

Briefing Note:

Understanding the refreshed 2025 Concordat to Support Research Integrity

Summary: What is new in the refreshed Concordat?

- **The updated Concordat retains its existing structure of five ‘commitments’ for research integrity.** Text has been updated throughout, for clarity and to reflect advances in research practice and governance since the 2019 edition.
- **The five principles that form the UK’s definition of research integrity remain the same,** but their content has been updated (see page 4).
- **The UK’s definition of research misconduct remains the same,** but the Concordat has been updated to more thoroughly cover how to address all types of breaches of research integrity, not just misconduct (see page 6).
- **It contains updated responsibilities for research integrity which must be met by researchers and research-enabling staff, employers [research organisations], and research funders.** See pages 7-19 for a side-by-side comparison of these with the requirements of the 2019 edition.
- The Signatories (authors of the Concordat) have stated that organisations have until April 2026 to demonstrate implementation of the requirements of the 2025 edition of the Concordat. **However, to ensure proper compliance, they will need to begin work on this promptly.**

Introduction

This briefing note by the UK Research Integrity Office provides detailed, practical insight into the most recent revision of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Given the importance of the Concordat for research integrity and its key role in shaping the terms and conditions for many research grants, it is essential that organisations and researchers understand how their obligations under the Concordat have evolved in this recent revision.

Organisations have until **April 2026** to demonstrate implementation of the requirements of the 2025 edition of the Concordat and in the meantime should continue to comply with the 2019 edition. However, a robust implementation could take some time, so we wish to make the community aware of:

- **Updated requirements where new implementation activities will be necessary**
- **Where requirements have not changed and therefore existing implementation activities will not require wholesale revision**

This briefing note gives an overview of the Concordat and its most recent revision, and then compares key content in the 2025 edition with the previous 2019 edition, enabling readers to quickly digest how the document has evolved, with specific regard to:

- The definition of research integrity
- The definition of research misconduct and the addition of a definition for questionable research practices
- Responsibilities that must be fulfilled by researchers and research-enabling staff; employers [research organisations]; and funders [of research projects]

Context

This briefing was developed independently by UKRIO. It does not represent the views of the Concordat's authors ('Signatories'), nor is it endorsed or warranted by them.

To support insights gained from this briefing, UKRIO recommends careful consideration of the 2025 edition of the Concordat, which can be accessed via [its dedicated page](#) on the website of the UK Committee on Research Integrity.

UKRIO recommends careful and regular scrutiny of both [the Concordat's webpage](#) and the research integrity and related policies of funders, to ensure the research community stays informed of any changes to the requirements related to the Concordat.

The refreshed Concordat: content

The text of the 2025 edition has been updated from the 2019 edition throughout. This is partly for clarity and accessibility, but primarily to reflect advances in research practice and governance since the 2019 edition, including the introduction of new tools, techniques and technologies for research.

Due to these wide-ranging edits, a side-by-side comparison of the text of the 2025 commitments with those of the 2019 edition would be misleading. Instead, UKRIO recommends careful consideration of that text, which can be accessed via its [dedicated webpage](#). However, the responsibilities listed under each commitment – the requirements which individuals and organisations must comply with – can be more easily compared and this is set out on pages 7-19 of this briefing so you can see what is new and what remains broadly the same. UKRIO's [Self-Assessment Tool](#) for the Concordat will be updated in the coming months to explore the nuances of the updated text of the commitments.

As stated on [its website](#), **organisations have until April 2026 to adhere to the expectations of the 2025 Concordat.** In the meantime, they should continue to comply with [the 2019 edition](#).

