

Volunteer Policy and Agreement

Introduction

UKRIO recognises the invaluable contribution made by the people who volunteer. The charity has been generously supported for many years by a range of committed individuals with a passion for research integrity.

UKRIO's volunteers are typically made up of three broad roles:

Board of Trustees	Advisory Council member	Expert community member (formerly 'advisory community member')
Responsible for the effective governance and development of UKRIO	Advises on UKRIO's strategy and programme of work	Supports the organisation in its operational delivery and execution
Sets its major policies	Provides strategic guidance and a thoughtful sounding board for the charity	This includes, but is not limited, to (a) informing expert responses to our advisory service, (b) supporting peer review, (c) acting as an expert member of an investigation panel, and/or (d) taking on ambassadorial duties for the charity
Agrees the charity's strategic direction with the CEO	Enhances the execution of UKRIO's programme of work	
Acts as ambassadors		

This policy details our procedures and will be applied, as appropriate, to help each volunteer understand the valuable role they will play, and which will enable them to contribute most to our work. Each volunteer will need to sign and agree to the terms set out in our volunteer-agreement.

Purpose of this policy

1. To explain the recruitment, selection, and induction process for volunteers
2. To exemplify the types of volunteer support needed
3. To set out the expectations and responsibilities of volunteers and act as an agreement between UKRIO and its volunteers

Nature of volunteer support

Expertise and skills

Subject to meeting mandatory requirements, all volunteers are welcome. We particularly welcome volunteers from broad ranging backgrounds who represent the diverse communities we support.

How to express interest in becoming an expert community member

All potential volunteers will be asked to submit their CV, a short statement and will be asked to complete a skills/expertise matrix. Following this, individuals will be invited for a short call to discuss further.

Volunteers are recruited based on their expertise and experience in addressing issues of research integrity. UKRIO are seeking people who have a strong desire to volunteer meaningfully in their mission to advance research integrity, utilising critical skills including specialised knowledge, professional expertise, and technological acumen, often cultivated over many years. Expertise includes but not limited to in-depth knowledgeable in an area or topic due to his or her study, training, or experience in the desired subject matter.

Our volunteer community comes from a variety of backgrounds. Volunteers may include but are not limited to professions such as: researchers from any academic discipline, or be active in related occupations, such as:

- senior managers of research institutions;
- research administrators/ managers;
- editors of academic journals;
- statisticians;
- representatives of regulatory, funding or professional bodies;
- human resources;
- research ethics;
- research governance officers and other specialists in research integrity.

UKRIO also recruits lay persons and legal professionals to act as Volunteers.

Volunteer recruitment and selection

Promoting volunteering opportunities

Persons with relevant experience are encouraged through a variety of means to apply to UKRIO. We also approach suitable candidates and invite them to join the Advisory Community. Ways in which volunteer opportunities are promoted:

- Via websites, such as funders, local community groups and foundations.
- Social media
- Through networks and word of mouth.

Safer recruitment practices

We follow safer recruitment practices in that we:

- Inform candidates of our commitment to safeguarding.
- Plan our recruitment timeline to ensure we have enough time to carry out due diligence each candidate.
- Where necessary, though this is not typically the case, carry out pre-employment checks, including DBS checks, qualification checks, reference checks and identity checks.
- Ensure volunteers have the appropriate skills and training for their duties.

Selection

Mandatory Requirements

- A commitment to our work and to UKRIO's vision and values.
- A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Sufficient time/flexibility to be able to carry out the role.
- Relevant professional qualifications, experience or accreditation and completion of a skills matrix.
- Agreement and adherence to UKRIO's Volunteer agreement

