the same page' in collaborative research with different teams, organisations, countries. • Similarly, highlighting of poor or unacceptable practices and the harm it can cause to a researcher's career, regardless of

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
		seniority.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Do you provide senior staff, PIs, PhD supervisors, research managers, etc. with information and resources to help them promote research integrity the institution's requirements in this area, and sources of guidance and support to their colleagues?	• Examples of the material and resources that are made available to assist such staff in raising awareness.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity	• Do you encourage staff to support each other informally and share their perspectives and experiences?	• Information on mentoring • Working group, one-day conference, case study workshop, seminars, panel discussions, networking events.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Do you provide training to your researchers to help them achieve the following broad aims? ○ Understanding of the required standards and what is considered 'best practice' for their research. ○ Recognition that research integrity is relevant to all research and all researchers. ○ Encouraging reflection on the challenges involved in conducting ethical and high-quality research, and how they might be addressed. ○ Understanding that researchers should speak out if they require support or have concerns about research misconduct, and the sources of help available to them.	• Information on: ○ The training and educational resources available to researchers. ○ The audiences that have been reached by your education and training activities. • Samples of training materials, case studies etc. • Research integrity component of institutional e-learning package. • Online self-assessment tools, for both early-career and more experienced researchers. • Training materials hosted on institutional web page(s) on research integrity and/or linked to from College/ Faculty/ School/ Departmental website areas.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence

		• Any training with a particular focus, for example:
		  ○ The value of ethical review and the process of seeking ethical approval.
		  ○ Discipline-specific training.
		  ○ College, faculty- or school-level activities.
		  ○ Specific types of research (e.g. clinical trials; research involving animal subjects; covert research).
		  ○ Specific aspects of the research process, such as publication and authorship.
		  ○ Introduction or revision of institutional policies and systems for research.

1. Maintaining standards
2. Ethical and other frameworks
3. Culture of integrity
4. Research misconduct
	• How do you incorporate research integrity training and understanding of relevant policies and guidelines into teaching / development / other activities for:
	  ○ Research students?
	  ○ Research staff, including early-career researchers?
	  ○ Senior staff, including researchers and other managerial positions?
	  ○ Administrators?
	  ○ Technical staff?
		• Information on modules and workshops for:
		  ○ Postgraduate researchers.
		  ○ Post docs.
		  ○ Staff inductions.
		  ○ New PhD supervisors.
		  ○ New Principal Investigators.
		  ○ New members/ chairs of ethics committees.
		  ○ New Heads of Departments.
		• 1-2-1training when appropriate (e.g. for more senior staff).
		• Refresher courses for staff and students.
		• The audiences that have been reached by these education and

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
		training activities.
2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity	• Do you provide training for researchers involved in: ○ Human participant research, including clinical trials? ○ Other health and social care research? ○ Research involving human tissue, material or remains? ○ Research involving personal data? ○ Animal subject research, including implementation of the '3Rs'?	• Information on: ○ The training and educational resources available to these researchers. ○ Audiences reached by these education and training activities.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Do you provide training, continuing professional development and support for staff involved undertaking the following roles: ○ Chairs or members of ethical review committees? ○ Research governance? ○ Research integrity officer or equivalent role?	• Information on: ○ The training and educational resources available to such staff. ○ Audiences reached by these education and training activities.
1. Maintaining standards 2. Ethical and other frameworks 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Do you integrate your training and development with the activities of other groups responsible for staff and research student development, so research integrity is not seen as something in isolation or an 'add-on'? ○ For example, staff development, central student support departments, PGR tutors, support programmes for postdocs and new PIs.	• Examples of how research integrity training has been incorporated into other institutional development activities.
1. Maintaining standards	• Have you assessed the required level and content of your training and development, and how it could best be provided?	• Outcome of this assessment reflected in your training content and delivery.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
2. Ethical and other frameworks **3. Culture of integrity** **4. Research misconduct**	For example: ○ What is provided centrally and what is done at discipline level? ○ What expertise exists in your institution to deliver the training at either central or local level? ○ How does the institution obtain expertise if it does not have it?	