The refreshed Concordat: structure

The overall structure of the 2025 edition of the Concordat remains the same as its predecessors: following an introduction, it sets out five high-level ‘commitments’ for research integrity, the first of which defines research integrity in the form of five principles. Each commitment relates to a specific, but broad, aspect of research integrity. **The names of all commitments have been changed in the 2025 edition, but each still covers the same broad area as before:**

- **Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity – the principles**
 - This commitment includes the UK’s definition of research integrity, in the form of five principles: *Honesty, Rigour, Transparency and open communication, Care and respect, and Accountability.*
- **Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity – expectations and compliance**
- **Embedding a culture of research integrity**
- **Questionable research practices and potential research misconduct**
- **Accountability and continuous improvement in research integrity**

Specific responsibilities for the research community (researchers and research-supporting staff), employers and funders are listed within each of the commitments to enable them to be implemented by those groups in a way that lends itself to continuous improvement and ongoing accountability.

- Please note that in the 2025 edition, the responsibilities for Commitments 1 and 2 have been amalgamated and appear after Commitment 2.

All these responsibilities are reviewed later in this document (pages 7-19).

Updated definition of research integrity

The definition of research integrity given in Commitment 1 of the 2025 and 2019 editions of the Concordat are compared below. New or significantly changed text is listed **red**, minor textual changes or edits have not been marked. If a requirement from the 2019 edition does not feature in the 2025 edition, it has been shown in ~~grey strikethrough~~.

2025 edition	2019 edition
<p>Research integrity: Research has integrity when it's carried out according to the principles of the Concordat, and in a way that is trustworthy, ethical, and responsible.</p>	<p>Research integrity: There is no universal definition of research integrity. This concordat identifies five core elements of research integrity, and these are described under Commitment 1. The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010), referenced within this concordat, provides a further definition. In addition, the UKRIO has set out principles of research integrity in its Code of Practice (UKRIO, 2009).</p>
<p>Honesty is crucial, from the presentation of research ideas and goals, through to authorship and financial contributions, and on to findings. Examples include honesty in reporting research methods and procedures; gathering data and information; referencing work; representing and acknowledging the work of others; conveying interpretations; and making justifiable claims based on research findings.</p>	<p>Honesty in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings.</p>
<p>Rigour is demonstrated by behaviour that is in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, including the use of appropriate methods. It may be evidenced through adherence to procedures, standards of practice and agreed protocols, as appropriate, and is expected when drawing interpretations and conclusions from research, including when communicating findings. The integrity of the research record should be protected through secure and rigorous approaches.</p>	<p>Rigour, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.</p>

Transparency and open communication provide the foundation for the actions taken when conducting or communicating about research. Examples may include: declaring potential competing interests; reporting research data collection methods; **acknowledging the use of tools such as emerging technologies**; analysing and interpreting data; and publishing or otherwise sharing findings. **This may include appropriate open research practices. It permits humility in the process, acknowledging errors committed in good faith and ensuring honest mistakes are seen as productive elements of research.**

Care and respect are expected for everyone and everything involved in the research system, and for the protection of the integrity of the research record. They should be extended to everyone involved in the research process, all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record.

Accountability is expected of everyone individually and collectively to create a research environment in which **diverse** individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process **and be accountable for their contributions to the research record. This includes being accountable to participants involved in research**, and a responsibility to hold individuals and organisations to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by the Concordat.

Transparency and open communication in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes **publishing or otherwise sharing** negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public.

Care and respect for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record.

Accountability of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this concordat.

Definition of research misconduct and questionable research practices (QRPs)

The definition of research misconduct given in the 2025 edition of the Concordat remains the same as in the 2019 edition, though it has been moved from under Commitment 4 to an Annex. The paragraph preceding the detailed text of the definition has similarly been moved to the same Annex and the text has undergone significant changes, as shown below:

2025 edition	2019 edition
<p>Research misconduct: Research misconduct constitutes the behaviours and deliberate actions that fall short of the principles in Commitment 1 of the Concordat, occurring at any point in the research lifecycle. This includes behaviours associated with the ideation of research proposals, reviewing the work of others, and the reporting of research findings.</p>	<p>Research misconduct is characterised as behaviours or actions that fall short of the standards of ethics, research and scholarship required to ensure that the integrity of research is upheld. It can cause harm to people and the environment, wastes resources, undermines the research record and damages the credibility of research. The concordat recognises that academic freedom is fundamental to the production of excellent research. This means that responsibility for ensuring that no misconduct occurs rests primarily with individual researchers.</p>

The full definition of research misconduct retains the same text as in the 2019 version, specifically:

- The sub-headings of **fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations, misrepresentation, and improper dealings of allegations of misconduct**, with the detailed text under each of these sub-headings remaining the same.
- The statement that ‘Honest errors and differences in, for example, research methodology or interpretations, do not constitute research misconduct.’

