# UK Research Integrity Office

## UKRIO:
## recent developments
## and our plans for the future
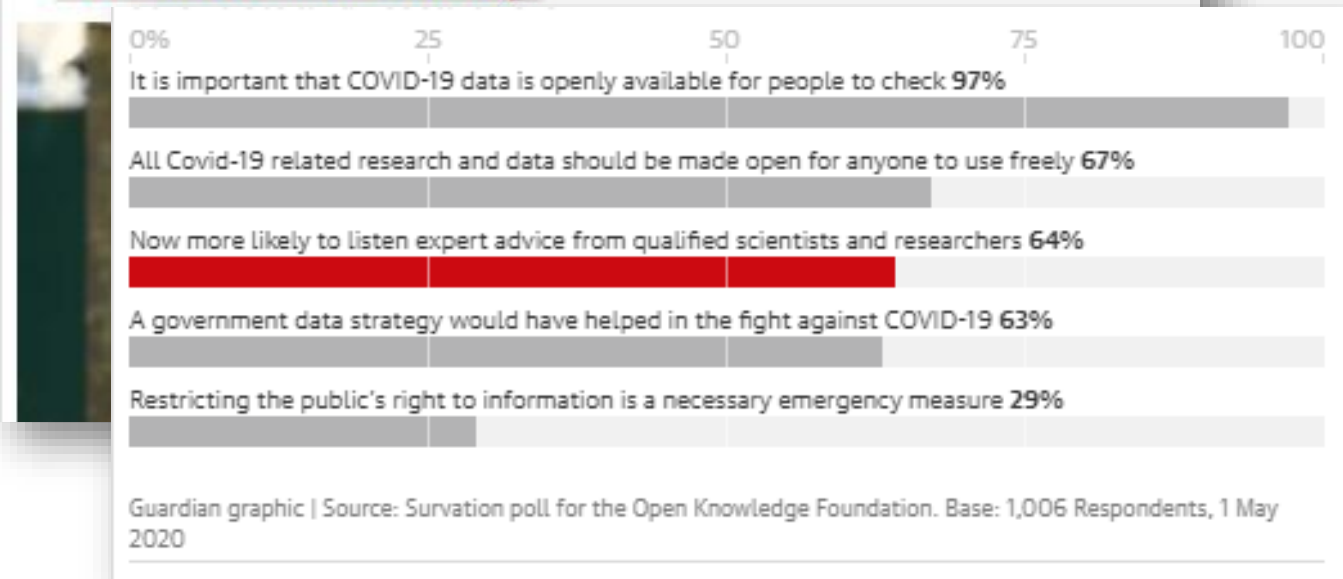
### James Parry, Chief Executive, UKRIO

# Integrity = being trustworthy & open



Trust in scientists grows as fake coronavirus news rises, UK poll finds

Poll finds 64% of voters more likely to listen to expert advice as 51% say they have seen fake news about virus

- Coronavirus – latest updates
- See all our coronavirus coverage

| | 0% | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It is important that COVID-19 data is openly available for people to check **97%** | | | | | |
| All Covid-19 related research and data should be made open for anyone to use freely **67%** | | | | | |
| Now more likely to listen expert advice from qualified scientists and researchers **64%** | | | | | |
| A government data strategy would have helped in the fight against COVID-19 **63%** | | | | | |
| Restricting the public's right to information is a necessary emergency measure **29%** | | | | | |

Guardian graphic | Source: Survation poll for the Open Knowledge Foundation. Base: 1,006 Respondents, 1 May 2020

**Source:** *The Guardian*, 05/05/20

# Adaptation and expansion

- UKRIO's premises are closed but our charity is still operating as usual.

- Support and services now being delivered virtually.

- Expanding our team: 5 new staff and more volunteers.

- Recognition:

  - Impact of pandemic on research community

  - Impact of pandemic on research integrity

  - Importance of supporting research into COVID-19

  - Wider impact of pandemic on individuals and organisations.

# Work programme: highlights

1. New publications
2. Advice and support for researchers and organisations
3. Training and development
4. Virtual events
5. Collaborations

# Guidance on ethics review

- **Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations** https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO-2020.01-ARMA

- **Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations – summary version** https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO-2020.02-ARMA

# Concordat Self-Assessment Tool V2

- Comprehensive changes to reflect 2019 revision of *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, for publication in May.

- Updated self-assessment question tables.

- Comparison of 2012 & 2019 Concordats.

- New discussion on implementation of the Concordat and avoidance of a 'tick box' approach.

- Expanded guidance on writing institutional annual statements on research integrity.

# COVID-19: checklist for research

- **Recommended Checklist for Research Communities**, for publication in May.

- Relevant to all disciplines and to all individuals and organisations involved in research.

- Highlights issues that might affect the integrity of research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, including research into COVID-19 and related topics.

- The Checklist does **not** try to state the 'right' way to undertake such research.

- Instead, the aim is to help individuals and organisations anticipate what issues might affect their research and think about how to address those issues.



Recommended checklist for research communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, for both existing and new research

**Introduction**

This checklist, building on UKRIO's Recommended Checklist for Researchers (2008), highlights issues that can affect the integrity of research undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to research on COVID-19 and related topics.

These issues can have negative consequences for:

- Honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication in the design, conduct and reporting of research.
- Care and respect for research participants, researchers and all others involved in research.
- Accountability of researchers, organisations, funders and publishers.
- Public trust in research.

