

Complaints Policy

Introduction

Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to enable the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) to:

- ensure that all UKRIO's service users have the opportunity to make complaints about the service;
- ensure all complaints are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and objectively; and
- ensure the results are communicated to the complainant.

Scope

This policy applies to all employed staff and volunteers at UKRIO. The policy is aimed at all users of UKRIO, its staff and volunteers.

The policy does not cover:

- Comments or dissatisfaction about our policies or policy decisions;
- Matters that have already been thoroughly investigated through this complaints policy;
- Complaints about volunteers that do not relate to UKRIO and/or to their role at the charity.

Definitions

A complaint, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about UKRIO's services, whether it is found to be justified or not.

This policy covers complaints by service users or any individual in relation to services provided including:

- The standards of the service we provide
- The conduct of staff and volunteers in their capacity carrying out activities for the Charity.

What to do if you have a complaint

If you have a complaint, you can contact us by any of the following methods:

Email – please email info@ukrio.org with the details of the complaint, including the date, venue and time of occurrence. Please share your contact details in the email so that we can respond to you.

Letter – please write to: FAO: Steph Neave, *UK Research Integrity Office, Impact Hub London Euston, 1 Triton Square, NW1 3DX* with details of the complaint, including the date, venue and time of occurrence. Please share your contact details in the letter so that we can respond to you.

For complaints against UKRIO staff or volunteers please address the complaint to Steph Neave, Chief Executive Officer; for complaints against the Chief Executive Officer, please address the complaint to Linda Partridge, Chair of UKRIO's Board of Trustees.

Please outline the nature of your complaint as precisely as possible and include any relevant documents or correspondence, as this will help us to investigate further and seek a resolution for the issue. Please also supply your contact details in case more information is required.

Complaints related to data protection

If an individual is unhappy with any aspect of how UKRIO is using their personal data, please inform UKRIO's Data Protection Officer. You can do so via email to info@ukrio.org or by writing to: UK Research Integrity Office, *Impact Hub London Euston, 1 Triton Square, NW1 3DX*. A person also has the right to lodge a complaint about any use of their information with the UK's Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). For further details, please refer to UKRIO's Data Protection Policy.

Investigation of complaints

The process below sets out the timeframes for dealing with complaints. These processes will be followed regardless of the method by which the complaint was received.

Complaints received will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt by the method requested by the complainant. Your complaint will be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner.

Your complaint will be assigned to the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint, who will investigate the matter fully and communicate regularly with you until the issue has been resolved.

Service complaints

Where a complaint is made about a service provided directly by UKRIO (e.g. training, response to a request for advice, or a publication), it should be raised directly with Steph Neave, Chief Executive Officer. The complaint will be investigated and a response will be provided to the complainant.

UKRIO aims to respond to all complaints within 3 working days of acknowledgement of receiving the complaint. Where further investigation is required, or the complaint is complex in nature, the complainant will be notified. UKRIO aims to resolve all complaints within 28 working days of receipt.

Employee complaints – Staff member and volunteers (inclusive of Board of Trustees and other Expert volunteers)

Where a complaint is made about a staff member or volunteer of UKRIO, depending on the nature of the complaint, it will be raised with their Line Manager. They will investigate and respond directly to the complainant. UKRIO aims to respond to all complaints within 3 working days of acknowledgement of receiving the complaint. Where further investigation is required, or the complaint is complex in nature the complainant will be notified. UKRIO aims to resolve all complaints within 28 working days of receipt.

Confidentiality during a complaints procedure

While UKRIO will treat any information given to us with sensitivity we may not guarantee that your identity will remain confidential during a complaints procedure as we may need to disclose your identity if required to do so by law. It must also be noted that your identity may be recognisable to others during a complaints procedure. UKRIO will endeavour to limit the risk of disclosing the identity of the complainant. All complaint records will be kept in accordance with UKRIO's Data Protection Policy.

Completing a complaints investigation

UKRIO will consider each complaint carefully and decide upon an appropriate course of action. In some cases, it may not be possible to investigate or substantiate complaints, or it may fall outside of UKRIO's responsibilities.

If the complainant has given contact details, they will be notified of any part of the investigation which may directly involve them. UKRIO may not disclose the outcome of an investigation that has been carried out due to confidentiality and legal restrictions. However, UKRIO may report that an investigation has been carried out and appropriate action has been taken.

All complainants will be responded to as per the procedures and times frames set out above.

Appealing a response

A complainant that is not satisfied with the response to their complaint may raise their concerns with the Chair of Trustees via email or letter. The Chair of Trustees will aim to respond to the complaint within 10 working days of receiving the appeal. Where further investigation is required, or the complaint is complex in nature, the complainant will be notified. UKRIO aims to resolve all complaints within 28 working days of receipt.

The appeal should be regarding the handling of the original complaint.

Further appeals

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the Chair of Trustees, they can complain to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. For more information, please visit: www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

Policy review cycle

Responsible: UKRIO Board of Trustees

Date of last review: July 2025

Date of next review: July 2028



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

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 pursue these aims through a multi-faceted approach:

- Education via our guidance publications on research practice, training activities and comprehensive events programme.
- Sharing best practice within the community by facilitating discussions about key issues, informing national and international initiatives, and working to improve research culture.
- Giving confidential expert guidance in response to requests for assistance.

Established in 2006, UKRIO is the UK's most experienced research integrity organisation and provides 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, responding to allegations of fraud and misconduct, or improving research culture and systems.

UK Research Integrity Office

Impact Hub, 1 Triton Square, NW1 3DX

Email: info@ukrio.org Web: www.ukrio.org Twitter: @UKRIO

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