We note that the text of Commitment 4 has been significantly reworded to cover understanding and managing all types of breaches of research integrity, ranging from honest errors, through questionable research practices, to allegations of research misconduct.

The definition of Questionable Research Practices (QRPs) is a new addition to the 2025 Concordat and is as follows:

- ‘QRPs refer to minor infractions or research practices, including avoidable errors, which fall short of the definition of intentional research misconduct. They may arise due to a lack of knowledge or attention to detail, negligence, or deliberate action, and may occur where there is no evident intention to deceive.’

New and updated responsibilities for researchers, research-supporting staff, employers and funders

Under each commitment, the Concordat sets out relevant responsibilities that must be met by researchers and research-supporting staff (collectively referred to as **‘the research community’** in the Concordat), research organisations (‘employers’) and funders. Below, the requirements of the 2025 edition are compared with those of the 2019 edition, so you can see precisely what new or changed responsibilities must be met by April 2026.

- Wholly new responsibilities and significantly changed text in existing responsibilities are in **red text**.
- If responsibilities from the 2019 edition have been amalgamated into a single new responsibility in the 2019 edition, these are depicted in **green text**.
- If a requirement from the 2019 edition does not feature in the 2025 edition, it has been shown in ~~grey strikethrough~~.
- Where requirements have been reworded and/or their order of appearance within a particular commitment has changed, but their scope and meaning remain the same (e.g. Responsibilities of the research community under *Commitment 4: Questionable research practices and potential research misconduct*), this has not been marked as a new or updated responsibility.

Please note that in the 2025 edition, the responsibilities for Commitments 1 and 2 have been amalgamated and appear after Commitment 2; the tables below reflect this.

Responsibilities of the research community	2025 edition	2019 edition
<p>Commitment 1: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity and</p> <p>Commitment 2: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity – expectations and compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and maintaining the expected standards of integrity relevant to their research throughout the research cycle Being open and transparent about their research methodologies and findings, and honest when errors are made Complying with ethical, legal, regulatory and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards as required by statutory and regulatory authorities, and by employers, funders and other relevant stakeholders Ensuring that all their research is subject to ongoing, active, and appropriate consideration of ethical issues Maintaining trust in research, including by reporting any concerns of research misconduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the expected standards of rigour and integrity relevant to their research Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in their work at all times Comply with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards as required by statutory and regulatory authorities, and by employers, funders and other relevant stakeholders Ensure that all their research is subject to active and appropriate consideration of ethical issues
<p>Commitment 3: Embedding a culture of research integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping their knowledge up to date on research integrity principles and how their responsibilities may evolve at different stages of their career Designing, conducting, and reporting research in ways that embed integrity and ethical practice throughout Collaborating with others to build and maintain research environments that encourage research integrity, including seeking support from those in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take responsibility for keeping their knowledge up to date on the frameworks, standards and obligations that apply to their work Collaborate to maintain a research environment that encourages research integrity Design, conduct and report research in ways that embed integrity and ethical practice throughout

Responsibilities of the research community	2025 edition	2019 edition
	<p>leadership and supervisory roles, as needed, to resolve issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhering to and promoting standards of research integrity when working with partners 	
<p>Commitment 4: Questionable research practices and potential research misconduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honesty when reporting any concerns about potential breaches of integrity and declaring conflicts of interest Supporting and participating in any investigation, its management and implementation of any recommendations, as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act in good faith with regard to allegations of research misconduct, whether in making allegations or in being required to participate in an investigation, and take reasonable steps, working with employers as appropriate, to ensure the recommendations made by formal research misconduct investigation panels are implemented Handle potential instances of research misconduct in an appropriate manner; this includes reporting misconduct to employers, funders and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies as circumstances require Declare and act accordingly to manage conflicts of interest
<p>Commitment 5: Accountability and continuous improvement in research integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upholding trust and confidence in research in the UK through the work they undertake, host, fund, partner or collaborate on, support, and disseminate Finding opportunities to implement, reward, and share ideas, good practice, and learning experiences inside and outside their own organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers will ensure their own integrity and help to develop a culture of integrity in their groups, departments and institutions