Areas of support

Area of support	What to expect /What we need
<p>Informing expert responses to our advisory service</p> <p>A key element of UKRIO's work programme is UKRIO's Advisory Service. This provides independent, expert and confidential advice on the conduct of research, whether promoting good practice or addressing alleged poor practice and misconduct. It covers all subject areas and any issues relating to research practice.</p> <p>Examples of advice sought have been on issues of good practice in research. We also advise whistle-blowers and help those responsible to deal effectively with problems of poor practice and allegations of misconduct.</p>	<p>UKRIO currently receives 100-120 formal requests for help per year.</p> <p>The main role that our expert community members play is to support the work of UKRIO's Advisory Service – a free to access advice and guidance enquiry service on all matters of research integrity.</p> <p>Our Advisory Service is open to all, including members of the public, research participants, patients, individual researchers, research students and research organisations. UKRIO welcomes enquiries on general or hypothetical topics, as well as those on specific research projects, issues and cases. Straightforward and complex enquiries are dealt with by the office directly, drawing upon relevant best practice guidance from UKRIO and others, and from our extensive experiences in resolving issues of research integrity.</p> <p>When enquiries require subject-specialist knowledge, are contentious or multi-faceted, opinions are sought from several volunteers with relevant experience for their insights and views. In all cases enquiries are anonymised before being shared with our volunteers.</p> <p>Expert community members must sign and adhere to the 'volunteers' agreement. Expert community members must not disclose details of enquiries to anyone else, including another expert community member, unless approved by the Chair or UKRIO staff.</p>
<p>Peer review</p>	<p>Recognising the wealth of experience embodied in the Expert Community, its members maybe periodically consulted regarding other elements of UKRIO's work programme. For example, expert community members may be asked: if they wish to contribute to the development of our education and training, dissemination activities, or new publications; or how UKRIO might respond to consultations or new initiatives on issues of research practice or integrity. This wider involvement in the work of UKRIO is by mutual agreement only.</p>
<p>Expert panel member on investigation panel</p>	<p>Expert community members can choose to take a more active role, joining institutional investigations of alleged research misconduct. Expert community members bring an external, skilled and experienced</p>

<p>When approached by research organisations investigating alleged misconduct in research, UKRIO can provide members of the Register to participate as external members of screening or investigation panels.</p>	<p>perspective to investigations and can help reassure all involved that the process will be thorough and fair. We recognise that not all members will be willing or available to undertake such a role; accordingly, involvement in an institutional investigation is strictly by choice. UKRIO will only facilitate a pairing and will have no involvement in the investigation nor its outcome.</p>
<p>Ambassadorial duties</p> <p>Where appropriate author blogs, guidance, acting as a webinar speaker, acting a UKRIO ambassador, be part of working groups</p>	<p>We need your expert help to produce engaging, purposeful and impactful articles and blogs. We would welcome your input. UKRIO also regularly seeks expert speakers at the cutting edge of research integrity to share their views as part of the charity's expert webinar series.</p> <p>We may also seek your support in representing UKRIO in an ambassadorial capacity at events or working groups. You will be briefed by UKRIO's team and be given ambassadorial materials to support you.</p>

Time commitment

Volunteering at UKRIO may range from dedicating a few hours a month, to a more substantial time commitment. We do our best to ensure that our expert community are not overburdened by allocating enquiries carefully and proportionately. expert community members are always free to decline assignments without losing goodwill of the organisation.

Typically, the level of commitment the level of commitment UKRIO volunteers provide is around 6-12 hours of their time of their time over the course of a year, depending on their interest and the projects relevant to their expertise and subject-matter knowledge.

Location

Currently, our volunteering opportunities are virtual.

Training

UKRIO may arrange periodic training for its expert community in the form of an away day or small discussion sessions.

Expenses

Expert community members give their time to UKRIO pro bono and are not employees of the organisation. Where agreed in advance, the charity can pay reasonable expenses incurred by expert community members in the course of supporting UKRIO. All expenses must be agreed with UKRIO prior to being incurred.

Insurances

Appropriate insurances and indemnities have been obtained to cover volunteers, including expert community members, when acting on behalf of UKRIO.

Volunteer Induction

- Checks and administration, including policies and procedures.
 - Induction into our safeguarding procedures and where relevant, though not typically applicable, identity and right to work checks.
- Welcome and induction into our work, by a team member.
- Ongoing support as required.

Volunteering term

We ask that volunteers commit to a minimum volunteering term of one year, and a maximum of three years before a review. We ask that you communicate with us if your situation changes and you are no longer able to engage with volunteering at UKRIO.