This Checklist is aimed at all involved in research, including: researchers, administrators, managers, technicians, research organisations, funders, reviewers, editors, publishers, and the public, including research participants. It is applicable to all research disciplines and all research sectors.

The pandemic has had considerable effects on how research is designed, funded, conducted, managed, monitored and disseminated. The aim of this Checklist is not to state the 'right' way to undertake COVID-19 research or research during a pandemic.

Instead, the aim is to help individuals and organisations anticipate what issues might affect the integrity of their research and consider in advance how those issues might be mitigated against.

**Before conducting all research, and bearing in mind that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research:**

1. Does the proposed research address pertinent question(s) and is it designed either to add to existing knowledge about the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it?
   a. For COVID-19 research: does the proposed research address COVID-19 and/or related topics in the above manner, or is the inclusion of COVID-19 peripheral at best?
   b. Do applications for funding accurately describe the significance of research question(s) and potential findings/interpretations and without embellishment?

2. Is the research design appropriate for the question(s) being asked?
   a. Does the research design take into account guidance relating to research during and/or into pandemics and ethical considerations during pandemics, recognising that such guidance can be updated frequently?
   b. Is the research design in accordance with good practice standards for the type of research in question or has design been compromised because of resourcing issues (see 5, below) and/or pressure to produce results quickly?

3. Have applications for funding undergone appropriate peer review?
   a. Consider if the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the ability of funding bodies to thoroughly, objectively and efficiently peer review applications for funding?

# New research misconduct procedure

- For consultation in May: draft **Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research**.

- A full revision of the original, drawing on UKRIO's extensive experience in this area.

- Can be adopted 'as is' or (our recommended approach) used as benchmark guidance when creating or revising an investigation process.

- Compatible with the requirements of the Concordat and research funders.

- Includes commentary on: particular stages of the Procedure; key issues which may be encountered during an investigation; and of different approaches to consider when creating/revising an investigation process.



**Receipt of Allegations stage**

**Purpose**

24. The purpose of the Receipt of Allegations Stage is to assess an allegation of research misconduct that has been received by an Organisation, in order to determine the most appropriate process to investigate or otherwise address it.

**Carried out by:**

25. The Named Person will carry out this stage of the Procedure, supported by the Research Integrity Officer.

26. The Named Person may identify suitable administrative and other support to assist him/her in carrying out the above actions, including liaisons from Human Resources and Student Services if deemed appropriate. Those selected to provide such support should confirm to the Named Person in writing that their participation involves no conflict of interest, seeking advice from the Named Person if unsure (see paragraph 22).

27. The Named Person shall be free to seek confidential advice from persons with relevant expertise, both within the Organisation and outside it, as described in paragraph 19.

**Possible outcomes**

28. At the conclusion of the Receipt of Allegations stage, the Named Person will determine whether the allegation of misconduct in research:

a. is unfounded, because it is mistaken or is frivolous or is otherwise without substance, and will be dismissed; or

b. is unfounded, because it is vexatious and/or malicious, and will be dismissed; or

c. warrants referral directly to another formal process of the Organisation, including but not limited to: exam regulations, academic misconduct process or equivalent; bullying/harassment procedure or equivalent; financial fraud investigation process or equivalent; or

d. warrants referral directly to an external organisation, including but not limited to statutory regulators or professional bodies, the latter being particularly relevant where there are concerns relating to Fitness to Practise; or

e. has some substance but due to a lack of intent to deceive or due to its relatively minor nature, will be addressed through education and training or other non-disciplinary approach, such as mediation, rather than through the next stage of the Procedure or other formal processes; or

f. is sufficiently serious and has sufficient substance to advance to the Screening Stage of this Procedure..

**Timescale:**

29. This stage of the Procedure should be completed as soon as is practicable upon receipt of an allegation, normally within ten working days, provided this does not compromise the Standards (see paragraphs 14-23) and Principles (see Annex 1) of this Procedure and the full and fair investigation of the allegation.

a. Any delays to this timescale will be explained to the Complainant in writing, presenting an estimated revised date of completion.

# Advice and support

- UKRIO Advisory Service for good research practice and addressing concerns about research.

- Support for subscriber organisations, including creation/revision of policies and systems.

- Support for regional research integrity networks and other peer-led groups.

- Discipline-specific support and guidance on research integrity matters/standards.

# Training

- Recommended core curriculum for research integrity training.

- Online training course in development.

- Research integrity training for institutions will now be delivered virtually until further notice.

- Virtual training for research ethics committees:

  - Training for specific organisations.

  - Regional workshops.

# Events

- **UKRIO conference rescheduled to 16 October**, but in the meantime…

- Research integrity webinars: monthly, open to all.

- UKRIO subscriber workshops: virtual meetings to explore key topics, with a practical focus.

- Virtual training events.

# Collaborations

- "…the new committee should take responsibility for driving the implementation of an updated and strengthened Concordat, and following up on other recommendations to the sector in this report. Meanwhile, UKRIO should continue its work in providing advice on research integrity and sharing best practice."

**House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, 2018**

House of Commons

Science and Technology Committee

**Research integrity**

Sixth Report of Session 2017–19

*Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 26 June 2018*

# Questions

- **Research during the pandemic:** how should the community respond to challenges to research integrity?

- **Research culture:** how do we "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative"?

- **Peer-led activity:** how to get researchers more involved in promotion/discussion of good research practice?

- **UKRIO:** what additional support can we provide?