Addressing research misconduct

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence

1. Maintaining standards
4. Research misconduct
	• Do you have an institutional procedure for the reporting and investigation of allegations of research misconduct?
	• Does it align with your research integrity and other relevant policies, and with your statutes and ordinances, and not conflict with them?
	• Does it include?
	  ○ A clear definition of research misconduct.
	  ○ A process for reporting concerns about the conduct of research.
	  ○ A screening or initial assessment stage.
	  ○ A formal investigation stage.
	  ○ A review or appeals process.
	  ○ A reporting and outcomes stage.
	  ○ Standards to ensure that investigations are objective, thorough and fair, and carried out in a transparent and timely manner.
	  ○ Principles to inform the operation of the procedure.
	  ○ Provisions for appropriate confidentiality.
	  ○ Clarification on the skills, knowledge, experience and authority which should be possessed by the persons responsible for the operation of the procedure.
		• Research misconduct procedure, including link on a publicly-accessible web page.
		• Relevant provisions in research misconduct procedure.
		• References to research misconduct procedure in other institutional policies and in statutes and ordinances.
		• Information on how you have publicised the research misconduct procedure and the process for reporting concerns about research misconduct.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence

1. Maintaining standards
4. Research misconduct
	• Does your research misconduct procedure apply to:
	  ○ All disciplines of research?
	  ○ Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the institution, including but not limited to: research students; employees; independent contractors and consultants; visiting or emeritus staff; staff on joint clinical or honorary contracts; or anyone conducting research using institutional facilities or on institutional premises?
	• Does your research misconduct procedure explain if and under what circumstances the procedure applies to research students? Does it also note any other mechanisms that may be used to investigate the conduct of research students, such as exam or other student regulations?
	• Do your research misconduct procedure, research integrity policy and related guidance use the same definitions for expected standards and unacceptable behaviours? Do they avoid contradicting each other? Do they cross-reference each other?
		• Scope/ remit of research misconduct procedure.
		• Links between research misconduct procedure and relevant student regulations.
		• Wording checked during design and revision of policies to ensure clarity and consistency, and avoid contradictions, including exam or other student regulations.
		• Relevant cross-referencing in research misconduct procedure and other policies/ guidance, including exam or other student regulations.

1. Maintaining standards **3. Culture of integrity** **4. Research misconduct**	• Does your institution have a named point of contact (or recognise an appropriate third party) to act as confidential liaison for whistleblowers or anyone wishing to raise concerns about the research being conducted under your auspices? • Is this 'named person' identified in your research misconduct procedure, your institutional whistleblowing policy and on your website? Do you publicise their role and contact	• 'Named person' listed in research misconduct procedure and related institutional policies. • Examples of how you have publicised their role and contact information, including to external collaborators and the public. • URL of a publicly-accessible web page listing relevant contact information. • Similar information for any other named points of contact.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	information? • If your institution has a collegiate or other devolved structure, do you also have other named points of contact at appropriate levels? E.g. college or divisional level? Do you publicise their role and contact information?	
1. Maintaining standards 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• Are disclosures relating to alleged research misconduct included within the scope of your institutional whistleblowing policy?	• Relevant provision in institutional whistleblowing policy.
1. Maintaining standards 3. Culture of integrity 4. Research misconduct	• To encourage the reporting of concerns, especially by students or early-career researchers, does your procedure allow for concerns to be raised with the named person via, or with the assistance of, an intermediary? For example, a line manager, tutor/ supervisor, head of school, trade union representative, officer of the Students' Union or colleague.	• Relevant provisions in research misconduct procedure. • Relevant provisions in related institutional policies, e.g. whistleblowing policy.
4. Research misconduct	• Does your research misconduct procedure have the ability to initiate an investigation, *at your institution's discretion*, where the complainant is anonymous or where there is no specific complainant?	• Relevant provision in research misconduct procedure, with any decision to initiate such an investigation taking into account: ○ The seriousness of the concerns raised. ○ The credibility of the concerns. ○ The likelihood of confirming the concerns from alternative and credible sources.
4. Research misconduct	• Does your research misconduct procedure allow your institution to follow an investigation through to completion even in the event that the individual concerned leaves the	• Relevant provision in research misconduct procedure.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	institution? Does the procedure allow you to investigate the conduct of individuals who have already left the institution?	
4. Research misconduct	• Does your research misconduct policy include the provision to pass a matter to a regulator, other statutory body or professional body for consideration?	• Relevant provision in research misconduct procedure.
4. Research misconduct	• As well as considering the conduct of individuals, does your research misconduct procedure include the following within its scope? ○ Any actions necessary to safeguard research participants, patients and any other involved parties. ○ Correcting the record of research. ○ Addressing and remedying any research misconduct that may have taken place. ○ Making relevant reports, with appropriate confidentiality, to regulators, professional bodies, funders, journals, research participants and others. ○ Reporting on any procedural or organisational issues which should be reviewed by the institution. ○ Initiating further investigations of alleged research misconduct. ○ Remedial training, mentoring and monitoring when an allegation of research misconduct was upheld but the person(s) involve continue to work or study at the institution.	• Relevant provisions in research misconduct procedure.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	○ Non-disciplinary approaches to resolve matters which are of a relatively minor nature or involve honest error (i.e. there was no intent to deceive). For example, mediation between involved parties, training, mentoring and monitoring.	
4. Research misconduct	• Does your research misconduct procedure have the option, *at your institution's discretion*, for the screening/ initial assessment stage (or the equivalent) to be carried out by a small panel rather than a single person? If so, does this panel have the option of including a member from outside your institution?	• Relevant provision in research misconduct procedure. ○ For example, when an allegation is deemed to be particularly complex or contentious; the field of research is new, particularly specialised, or has been the subject of considerable debate in the academic, scientific or medical communities; or the field of research has been the subject of public debate and concern.
4. Research misconduct	• Does your research misconduct procedure require that Formal Investigation Panels (or the equivalent) include a member from outside your institution?	• Relevant provision in research misconduct procedure.
4. Research misconduct	• As in 'policies and systems', above, have you: ○ Reviewed your research misconduct procedure against external standards? ○ Liaised with other professional services (e.g. Human Resources, etc.) to ensure that your research misconduct procedure is in line with relevant legislation and with other institutional policies and systems, and with your statutes and ordinances?	• Information on how policies were developed and how they will be reviewed.

