

Strategy

2026 – 2031



A message from our **Board Chair**

Twenty years ago, UKRIO began as an initiative within Universities UK, driven by a clear conviction that research integrity matters and that the sector needs independent, expert support to uphold it. Since then, we have grown into a national charity with an internationally recognised and trusted role across the research ecosystem, underpinned by a broad and vibrant community of subscribers and expert support.

This evolution has been shaped by many hands over many years. More recently, the bold direction set by my predecessor, Sir Ian Boyd, together with the appointment of Stephanie Neave as CEO, accelerated our development and sharpened our strategic focus. Under their leadership, the charity made a deliberate decision to concentrate its efforts on the emerging and complex issues where our expert and trusted voice can make the greatest difference. It strengthened its capacity, clarified its purpose and embedded mechanisms to ensure our work is grounded in the real needs of the research community.

The growth of our subscriber community – from 105 research organisations at the start of the last strategy period in 2022 to over 170 today – speaks to the value and relevance of this approach. I hope many of you have felt this shift in the support we provide.

Yet our work is far from complete. Now more than ever, research integrity needs to be championed, and this is a key reason I joined as Chair of the Board in April 2025.

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, the research landscape is becoming more complex, more interconnected and more resource constrained. These pressures heighten the risk of poor practice and make the need for trusted, independent support greater than ever.

This strategy sets out how UKRIO will respond, building on our renewed sense of purpose and momentum. It outlines how we will support individuals when issues arise, strengthen organisations and the wider ecosystem, and influence the systems that shape the research environment. Above all, it reflects our belief that safeguarding research integrity is a shared responsibility – one that requires collaboration, openness and a strong, connected community.

This strategy is therefore both an invitation and a commitment: an invitation to work with us, and a commitment that UKRIO will continue to stand alongside you, providing independent expertise, practical support and leadership for the sector.

Together, we can build the conditions in which high-quality, ethical research can thrive.

Dame Linda Partridge
Chair, UK Research Integrity Office

Who we are

UKRIO is the UK's independent charity dedicated to safeguarding and advancing research integrity. For two decades, we have supported researchers, institutions and the wider research system to uphold the highest standards of honesty, rigour and ethical practice.

Our independence is central to our role. We are not a regulator and we do not enforce compliance. Instead, we offer expert, confidential and impartial support that helps people navigate complex issues and make informed decisions.

We work across all sectors where research takes place: from higher education, the NHS, industry, charities, government bodies and beyond.

Our values

UKRIO's work is grounded in a set of principles that guide how we support the research community and uphold our mission.

- **Independent**, ensuring our advice and guidance is trusted and impartial
- **Practical**, focusing on real-world tools and solutions that support consistency and efficiency
- **Collaborative**, recognising that integrity is a collective endeavour
- **Responsive**, pairing timely support when issues arise with proactive work on systemic issues
- **Community-led**, putting the research community's needs and priorities at the heart of our work.

Together, these principles underpin everything we do to advance **our mission: to promote good research practice and prevent research misconduct.**

Why research integrity matters

Research integrity is the foundation of a healthy, effective research system.

It ensures that knowledge is created through honest, rigorous, transparent and accountable processes, underpinning high-quality research at every stage, from idea to analysis to application.

When integrity is upheld, good practice becomes the norm and research is conducted in an environment where ideas can be tested, challenged and advanced with confidence. When it is not, trust erodes, progress stalls and the cumulative knowledge on which discovery depends is weakened.

The importance of research integrity extends far beyond the research community. Society relies on research to inform decisions that shape people's health, their environment, their communities and their future.

The way we respond to global challenges, develop effective policy, harness technological innovation or advance social and economic progress all depend on the trustworthiness of the evidence that underpins them.

In this sense, research integrity is not just a professional obligation but a public good. Upholding it is a collective responsibility that requires all sectors and disciplines to commit to the highest standards.

How we make a difference

UKRIO plays an important role in helping practitioners and organisations safeguard and advance research integrity through our annual events and work programme. But we recognise that integrity is shaped not only by individual actions or organisational policies; it is also influenced by the wider research system, where pressures, incentives, norms and cultures all play a part.