Responsibilities of employers	2025 edition	2019 edition
<p>Commitment 1: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity and</p> <p>Commitment 2: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity – expectations and compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining a research environment that values research integrity and creates the conditions necessary for honest errors to be openly admitted without undue detriment Developing transparent, robust, and fair research integrity related policies within an appropriate organisational governance structure Demonstrating, through periodic review, that policies and procedures are in place to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with standards of best practice Supporting the research community to understand and act according to expected ethical, legal, regulatory and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining a research environment that develops good research practice and embeds a culture of research integrity, as described in Commitments 2 to 5 Supporting researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours Defending researchers when they live up to the expectations of this concordat in difficult circumstances Demonstrating that they have procedures in place to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with standards of best practice; systems to promote research integrity; and transparent, robust and fair processes to investigate alleged research misconduct Have clear policies on ethical review and approval that are available to all researchers Make sure that all researchers are aware of, and understand policies and processes relating to ethical approval Support researchers to adopt best practice in relation to ethical, legal and professional requirements Have appropriate arrangements in place through which researchers can access advice and guidance on ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards

Responsibilities of employers	2025 edition	2019 edition
Commitment 3: Embedding a culture of research integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhering to the principles of the Concordat across all functions of the organisation that have a role in the research environment Reflecting recognised best practice that supports a culture of integrity in their systems, processes, and practices Reviewing actions taken to meet the commitments of the Concordat and working to continuously improve Providing and promoting training and development opportunities to the research community and encouraging uptake Adopting mechanisms to acknowledge, promote, and reward responsible research practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed these features in their own systems, processes and practices Reflect recognised best practice in their own systems, processes and practices Implement the concordat within their research environment Participate in an annual monitoring exercise to demonstrate that the institution has met the commitments of the concordat <i>Moved to Commitment 5 in the 2025 edition.</i> Promote training and development opportunities to research staff and students and encourage their uptake Identify a named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity and ensure that this information is kept up to date and publicly available on the institution's website <i>Moved to Commitment 5 in the 2025 edition.</i> Identify a named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity and ensure that contact details for this person are kept up to date and are publicly available on the institution's website <i>Moved to Commitment 5 in the 2025 edition.</i>

Responsibilities of employers	2025 edition	2019 edition
Commitment 4: Questionable research practices and potential research misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing policies related to questionable research practices and research misconduct that are accessible to the research community and that include a confidential reporting mechanism through a named point of contact • Maintaining fair and transparent processes, managing conflicts of interest, using external advisers where needed, and offering appeals processes • Preparing and, when necessary, providing training for those running investigations and serving as panellists • Ensuring investigations are completed in a timely manner, bearing in mind the need to support all parties involved • Documenting the process, acting on the outcomes, and, where concerns are upheld, ensuring appropriate action is taken, avoiding the use of non-disclosure agreements • Providing information to third parties as required under any formal agreements, such as with research funders or statutory bodies • Taking reasonable steps to protect all parties involved from undue pressure, victimisation, or unwarranted negative consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear, well-articulated and confidential mechanisms for reporting allegations of research misconduct • Have robust, transparent and fair processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct that reflect best practice. This includes the use of independent external members of formal investigation panels, and clear routes for appeal (see the references section) • Ensure that all researchers and other members of staff are made aware of the relevant contacts and procedures for making allegations • Act with no detriment to whistle-blowers who have made allegations of misconduct in good faith, or in the public interest, including taking reasonable steps to safeguard their reputation. This should include avoiding the inappropriate use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements • Take reasonable steps to resolve any issues found during the investigation. This can include imposing sanctions, requesting a correction of the research record and reporting any action to regulatory and statutory bodies, research participants, funders or other professional bodies as circumstances, contractual obligations and statutory requirements dictate