Monitoring and reporting

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence

1. Maintaining standards
2. Ethical and other frameworks
4. Research misconduct
5. Strengthening integrity
	• How regularly do you review the following policies and systems?
	  ○ Research integrity policy.
	  ○ Policy for ethical approval and associated systems.
	  ○ Research misconduct policy.
	  ○ Policies on issues which can affect research integrity (see 'Policies and systems', above, for examples).
	• How often do you seek feedback from researchers, research students and research administrators on policies and associated systems, their dissemination and associated training?
		• Information on when policies were last updated.
		• Proposed future review cycle.
		• Information on how feedback is sought on policies.
		• 'Frequently asked questions' drawn from common or notable issues raised in feedback and listed on institutional website.

2. Ethical and other frameworks 5. Strengthening integrity	• What is your reporting structure from local research ethics committees to your institution's central research ethics committee (or equivalent body)? ○ For example, local ethics committees might make an annual report to the central committee. It could contain summary data on the projects reviewed (number, discipline/ type, outcome of review process); information on any strengths, issues or trends identified; and a random sample of approved applications and, in some cases, disputed applications as well.	• Information in your institution's policy for ethical approval on what information is shared and how. • Examples of information shared and any actions taken further to the summary information, all anonymised as appropriate,.
2. Ethical and other frameworks	• Do you have review meetings between central ethics	• Information on the regularity of meetings.

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
5. Strengthening integrity	committee members and local ethics committees and officers?	• Minutes of meetings.

1. Maintaining standards
2. Ethical and other frameworks
4. Research misconduct
5. Strengthening integrity
	• Do you have systems for monitoring compliance with institutional and external requirements? For example:
	  ○ Clinical trial model for high risk projects.
	  ○ Proportionate model for lower risk projects.
	  ○ Self-monitoring when appropriate.
	• Do you carry out:
	  ○ Monitoring of a random sample of research projects?
	  ○ Internal audits?
	  ○ Annual risk review?
	• Do you incorporate outcomes of external inspections (e.g. Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Human Tissue Authority and the Home Office) into your own monitoring of compliance with research integrity standards?
		• Information on systems for monitoring and audit.
		• Summary data from monitoring and audit of research projects.
		• Anonymised reports on specific projects.
		  • Reports from relevant external inspections. For example, Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Human Tissue Authority and the Home Office.

