

Research Integrity Assurance questions (August 2012; expanded March 2014)

Research Integrity & Ethics

Research Organisations in receipt of RCUK funding are 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)¹ and the *RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct* (2009)² and any subsequent amendments.

The reasons for collecting the information are:

- i) Primarily to provide assurance to the RCs that Research Organisations (ROs) are complying with the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct;
- ii) But also, to feed in to RCUK's narrative statement in meeting the requirements of the Concordat; and
- iii) To allow RCUK to compare the data it receives from ROs as part of the assurance programme with other information about research misconduct received by other routes, either from ROs or from elsewhere.

RCUK plans to make public annually:

- Numbers of ROs where the Assurance programme has revealed that the RO has and has not complied with RCUK guidelines on statements/processes/name responsible persons etc
- Numbers of formal investigations of research misconduct that 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). (Q5)
- Trend data on the above (following year one).

No RO will be named. It is recognised that numbers will need careful explanation as increases may be 'good' as they may reflect better reporting.

NB The RCUK Policy and Guidelines requires ROs to keep the relevant Research Council(s) informed of all allegations of research misconduct - at the time an allegation progresses to the formal investigation stage - wherever the case concerns individuals and/or research awards funded by the Council(s). (page 10).

From July 2014, the questions below have been incorporated into the standard RCUK Assurance Programme of ROs in receipt of RCUK funding – as one of the 'non-financial' elements. Although questions 5 and 6 specifically refer only to RCUK funding, the responses from ROs to all the questions will be shared in confidence with the other signatories to the Concordat. They may then want to follow-up with individual ROs. [Summary data for individual ROs may be shared in confidence with other relevant bodies].

¹ www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf

² <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf>

Questions

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 publicly accessible 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 completed in the past three completed academic years which relate to researchers funded by or responsible for funding from Research Councils (including supervisors of postgraduate awards)? Please complete the table below.

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.

* For question 5

- “Formal investigation” should be as described in the RCUK Policy and Guidelines (page 8).
- The relevant date should be when the formal investigation is completed.
- By completing the table below, please give by academic year (1st Oct – 30th Sept), for the past three completed academic years (starting with the most recent completed year), the number of completed investigations.
- And for each instance:
 - Whether it was Fabrication, Falsification, Plagiarism, Misrepresentation, Breach of duty of care or Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct (all as defined in the RCUK Policy, pages 6-7), or other. (If ‘other’, please explain briefly); and
 - Whether the allegation was upheld (in whole or in part). If in part, please give brief details in the final row.
- Names of individuals are not required.
- In terms of overall numbers, there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers.

	Number of formal investigations completed			Number of allegations upheld (in whole or in part)		
	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3
Fabrication						
Falsification						
Plagiarism						
Misrepresentation						
Breach of duty of						

care						
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct						
Other (please specify)						
Details of any allegations upheld in part						

* please specify the year
