

## Assurance on Research Integrity & Ethics

The Concordat to support research integrity includes (Commitment 5, page 21): "To provide assurance over efforts to strengthen research integrity, Research Councils UK will use its existing assurance mechanisms to garner feedback on activity across the sector. This information will be made available to other funders and provide an evidence base for the annual statement, thereby reducing the need for additional reporting requirements".

Early in 2013, RCUK piloted a set of assurance questions with seven HEIs. These have since been agreed across the funders that are signatories to the Concordat, and from summer 2013 will be rolled out to all HEIs as part of the overall RCUK assurance programme. The explanatory text and questions are:

### Research Integrity & Ethics

*The Research Organisation is required to have procedures for governing good research practice, and for investigating and reporting unacceptable research conduct that meet the requirements set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012) and the Research Councils' Code of Conduct and Policy on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2009) and any subsequent amendments.*

1. Please confirm that you have policies and procedures in place that meet the above requirements, including processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct. How often are these reviewed and when were they last reviewed?
2. Please provide the weblink to these policies and the name of the senior officer responsible for dealing with cases of misconduct.
3. How are these policies disseminated to staff? Please indicate if any special provision is made for new employees (including post-graduate students) and also how staff awareness is maintained.
4. Please outline any actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example, postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews).
5. How many formal investigations of research misconduct have been undertaken in the past three years which relate to researchers funded by or responsible for funding from Research Councils (including supervisors of postgraduate awards)?
6. The Research Councils expect that the research they support will be carried out to a high ethical standard. Please explain the arrangements you have in place for reviewing that any research funded by the Research Councils is planned and conducted in accordance with such ethical standards.

The reasons for collecting the information are:

- i) Primarily to provide assurance to the RCs that the HEIs are complying with the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct;
- ii) but also, to feed in to the narrative statement in meeting the requirements of the Concordat (page 21); and

- iii) to allow RCUK to compare the data it receives from HEIs as part of the assurance programme with other information about research misconduct received by other routes, either from HEIs or from elsewhere.

The information received will be shared in confidence (but not anonymised) between the funders that are signatories to the Concordat. This means that each funder will not need to ask HEIs to respond to its own assurance questions. Any information made public will be anonymised, except for example to identify good practice.

RCUK and the other funders will monitor this process and may adapt the questions if necessary.