



RESEARCH INTEGRITY OFFICE

Promoting integrity and high ethical standards in research
Providing confidential, independent and expert support

Self-Assessment Tool for the Concordat to Support Research Integrity

*Standalone Guidance on Research
Integrity Statements*

Version No.: 3.0

Publication Date: 29/07/2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO.2025.07.self-assessment>

Annual research integrity statements: suggested content

Commitment 5 of the Concordat (2025) requires that organisations publish: *“on their organisation’s website, an annual statement, approved by their own governing body, reporting progress on meeting the Concordat principles and commitments. This statement must include a summary table of the number and types of research misconduct allegations reported to the organisation and investigations undertaken.”*

It further states that *“Organisations are encouraged, but not required, to use the [Concordat Annual Statement template](#)”* – a template developed by UKRIO with the RICS Group.

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 organisation has undertaken to enhance research integrity and its research culture. When read as a series, an organisation’s annual statements should illustrate how it has continually developed its support for good research practice over time.

Drawing on UKRIO’s extensive experience, and feedback from organisations, researchers and research-enabling staff, this section suggests possible content for the annual statement. As noted earlier, the self-assessment tool should not be

seen as prescriptive. Accordingly, this section is intended as a guide to inform the content of an annual statement in line with the requirements of the Concordat.

UKRIO welcomes enquiries from organisations seeking advice on the content of their annual statements and is happy to assist its subscribers in drafting them.

Writing the annual report

Structure: in general terms, it is recommended that the annual statement should use the format of the Concordat [annual statement reporting template](#). This is divided into three sections.

Section 1: Key Contact Information

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture

Section 2 (*“a description of actions and activities undertaken...”*) covers supporting research integrity and positive research culture in general terms and relates to Commitments 1, 2, 3 and 5. It includes sub-sections covering:

- A description of current systems and culture.
- Changes and developments during the period under review.
- Reflections on progress and plans for future developments.
- A case study on good practice (optional).

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

This section covers how the organisation addresses research misconduct. It includes sub-sections covering:

- A statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct.
- Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

Within that broad structure, organisations have considerable scope to describe activities undertaken, ‘lessons learned’ and plans for the future. Some suggestions on content are made later in this section, but these should be seen as a starting point rather than prescriptive.

Annual statements should include a summary of any actions taken to safeguard and support research integrity relating to researchers and projects supported by particular funding bodies. These can either be included in the suggested structure given above or in an additional section specifically for funder-related activities.

Essential information: annual statements should state the date on which the organisation’s governing body approved the document and the date on which it was made publicly available. For version control purposes, the dates of any amendments to the statement and a brief description should be listed at the end of the document.

Each annual statement should include a link to the previous statement and to

any earlier ones referred to in the text. This could either be direct links or a link to a web page that hosts all previous annual reports.

As readers may have questions about the statement, it should also include contact details for persons who can receive requests for clarification or further information. This could be direct email links or a link to the research integrity section of the organisation’s website.

Period covered: 12 months. Neither the Concordat nor the template mandates the use of the calendar year, academic year or financial year; it is up to the organisation to decide its preferred approach

Scope: the annual statement 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. The scope should be wider, covering all organisational activities to safeguard and enhance good research and demonstrate a broader commitment to the promotion of research integrity and a positive research culture.

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 to say not only what has been done, but also the reasons for actions taken, the outcome and potential or planned next steps. 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 organisational research integrity web pages subsequently increased. We will follow up with further promotion of relevant training resources and sources of advice.”

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 organisation, 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 organisation’s website and be linked to in new statements. We recommend that organisations check periodically how easy it is to find and access their statements on their website. For example, can it be found easily when using an internet search engine and search terms that a member of the public with no research

experience might use? How easy is it to find the statement using such search terms in the organisational website’s search facility? Is the statement itself presented in an accessible format and with the option to be downloaded?

Suggested content: promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture

Evidence of how your organisation is implementing the commitments of the Concordat, including compliance with its ‘responsibilities of employers of researchers’. For example:

- An overview of your organisation’s strategy and objectives to strengthen understanding and support of research integrity.
- How research integrity is recognised in the organisation’s research strategy and who has strategic and operational responsibility for putting this into practice.
- How does the organisation communicate the standards and ethos which it wishes to underpin its culture of research?
- How does the organisation ensure that those standards and ethos are reflected in its research policies, practices and decision-making?
- How do the central research departments and committees work with faculties, schools, professional services

departments and others to embed a healthy research culture?