A core principle of our five-year strategy is therefore to look beyond supporting the community when issues occur. We will also work to understand and address the underlying conditions that allow those issues to emerge.

Our vision is for a UK research community that produces work that is honest, reliable and ethical.

We will contribute to this by:

Empowering individuals

Research integrity relies on the actions of everyone involved: from researchers to technicians; governance staff to senior academics. We will work to ensure all have the knowledge, tools and support to embed integrity into their everyday practice.

Strengthening organisations

Organisations undertaking, funding or publishing research all have a key role in promoting good research practice and preventing misconduct. Our aim is to help every organisation embed integrity into its ways of working and to create the conditions and environment to support responsible practice.

Influencing the system

The policies, incentives and norms of the wider research system strongly influence behaviour. We will advocate for a system that enables honest, reliable and ethical research.

Our strategic priorities for the next five years



Context: a changing landscape

The next five years will bring significant change for the UK research community.

Insights from our strategy consultation, which drew on 215 responses from across the sector, highlight both major opportunities and growing pressures shaping the environment in which research is conducted.

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence are transforming research practice, offering new possibilities while raising questions about transparency, accountability and responsible use. Financial pressures across the sector, particularly within higher education, continue to intensify. Organisations are being asked to deliver more with fewer resources, even as expectations grow for research to drive economic growth, innovation and societal benefit.

At the same time, preparations for REF 2029 are reshaping institutional priorities, with a stronger focus on the research environment and the conditions that support high-quality work. More frequent international collaboration has the potential to enrich UK research but is adding to regulatory, ethical and geopolitical complexity.

Meanwhile, the politicisation of research has made public trust more fragile. Ensuring that research is seen as honest, reliable and ethical is becoming ever more important.

Together, these shifts create a landscape that is dynamic and full of potential but also more complex and demanding.

Our strategic priorities

- 1 Strengthen the depth and reach of practical support
- 2 Build skills and capability within the research community
- 3 Create spaces for shared learning and collective action
- 4 Champion integrity across the research system

Our strategic priorities are designed to help the research community navigate this environment and strengthen integrity across the system.

Over the next five years, we will deepen our practical support to reduce unnecessary duplication, improve consistency and harmonisation, and build skills and capability. At the same time, we will strengthen our role as a trusted, independent voice, using our unique perspective across the research community to anticipate emerging challenges and opportunities, bring people together around shared solutions, and drive collective action and systemic change.

Strategic priority **one**

Strengthen the depth and reach of practical support

As demands on the research community grow, so too must the support available to it. Strengthening the depth and reach of the direct and practical support we provide is central to our strategy. Our goal is to ensure all individuals and organisations involved in research have access to timely, practical and expert guidance that enables them to safeguard and advance research integrity efficiently and effectively.

We recognise that many organisations are under significant resource pressures, facing increasingly complex integrity issues, and in some cases working with limited research infrastructure or familiarity with research integrity.

To help practitioners work more efficiently and confidently, we will strengthen our advisory services and expand our practical guidance, ensuring these are applicable across the different sectors and contexts in which research is undertaken.

We will also develop clear, accessible templates, model procedures and practical tools that reduce duplication of effort and promote consistent, high-quality practice. By deepening and widening access to direct, practical support, we will build capacity across the research system and ensure expert assistance is available whenever it is needed.

Strategic priority **two**

Build skills and capability within the research community

A strong culture of research integrity depends on people having the knowledge, skills and confidence to apply good practice in real-world settings. This requires more than awareness: it demands sustained opportunities to learn, practise and embed the principles and behaviours that underpin responsible research.

Over the next five years, UKRIO will expand and enhance its education and training provision to ensure that all those involved in research and at every stage of their careers can undertake high-quality, practical learning. Our goal is to make training and education as accessible as possible so that research integrity becomes a shared, mainstream competency rather than specialist knowledge held by a few.

We will broaden the reach of our training provision through flexible formats, tailored content and resources designed to meet the needs of different sectors and organisational contexts.