4. Research misconduct **5. Strengthening integrity**	• Is anonymised summary information on allegations of research misconduct received or (formally) investigated by your institution made available to relevant institutional bodies? For example, your governing body, research committee, central and other ethics committees, and human resources/ student services. ○ **Please note that** thresholds vary. Some institutions may share anonymised summary information concerning all	• Relevant provisions in your institution's research misconduct procedure. • Information on what material is shared and how, plus anonymised examples. • Information on how appropriate confidentiality is maintained in relation to this information. • Information on any actions taken further to the summary

Relevant Commitment(s)	Self-assessment questions	Possible evidence
	allegations received; others concerning allegations which progressed to the screening stage; while some may only share information on allegations which underwent formal investigation. • Are anonymised learning points from completed investigations made available to relevant institutional bodies and included in training for research staff and students?	information.
4. Research misconduct **5. Strengthening integrity**	• If research misconduct investigations are carried out at a devolved level (i.e. College / Faculty/ School, etc.), are confidential reports on allegations of research misconduct received or investigated at the devolved level made to your institution's 'named person'?	• Relevant provisions in your institution's research misconduct policy. • Information on what information is shared and how, including provisions for confidentiality. • Information on any actions taken further to the summary information.
5. Strengthening integrity	• Have you made an annual statement on research integrity to your institution's governing body? ○ **See Annex 1 for discussion of what an annual statement might contain** • Have you made it public? • Have you made a similar annual statement/ report to any external funders or other bodies which require one (e.g. Research Councils UK, US Office of Research Integrity)?	• Publication of annual statement. • Information on how you have publicised the annual report, including URL of publicly-accessible web page. ○ Web page also holds links to previous annual statements for purposes of comparison. • Annual statements/ reports that have been submitted to relevant external funders and other bodies.

Annex 1: suggested annual statement content

The Concordat recommends that institutions make an annual statement to their governing body on the actions they have undertaken to sustain and further enhance integrity in their research. It also recommends that institutions make their statements public. The annual statement is a valuable opportunity for internal review and reflection. Equally, it is an opportunity to demonstrate publicly a commitment to high quality and ethical research, by declaring the practical measures which an institution has undertaken to support research integrity.

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

Commitment #5: We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

…**employers of researchers** should present a short annual statement to their own governing body that:

- provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews)
- provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation
- provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

To improve accountability, and provide assurances that measures being taken continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity, this statement should be made publicly available.

Drawing on UKRIO's extensive experience, and feedback from institutions and researchers, this annex suggests possible content for the annual statement. As noted earlier, the self-assessment tool should not be seen as prescriptive. Accordingly, this annex is intended as a guide to inform the drafting of an annual statement. It is up to institutions to determine what their statements will contain. Like the rest of this document, this annex will be revised as the implementation of the Concordat evolves. UKRIO welcomes enquiries from institutions seeking advice on the content of their annual statements and is happy to assist its subscribers in drafting them.

It should be noted that the annual statement is *recommended* by the Concordat; it is not a requirement. However, UKRIO strongly endorses this recommendation and would urge institutions to produce annual statements and make them public, for the reasons given at the beginning of this annex.

Writing the annual report

The annual report should provide a brief but wide-ranging summary of activities undertaken to support research integrity, including addressing any allegations of misconduct. The report should not be limited to activities which relate specifically to the implementation of the Concordat, let alone to those which relate only to compliance with the Concordat, or with other guidance, as a condition of grant.

This is not to diminish the importance of contractual and other mandatory standards. The annual statement can certainly be used to demonstrate that these are being met, in particular the 'responsibilities of employers of researchers' listed in the Concordat. However, it can – and, in UKRIO's view, *should* – also demonstrate a broader commitment to the promotion of research integrity. If for any reason a contractual or other required standard is not being met, the report should contain a brief summary of what is being done to address this and a proposed completion date. For example: "The publicly accessible web link to our research integrity policies and the named person for receiving allegations of misconduct is not yet in place. This will be rectified by the beginning of the next semester."

It may be challenging to summarise a year's worth of research integrity support in a brief and accessible form. However, merely listing activities undertaken should be avoided. It would be helpful not only to say what has been done, but the reasons for actions taken and the outcome. For example: "Drawing on lessons learned from a recent investigation of research misconduct, we have undertaken additional activities to raise awareness of the sources of help on research practice and ethics available to researchers. Downloads of relevant policies and visits to our institutional research integrity web pages subsequently increased."

The annual statement is also an opportunity to highlight how existing measures and previous actions are being built upon or further developed. As successive annual statements are published by an institution, we feel it would be helpful if they had a strong focus on new measures and significant changes to existing measures, rather than simply echoing what has gone before. Previous statements should remain available on the institution's website.