Responsibilities of employers	2025 edition	2019 edition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take reasonable steps to safeguard the reputation of individuals who are exonerated • Provide information on investigations of research misconduct to funders of research and to professional and/or statutory bodies as required by their conditions of grant and other legal, professional and statutory obligations • Support their researchers in providing appropriate information when they are required to make reports to professional and/or statutory bodies <p><i>While employers have a responsibility to provide information to third parties as required, in the 2025 edition employers do not have an explicit responsibility to support individuals in any reporting which they may be required to do as individuals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a named point of contact or recognise an appropriate third party to act as confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted under their auspices. This need not be the same person as the member of staff identified to act as first point of contact on research integrity matters, as recommended under Commitment 3 • Employers should also be mindful that minor infractions, including honest errors, particularly

Responsibilities of employers	2025 edition	2019 edition
		<p>by less experienced researchers or where there is no evident intention to deceive, may often be addressed informally through mentoring, education and guidance</p> <p><i>This does not appear in the 2025 edition.</i></p>
<p>Commitment 5: Accountability and continuous improvement in research integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking reasonable steps to ensure that any research carried out by a partner or subcontractor aligns with the principles set out in this Concordat • Publishing up to date information on their organisation’s website including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Named senior role(s) responsible for oversight of research integrity ○ First point of contact(s) for research integrity matters • Publishing, 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. Organisations are encouraged, but not required, to use the Concordat Annual Statement template. <p><i>Note that annual statements, while still including high-level summary data on research</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps to ensure that their environment promotes and embeds a commitment to research integrity, and that suitable processes are in place to deal with misconduct <p><i>Moved to Commitments 1/2 and 4 in the 2025 edition.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a short annual statement, which must be presented to their own governing body, and subsequently be made publicly available, ordinarily through the institution’s website. This annual statement must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews) ○ A statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation

Responsibilities of employers	2025 edition	2019 edition
	<p><i>misconduct, now explicitly have a much broader focus than in the 2019 edition: 'reporting progress on meeting the Concordat principles and commitments'.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, which will include data on the number of investigations. If no formal investigation has been undertaken, this should also be noted ○ A statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring ○ A statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct ● Periodically review their processes to ensure that these remain fit for purpose. <p><i>Moved to Commitment 3 in the 2025 edition.</i></p>

Responsibilities of funders	2025 edition	2019 edition
<p>Commitment 1: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity and</p> <p>Commitment 2: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity – expectations and compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing clear, proportionate, and relevant expectations of the research community and their employers consistent with the responsibilities in the Concordat, indicating specific codes of practice or other policies where compliance is required • Encouraging adoption of the Concordat by associating it with their funding terms and conditions • Taking research integrity into account in the development of policies and processes, reducing unnecessary burden on the research community and employers • Incorporating proportionate checks, where appropriate, in the application and award processes related to legal and ethical requirements • Only providing funding to organisations that can demonstrate that appropriate structures, policies, and processes are in place to support integrity in their research activities • Through engagement with stakeholders, exploring ways of streamlining their requirements to reduce duplication, inconsistency, and/or conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish clear statements of their expectations of researchers and employers of researchers with respect to standards of professionalism and integrity • Take research integrity into account in the development of policies and processes • Encourage adoption of the concordat by associating it with their funding conditions • Ensure that their requirements are, through regular review, proportionate, relevant and consistent with the expectations of the concordat <i>‘Regular review’ moved to Commitments 3 and 5 in the 2025 edition.</i> • Incorporate proportionate checks, where appropriate, in the application and award processes related to legal and ethical requirements • Only provide funding to organisations that can demonstrate that appropriate structures are in place to ensure research integrity in their research activities • Through engagement with the signatories and other stakeholders, explore ways of streamlining their requirements to reduce duplication, inconsistency and/or conflict • Clearly identify and indicate any specific codes of practice and other policies that researchers and employers of researchers are expected to comply