By supporting everyone involved in research to develop and embed research integrity principles and behaviours, we will help establish integrity as a core professional skill and enable individuals and organisations to respond to related challenges with confidence.

Strategic priority **three**

Create spaces for shared learning and collective action

We believe support is not only about having access to resources; it is also about connection and collaboration. Research integrity is strengthened when people learn from one another, share emerging issues and discuss what good practice looks like in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Many of the most significant challenges facing research integrity also require coordinated action across the research system, reflecting the fact that no single organisation can address them alone.

Over the next five years, UKRIO will expand its role as a convenor, bringing the research community together to share learning and develop collective solutions.

Through our good practice forums, we will provide trusted spaces for research professionals to discuss challenges, approaches and learning. Our aim is to ensure that every organisation, regardless of size, sector or level of maturity, has access to the knowledge, tools and networks needed to navigate integrity issues with confidence.

Our ambition for shared solutions extends beyond individual organisational policy and practice. Through roundtables, expert webinars and our annual symposium, we will convene research organisations, funders, publishers, policymakers and other stakeholders to address complex systemic and emerging challenges that require multi-pronged solutions. In doing so, our aim is to drive coordinated, system-wide approaches to strengthening research integrity.

Strategic priority **four**

Champion integrity across the research system

As the research landscape becomes increasingly complex, ensuring that integrity remains at the heart of research requires more than policies and procedures. It requires sustained leadership across the research community to ensure that the principles of honesty, rigour, transparency, accountability, care and respect are embedded in the wider decisions, incentives and practices that shape research.

Over the next five years, UKRIO will strengthen its advocacy role, using our independence, expertise and cross-sector reach to shape national and international conversations on research integrity.

Our aim is to make the case clearly, persuasively and consistently that integrity is an essential foundation of research excellence, public trust and responsible innovation.

Through targeted advocacy and thought leadership, we will work to ensure research integrity continues to be recognised as a vital part of a healthy research system and a key consideration in how research is funded, conducted, governed, assessed, published and commercialised.

To underpin this work, we will strengthen the evidence base and horizon scan for emerging challenges and opportunities, ensuring we advocate for approaches that remain informed, relevant and responsive to a changing landscape.

**Key
strategic
enablers**



Key strategic enablers

Delivering our ambitions for the next five years depends on UKRIO having a strong foundation and supporting infrastructure.

We are committed to ensuring UKRIO operates with maximum impact over the coming five years.

Through strong stakeholder engagement and enhanced organisational resilience, we will work to ensure we effectively safeguard and advance research integrity alongside the community we serve.

Enabler one

Ensure our work is shaped and powered by the research community

We exist to serve and provide critical infrastructure for the research community. It is therefore essential that our work reflects the priorities and needs of the research community in all of its diversity.

Over the next five years, we will deepen and broaden our engagement with the research community so that our priorities, guidance and services are consistently informed by real-world experience and the sector's most pressing needs.

We will build on the strength of our existing networks, including our 170+ subscriber organisations, our Board of Trustees and our expert community, while also working to expand our reach to ensure our work reflects the full breadth of the research system.

By embedding stakeholder insight at every stage of our work, we will ensure that UKRIO's work remains relevant, trusted and credible.

Enabler **two**

Strengthen our internal capabilities and external reach

Delivering this strategy requires strong foundations and the internal capabilities to match our ambition.

Over the next five years, we will:

- Invest in our people, ensuring our team has the skills and capacity to deliver
- Strengthen our operational systems and digital infrastructure
- Improve our communications, marketing and business development
- Maintain robust governance, strategic oversight and financial sustainability

These enablers will support our ability to deliver high-quality, impactful work across all areas of our strategy.

Implementation and next steps

While the priorities in this strategy will guide our work over the next five years, we will continue to engage with the research community annually to shape our work programme. This will ensure our activities remain focused on the areas of greatest need and potential impact while staying responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

We will:

- Set evidence-informed priorities
- Monitor and measure our progress and impact, with a commitment to continuous improvement
- Report transparently on our achievements and challenges

Our commitment is to remain accountable, responsive and focused on delivering meaningful, measurable impact for the research community.

Strategy

2026 to 2031

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