Further reading: Regulatory Guidance

- [Volunteer opportunities, rights and expenses: Volunteers' rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) – Rights of volunteers
- [Charity Commission](#): How to manage your charity's volunteers.
- [Fundraising Regulator](#): volunteers.
- [Health & Safety Executive](#): Volunteering – how to manage the risks.

Policy review schedule

- Review body: Audit & Risk Committee
- Last review date: September 2024
- Next date: September 2026

Appendix 1

Volunteer Agreement

All who act on behalf of UKRIO, including our Volunteers, must adhere to the highest standards of integrity, objectivity, honesty and professionalism. The agreement is divided into several sections and you must agree to adhere to the terms in order to volunteer with UKRIO.

The sections are as follows:

- Code of Conduct
- Declaration of competing interests
- Data Protection and Privacy
- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality

Following the agreement, you will also be asked to complete a skills matrix so we can best direct requests for support or relevant projects to you for your input.

Code of Conduct

Behaviours and Values

- Adhere to UKRIO's values of honesty, integrity, independence, impartiality, collaborative and supportive in your work and conduct.
- Act with integrity, objectivity and honesty, and in accordance with the law and the public good.
- Only take on assignments consistent with your skills and available time.
- Follow the procedures and policies established by UKRIO and co-operate with fellow staff and expert community members.
- Be mindful that those who contact UKRIO for assistance:
 - Have approached us seeking confidential, expert and objective advice and guidance;
 - May feel extremely nervous about approaching our organisation and/or raising their concerns;
 - May raise issues of a serious, sensitive or contentious nature, for example allegations that persons involved in research have suffered harm, injury or death;
 - May be a research participant or patient, or have some other personal interest in the subject of their enquiry.

Conflicts of interest: UKRIO Declaration of competing interests

The purpose of this declaration is to provide readers with information about the other interests that individuals that are UKRIO Trustees and Expert Community members may have that that could influence or bias judgment when discussing or reaching decisions relating to UKRIO business. These are known as competing interests or as conflicts of interest (COIs). A competing interest might bias or compromise an individual's motives or actions and could lead others to perceive them as being biased or compromised.

This disclosure form is designed to be completed electronically and stored electronically securely and **will be published on the UKRIO website**. UKRIO Trustees and Expert Community members should complete this form and each individual is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the statements made.

UKRIO requires you to declare any relevant competing interests that have arisen in the past five years, from the date of completing this declaration or any that are expected to arise in the next 12 months.

Interests outside the 5-year time frame must also be declared if they could reasonably be perceived as competing according to the definition above.

Competing interests could be potential or actual. Competing interests could include, but are not limited to, the following, which should be disclosed:

All relevant financial relationships

- Direct financial relationships such as employment, stock ownership, grants/grants pending and patents, contract research, membership of board of directors,
- Indirect financial relationships such as honoraria, consultancies to sponsoring organisations, mutual fund ownership, paid expert testimony, travel grants, gifts, and royalties.

All relevant non-financial relationships

- Personal and professional academic relationships, such as personal relationships, recent or ongoing professional collaborations, employment, or other relationships that may influence or appear to influence the work of UKRIO.
- Associations with organisations in a voluntary, unpaid capacity (honorary or emeritus).
- Other interests that might be thought to influence them, either wittingly or unwittingly in the matter under discussion.
- A relationship or association with an organisation that could be perceived to interfere with your ability to carry out the UKRIO work without bias.
- A relationship that, if revealed at a later date, would make a reasonable individual feel deceived or misled.
- I agree to immediately report any changes to potential or actual conflicts of interest to UKRIO. Yes/No

You will be asked to declare all competing interests including non-financial and financial relationships at the end of this form.

Data Protection and Privacy

- Adhere to UKRIO's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies.
- Pass on without delay anything that might be a subject access request to the [Data Protection Officer](#), James Parry, Chief Innovation Officer.