Suggested content: supporting and strengthening research integrity

- Evidence of how your institution is implementing the commitments of the Concordat, including compliance with its 'responsibilities of employers of researchers'. For example:
    - An overview of your institution's strategy and objectives to strengthen understanding of research integrity.
    - Introduction or revision of research integrity policies and procedures, requirements, process reviews or support mechanisms.
    - Revision of related institutional systems (e.g. financial audit process or whistleblowing policy).
    - Inclusion of relevant external requirements and guidance into institutional processes.
    - Dissemination and awareness-raising activities that you have undertaken.
    - A summary of your education and training provision, including the audiences that have been reached and any new activities.

- Information on any research into research integrity or related fields, such as research ethics, undertaken by members of your institution.
- A description of your internal monitoring and audit processes, including information on any revisions or developments, plus summary data.
- Summary of outcomes of any external inspections/ audits.

Suggested content: addressing research misconduct

- Confirmation that:
  - Your institution has a processes for the reporting and investigating of allegations of research misconduct.
  - The process has appropriate principles and mechanisms to ensure that investigations are thorough and fair, carried out in a transparent and timely manner, and protected by appropriate confidentiality.
- Brief, anonymised summary data on any formal investigations conducted by your institution into allegations of research misconduct. For example:
  - Number of formal investigations undertaken in the past year, including:
    - How many allegations were upheld in full or in part?
    - How many allegations were dismissed?
    - The number of ongoing investigations.
  - A breakdown of the number of formal investigations undertaken in the past year:
    - By discipline.
    - By the broad type of misconduct that was alleged. For example, fabrication/ falsification, plagiarism or failure of duty of care to research participants.
    - For allegations that were externally funded, a breakdown by funding body.
  - **Please note that:**
    - Specific allegations/ investigations and the individuals and research projects concerned should **not** be identifiable from this data.
    - Regarding the number of formal investigations undertaken, how many allegations were upheld or dismissed, and the breakdowns by discipline, type and funder, it is UKRIO's view that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer as long as the data provided is accurate. This has been echoed by other bodies with interests in this area, for example Research Councils UK in its 2014 *Research Integrity Assurance Questions*.
- Confirmation that the institution fulfilled any requirements to make reports to external bodies, including regulatory and professional bodies, regarding the initiation or completion of a formal investigation. In our view, there is no need to provide additional information in the annual statement,

simply to confirm that the institution has met its obligations. External bodies may require additional confirmation separately from the annual statement, for example via their assurance or audit processes.

- A short summary of key learning points from concluded investigations and subsequent actions taken. For example: revision of systems or policies, training on particular aspects of the research process or improvements to dissemination of expected standards.
    - **Please note that** it is not suggested that disciplinary or other actions taken in relation to specific individuals is listed. However, if the institution has previously made any public statements that mentioned such actions, these could be linked to.

Suggested content: external engagement

- Collaborations with external organisations to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues, whether UK-based institutions or those from other countries.
- Regional, national or international initiatives on research integrity which your institution has contributed to or participated in.
- Public engagement activities conducted by your institution, particularly involving research participants or patients, which included coverage of research integrity.
- External conferences, workshops or other events on research integrity to which your institution has contributed.
- Membership of, or collaborations with, organisations with a particular interest in research integrity and related issues. For example, the Association for Research Ethics, the Committee on Publication Ethics or UKRIO.

Suggested content: funder-specific activities

- A summary of any actions taken to safeguard and support research integrity relating to researchers and projects supported by particular funding bodies.
    - **Please note that** you may prefer to list funder-specific activities as subsets of relevant general activities instead of listing them in a separate section. For example, a description of your 'generic' training and development activities could be followed by a summary of training provided for researchers supported by a particular funder.

Annex 2: acknowledgements and further reading

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The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) is an independent charity, offering support to the public, researchers and organisations to further good practice in academic, scientific and medical research. We welcome enquiries on any issues relating to the conduct of research, whether promoting good research practice, seeking help with a particular research project or investigating cases of alleged fraud and misconduct.

Since 2006, UKRIO has provided independent, expert and confidential support across all disciplines of research, from the arts and humanities to the life sciences. We cover all research sectors: higher education, the NHS, private sector organisations and charities. No other organisation in the UK has comparable expertise in providing such support in the field of research integrity.

UKRIO welcomes enquiries on any issues relating to the conduct of research, whether promoting good research practice, seeking help with a particular research project or investigating cases of alleged fraud and misconduct.

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