- Introduction or revision of research integrity policies and procedures, requirements, process reviews or support mechanisms.
- Revision of related organisational systems (e.g. financial audit process or whistleblowing policy).
- Inclusion of relevant external requirements and guidance into organisational processes.
- Any activities to capture the interest of researchers in research integrity, from students and early-career researchers to senior researchers and organisational leaders.
- Any activities to seek feedback on the organisation's research culture, including the views of researchers and others involved in its research.
- Any formal and informal initiatives and networks to provide information, resources and support to researchers and professional services staff, and/or to encourage them to support each other and share best practice.
- A summary of your education and training provision, including the audiences that have been reached and any new activities.
- Information about how open research is supported and resourced.
- Any activities to mitigate the negative impact of incentives in research on their researchers and research projects, and on the organisation's policies, practices and research culture.
- Any activities relating to mitigating negative impacts on research integrity from: how researchers are recruited, assessed and promoted; research assessment; workload models; staff development; staff welfare and the impact of bullying and harassment.
- How equality, diversity and inclusion has been supported in your research integrity strategy and activities.
- How sustainability has been taken account of in your research integrity strategy and activities.
- A description of your processes and actions relating to continuing improvement and revision relating to research integrity, including summary information from any relevant internal monitoring or audit processes.
- Summary of outcomes of any external inspections/ audits relating to research integrity.
- Any other activities undertaken to fulfil your organisation's strategy and objectives to

support research integrity and a healthy research culture.

- Public engagement and impact activities conducted by your organisation, particularly involving research participants or patients, which included coverage of research integrity.
- External conferences, workshops or other events on research integrity to which your organisation has contributed.
- Information on any academic research into research integrity or related fields, such as research ethics or research culture, undertaken by researchers from your organisation.
- Collaborations with external organisations to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues, whether UK-based organisations or those from other countries.
- Regional, national or international initiatives on research integrity which your organisation has contributed to or participated in.
- Membership of, or collaborations with, organisations with a particular interest in research integrity and related issues, such as the UK Research Integrity Office.

Please note that activities listed should not be limited to those covering the entire organisation and

its researchers. Those which focus on particular sections of the organisation, particular types of research or researchers, and so on, are just as relevant.

Suggested content: addressing research misconduct

Confirmation that:

- Your organisation has processes for the reporting and investigating of allegations of research misconduct.
- Mechanisms for the reporting of allegations are clear, well-articulated and confidential, and include a named point of contact and/or a recognised appropriate third party to act as confidential liaison for those raising concerns.
 - Any additional measures taken to encourage the reporting of concerns by students, early-career researchers, research participants and the public should also be listed.
- 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 provisions.
- There is appropriate support and training available for those involved with the investigation of breaches of integrity.

Brief, anonymised summary data on any formal investigations conducted by your organisation into allegations of research misconduct. UKRIO defines a 'formal investigation' as *"...that part of the [research misconduct*

investigation] Procedure which is intended to examine the allegations of misconduct in research, hear and review the evidence and determine whether the alleged misconduct occurred, take a view on who was responsible, and which may make recommendations as to any response that the Organisation might make. The Formal Investigation will be preceded by [a] Screening Stage". (Source: UKRIO Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research)

- Number of allegations received during the past year and how many then proceeded to a formal investigation.
- 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 relating to research that is 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. This may be particularly challenging in some circumstances, e.g. for small and/ or specialist organisations, and it may be helpful to seek advice from UKRIO.
- Regarding the number of allegations received, 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 if the data provided is accurate. This has been echoed by other bodies with interests in this area.

A note confirming that the organisation 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 organisation 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, improvements to communication of expected standards, and other actions to improve research standards or help prevent misconduct from occurring.

An overview of any improvements to reporting mechanisms or investigation processes relating to allegations of misconduct should also be given. It should be noted that 'lessons learned' can include improvements and positive change and are not limited to preventative measures.

- **Please note that** it is not suggested that disciplinary or other actions taken in relation to specific individuals are listed. However, if the organisation has previously made any public statements that mentioned such actions, these could be linked to.

A note on funder-specific activities

As part of their annual statement, organisations should provide a summary of any actions taken to safeguard and support research integrity relating to researchers and projects supported by particular funding bodies.

These may relate to supporting and strengthening research integrity, including research culture and leadership; and/ or addressing breaches of research integrity.

- **When considering the structure of their annual statements,** organisations should decide whether they will list funder-specific activities in their own section or as subsets of relevant general activities. As an example of the latter approach, a description of 'generic' training and development activities could be followed by a summary of training provided for researchers supported by a particular funder.

Closing thoughts

While the Concordat sets out mandatory content for annual statements, this section has set out ideas for potential content which you may wish to consider including in your organisation's statement.

Annual statements are about reflecting on the positive steps you have taken to support good research practice and a healthy research culture at your organisation, as well as being open about any lessons learned from challenges and problems. Supporting research integrity is long-term work; it is ok to state that initiatives are still ongoing or delayed, and outputs from smaller activities are just as worth highlighting as those from huge projects.

While drafting an annual statement for the first time might seem somewhat daunting, they are a valuable opportunity for both internal review and reflection, and to demonstrate publicly a commitment to good research practice and a healthy research culture. UKRIO welcomes enquiries from organisations seeking advice on the content of their annual statements and is happy to assist its subscribers in drafting the