Safeguarding

- Report to UKRIO any concerns about: criminal activity; risk or harm to research participants, patients or other persons; improper treatment of animal subjects of research; improper use or storage of human tissue, materials or personal data; and/or negative environmental consequences.
- Maintain [confidentiality](#) and do not share confidential information about UKRIO's work with any third parties, unless authorised to make a relevant disclosure by UKRIO's Chief Executive Officer.

Confidentiality obligations

In order to safeguard individuals seeking advice, UKRIO is committed to keeping this information confidential. 'Confidential' means that all access to information must be on a need to know and properly authorised basis. You must use only the information you have been authorised to use, and for purposes that have been authorised. You should also be aware that under the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation, unauthorised access to data about individuals is a criminal offence.

When volunteering for UKRIO, you will may have access to confidential information which may include, for example:

- Information about the internal business of UKRIO;

You must assume that information is confidential unless you know that it is intended by UKRIO to be made public.

Passing information between the UKRIO office and volunteers (**note that** volunteer Advisers are not normally provided with *un anonymised* information about requests for UKRIO's help) or vice versa does not count as making it public, but passing information to another organisation does count.

You must also be particularly careful not to disclose confidential information to unauthorised people or cause a breach of security. In particular you must:

- not compromise or seek to evade security measures (including computer passwords);
- be particularly careful when sending information between the UKRIO office and volunteers; for example checking recipient names
- not gossip or speculate about confidential information, either with colleagues or people outside UKRIO; and
- not disclose information whether it is anonymised or not— especially over the telephone — unless you are sure that you know who you are disclosing it to and that they are authorised to have it.

If you are in doubt about whether to disclose information or not, do not guess. Withhold the information while you check with an appropriate person whether the disclosure is appropriate.

Your confidentiality obligations continue to apply indefinitely after you have stopped volunteering for UKRIO.

Skills matrix for expert community members

The expert community member will then be invited to complete a skills matrix where they will assess their relevant skills and expertise in a range of areas. Please note the data we intend to collect is currently under review by the Nominations Committee.

Declaration of agreement

I have read and understood and will adhere to the terms of UKRIO's Volunteer agreement including the following sections (please tick all):

UKRIO's Volunteer code of conduct

UKRIO's Data Protection and Privacy Policies

UKRIO's Safeguarding Policies

UKRIO's confidentiality obligations

Declaration of competing interests

In accordance with UKRIO's Competing interests policy, please specify all relevant non-financial relationships below:

Please insert a X into the relevant box:

I have no potential conflict of interest to report

I declare the following potential conflict(s) of interest:

Signed

Date:

Expert Community Member skills audit

Please evaluate your proficiency in each area (scale of 0-4) Skill	Little relevant expertise	Sufficient expertise to make informed contributions to discussions	Relevant expertise to lead in giving advice or review UKRIO publications	Recognised expertise (e.g. qualification) or sufficient experience to represent UKRIO externally (e.g. training event/webinar)
Artificial intelligence				
Data governance and regulation				
Equality, diversity, and inclusion				
Intellectual property (including copyright, licenses, patents, and commercialisation)				
International links in research integrity				
Open research practices (reproducibility)				
Public engagement with research				
Publication ethics				
Research culture				
Research ethics (e.g. as a researcher applying for a favourable ethical opinion/REC member/chair)				
Research ethics governance (e.g. setting up online ethics system, recruiting lay members)				
Research funding				
Research integrity in policy				
Research integrity in practice (development/training)				
Research integrity in research and evaluation				
Research policy				
Trusted Research				
	Please describe the following:			
Current role title				

Career level (e.g. Ph.D. candidate, retired professor, senior professional services)		
Current affiliation(s)		
Research discipline(s)		
	How often would you prefer to contribute to our organisation? (select one)	
Frequent (1 or 2 times a month)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Occasional (bi-monthly)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Infrequent (once every few months)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have expertise to train others in research integrity? (Yes/No, details of area)		
Please add any further areas of expertise not listed:		
Membership of a relevant professional body/ research integrity group/forum, e.g., COPE, UKRN		
Would you consider being a research misconduct panel member?		
Have you been a research misconduct panel member?		