Responsibilities of funders	2025 edition	2019 edition
Commitment 3: Embedding a culture of research integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the implementation of the Concordat; <i>working together, where appropriate, on shared guidance, policies, and plans</i> <i>Regularly evaluating</i> their policies and processes to incentivise the creation of, and support for, <i>positive research cultures and environments</i> Working in partnership with employers and the research community to embed a culture of integrity, <i>leading by example in the design and delivery of their services, procedures, and processes</i> 	<p>with, beyond those that might be generally expected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote adoption of the concordat within the research community Support the implementation of the concordat through shared guidance, policies and plans Identify within their organisation a senior member of staff responsible for oversight of research integrity and ensure that this information is publicly available on the organisation's website <i>Moved to Commitment 5 in the 2025 edition.</i> Identify within their organisation a named lead contact for research integrity, and ensure that contact details for this person are kept up to date and are publicly available on the organisation's website <i>Moved to Commitment 5 in the 2025 edition.</i> <i>Consider whether their policies and processes create disincentives for the creation and embedding of a positive research culture</i> Work in partnership with employers and researchers to embed a culture of integrity within the research community Encourage adoption of the concordat by associating it with their funding conditions. <i>In Commitments 1/2 in the 2025 edition</i>

Responsibilities of funders	2025 edition	2019 edition
Commitment 4: Questionable research practices and potential research misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish clear statements of what constitutes research misconduct • Ensure that recipients of funding are aware of requirements regarding the investigation and reporting of research misconduct, and that these are openly stated • Work with employers of researchers to manage funding appropriately, including supporting staff working on affected projects • Treat all allegations with confidentiality and abide by data protection laws with respect to data management • Take appropriate action when research misconduct is reported to them. In the most serious case, this could include funding sanctions or mandatory improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish clear statements of what constitutes research misconduct • Ensure that recipients of funding are aware of requirements regarding the investigation and reporting of research misconduct, and that these are openly stated • Work with employers of researchers to manage funding appropriately, including any staff supported by an affected project • Treat all allegations with confidentiality and abide by data protection laws with respect to data management • Take appropriate action when research misconduct is reported to them. In the most serious case, this could include funding sanctions or mandatory improvements
Commitment 5: Accountability and continuous improvement in research integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting clear responsibilities for peer reviewers, employers, funding applicants, and all those involved in funded research to encourage responsible research practices • Regularly reviewing and updating their policies, grant funding conditions, and processes to support responsible research practices so that they remain fit for purpose. • Publishing up to date information on their website including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Named senior role responsible for oversight of research integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodically review their policies and grant conditions to ensure that they support good practice in research integrity • Periodically review their processes and practices to ensure that these are not providing inappropriate incentives <p><i>Moved to Commitment 3 in the 2025 edition.</i></p>

Responsibilities of funders	2025 edition	2019 edition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o First point of contact for research integrity matters 	

Other definitions

Definitions of **research integrity**, **research misconduct** and **questionable research practices** (QRPs) have already been discussed. Other definitions are discussed below. In general terms, all have been shortened and simplified.

2025 edition	2019 edition
<p>Research: part of a process leading to new insights</p> <p>Researchers and research-supporting staff: No single term exists that is inclusive of the wide breadth of roles involved in carrying out research. Throughout this document we have chosen to use ‘the research community’ to include all researchers and research-enabling staff.</p> <p>Employers: employers of researchers</p> <p>Funders: funders of research</p> <p>Organisation: all research conducting organisations and institutions</p>	<p>Research: Drawing on the UK funding bodies’ definition used in the Research Excellence Framework, as described in Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (Hefce, Hefcw, SFC, DEL, 2011), ‘research’ is defined as, ‘a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared... It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction’.</p> <p>Researchers: Following the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Code of practice for research (2009), ‘researchers’ are defined as any people who conduct research, including but not limited to: as an employee; as an independent contractor or consultant; as a research student; as a visiting or emeritus member of staff; or as a member of staff on a joint clinical or honorary contract.</p>

Employers of researchers: Drawing on the UKRIO Code of practice for research (2009), a broad definition of ‘employer’ is used. ‘Employers of researchers’ are any bodies that: conduct or host research; employ, support or host researchers; teach research students; or allow research to be carried out under their auspices.

Funders of research: These may be in the public-, third- or private sector. Funders may also be employers of researchers, and they may also commission research, and/or provide block grants or hypothecated funds. The definition includes organisations that provide financial sponsorship for research and/or researchers.

About the Concordat

The Concordat: purpose and scope

The Concordat is the UK's governing document on research integrity, including requirements on specific aspects of research integrity such as research culture, research ethics and governance of research projects. It is a framework by which all those involved in research can support the trustworthiness of research.

It is applicable to all types of research in the UK and all sectors where research is carried out, containing standards to be met by researchers and research-enabling staff (collectively referred to as 'the research community' in the text), research organisations (called 'employers') and funders of research projects. Though the term 'employer' is used, the Concordat does apply to universities and enrolled research students, who are not employees, as well as to employed researchers. It does not set out requirements for publishers of research outputs or other types of organisations involved in research.

The Concordat is a pan-disciplinary document, covering all areas of research from the arts and humanities to health and biomedicine. It is not intended to take the place of detailed, discipline-specific guidance but instead provides overarching principles and standards for the entire disciplinary spectrum.

The Concordat: 2024/25 revision

Following its publication in 2012, the Concordat was last updated in 2019, partly in response to an enquiry into research integrity by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee which reported in 2018. At that time, it was agreed that the Concordat would be updated every five-years going forward.

Accordingly, in 2024, the Research Integrity Concordat Signatories (RICS) Group began a revision, following the Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy in 2022 and the Concordats and Agreements Review in 2022/23.

This revision was given a comparatively light-touch scope. As stated by the RICS Group, it sought to ensure that:

- The Concordat appropriately reflects recent developments in research nationally and internationally, including technological advances
- The Concordat is appropriately aligned with international frameworks for research governance to support research carried out in international contexts
- The Concordat is as useful and practical as possible

The review began in 2024 and included in-depth consultation with the community. UKRIO contributed a detailed submission to this exercise, which can be viewed [here](#). The refreshed Concordat was published in **April 2025**, with organisations required to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the new edition by **April 2026**.

The Concordat: implementation and themes

Like all guidance on research practice and culture, the Concordat cannot be effective on its own. It needs to be implemented by research organisations, with its commitments being embedded in organisational policies, systems and behaviours, supported by appropriate awareness-raising, training, resourcing and strategic leadership. While implementation is a condition of grant from many, but not all, research funders, the aim must not be simply to comply with the funding terms and conditions but to use the Concordat to safeguard and enhance research integrity at the institution.

The Concordat is sensibly designed to allow for autonomy in how it is put into practice, recognising the variability of the research environments to which it applies. However, this leaves organisations with a challenge: how best to translate the high-level commitments of the Concordat into the everyday practicalities of carrying out and supporting research. UKRIO has provided practical advice and support to the research community on this topic since the Concordat was first published in 2012.

We have identified five themes that cut across all five commitments of the Concordat:

- Policies and systems
- Communication
- Culture, development and leadership
- Addressing breaches of research integrity
- Monitoring and reporting

Through our unique [Self-Assessment Tool](#) and other services – events, training and development activities, Advisory Service and more – we help researchers, research-enabling staff and organisations embed the Concordat in practices, policies systems, behaviours, and culture, including but not limited to compliance with funder requirements.

Now that the 2025 edition of the Concordat has been released, we are undertaking a full revision of the [Self-Assessment Tool](#) and our other Concordat-related outputs and services. This briefing note is just the first stage of UKRIO's proactive support for implementing the new Concordat. Please visit [our website](#) and subscribe to our [newsletter](#) to stay updated.