Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2025

Section 1: Key contact information

1A. Name of organisation	The Institute of Cancer Research
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by the Executive Board **Date statement approved by the Board of Trustees**	17/03/2026 26/03/2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.icr.ac.uk/about-us/our-values/responsibilities
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Prof. Clare Isacke
	Email address: Clare.Isacke@icr.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Dr. Yuen-Li Chung
	Email address: Yuen-Li.Chung@icr.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Overview of Systems and Culture

The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) maintains a strong organisational commitment to the principles of the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Research integrity is embedded through clear leadership structures, defined responsibilities, and a culture that promotes rigour, transparency, and accountability across all research activities.

Culture and Leadership

The ICR Lead for Research Integrity is also the Named Person for the ICR's Procedure for Investigating Misconduct in Research. To strengthen our culture of Research Integrity, the ICR has additionally appointed four research leaders as Research Integrity Champions who act as local champions for research integrity and good research practice. The Champions and Named Person provide oversight for our Research Integrity action plans.

The Executive Board, chaired by the CEO, holds overarching responsibility for research integrity across the organisation. Heads of Division and Group Leaders ensure that all researchers understand integrity expectations, adhere to regulations, and engage actively with good research practice. Their responsibilities include mentoring researchers, reinforcing rigorous research standards, and ensuring compliance with ethical, legal, and professional requirements.

Training and Development

ICR operates a hybrid training model combining centralised Research Integrity workshops with group-level discussions facilitated by Group Leaders. New researchers are required to attend the centralised Research Integrity workshops within their probation period.

A range of complementary technical courses, such as Good Clinical Practice, Good Laboratory Practice, scientific skills development, responsible statistics, and ethical figure processing, are available to support all researchers in developing high-quality and responsible research practices. Resources on research integrity, data management, and reproducibility are hosted on an accessible intranet hub.

Policies and Systems

The ICR's Good Research Practice Guidelines set out expectations for integrity and link to policy areas including research governance, research involving animals or human participants, health and safety, information governance, publication and authorship, and intellectual property management. These policies undergo regular review.

Monitoring, Audit, and Compliance

The organisation maintains robust processes to ensure ethical and regulatory compliance, including oversight by:

- Joint Royal Marsden NHS Trust (RM) /ICR Clinical Research Governance Board for human participant research.
- AWERB for animal research under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- ICR Clinical Trials and Statistics Unit (CTSU) and the Joint RM/ICR GCP and Regulatory Compliance Team, providing monitoring and audit support.
- Internal audit and tissue governance programmes.
- The Sustainability, Health and Safety (SHS) team who supports risk management, ensuring regulatory compliance, staff safety, sustainability processes, and appropriate laboratory management.

The ICR has a systematic procedure for monitoring and investigating any formal allegations of research misconduct, whether raised internally or externally (see Section 3 for further details). In addition, the ICR has an Assessment Misconduct Procedure, as well as guidance on plagiarism and the use of generative AI, which applies to all students enrolled on the Institute's taught courses and research degree programmes.

Communication and Engagement

The ICR intranet serves as a central hub for integrity-related policies, training modules, external guidance, and best-practice tools. It is actively promoted to researchers to reinforce awareness and understanding. The organisation encourages openness, accountability, and engagement with internal and external monitoring, audit processes, and UKRIO events.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Activities and actions undertaken during calendar year 2025 to support and strengthen a positive research environment include the following:

Research Integrity Training

Following a review of UKRIO materials, a research life-cycle module has been incorporated into the centralised Research Integrity workshops. Additional enhancements included updates to the Statistics for Researchers course and refreshed AI training content, with a strengthened focus on the responsible use of ICR's secure Copilot. In support of ongoing capability building, two members of the training team also attended the Babraham Institute's Train-the-Trainer Research Integrity session.

Good Research Practice and Policy Improvements

Further developments included webinars on sustainable research computing, intranet guidance on AI ethics and anonymisation, and an internal audit of due-diligence processes for external research partners. The ICR also completed a full self-assessment against the 2025 Concordat using the UKRIO tool.

Clinical Research Governance Developments

Achievements included: (i) The routine two-part MHRA inspection (Oct 2024 and Apr 2025) is now closed following submission and acceptance of the ICR's CAPAs. (ii) The Higher Education Institution Committee approval process for local ethical review (when NHS REC review is not required) has been successfully implemented. (iii) The ICR and RM continued regular review and updates of key tissue governance and clinical trial management policies, SOPs and templates. (iv) FreezerPro is the tissue-tracking software used across both the ICR and the Royal Marsden. The STiMS team completed a data-quality improvement project in FreezerPro, simplifying and standardising tissue-tracking data. (v) The ICR-CTSU continues to lead on development of sustainable research practices. The carbon-footprinting method is now available. The ICR-CTSU and their collaborators are developing further innovative approaches through their work in the Greener Trials and the UK Hub for One Health Systems initiatives.

Animal Research Governance

Enhancements included updated AWERB Terms of Reference, attendance at RSPCA AWERB-UK meeting, and deployment of a new animal management system.

Information security and Governance

Milestones included holding the annual Information Governance Month and reviewing and amalgamating several IT security and IG policies into an integrated suite of five new policies to take effect from 2026. They are the End User Policy, Information Management Policy, Information Security and Governance Policy, IT Security Policy, Data Protection Compliance Policy.

Sustainability, Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Achievements included implementation of the Health & Safety Action Plan (2025–2030), alignment with the Environmental Sustainability Concordat, reductions in emissions, GreenDisc certification, wellbeing initiatives, and achieving Level 1 Disability Confident status.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

Reflections on Progress

Throughout 2025, the ICR strengthened its research integrity framework through substantive improvements in governance, training, systems, and culture. Completion of the UKRIO self-assessment demonstrated proactive alignment with the updated 2025 Concordat, highlighting areas of strong performance and identifying opportunities for improvement.

The ICR continued to demonstrate leadership in sustainable and ethical research practices, particularly through initiatives in sustainable trial design, improved data governance, and implementation of a local ethical review process. Engagement with national bodies such as UKRIO ensured that the organisation maintains alignment with sector expectations and emerging best practices.

Plans for Future Developments (2026 and beyond)

Planned priorities include implementing improvements identified from the Concordat self-assessment and revising the Procedure for Investigating Misconduct in Research in line with the UKRIO 2025 Template. Another major organisational focus will be the redesign and strengthening of the health, safety, and environmental management systems, including enhancing the audit and review framework, with the aim of achieving re-certification to ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 in late 2026.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

Any individual wishing to initiate a complaint about the integrity of research carried out at the ICR can do so by writing to the Named Person or Nominate Alternate under the ICR's Procedure for Investigating Misconduct in Research which is available on the ICR's website. The procedure was written in line with UKRIO's "Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research" (version 2.0) and describes the principles and mechanisms to ensure that investigations are transparent, robust and fair, carried out in a transparent and timely manner, and protected by appropriate confidentiality.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	**Number of formal investigations**	**Number upheld in part after formal investigation**	**Number upheld in full after formal investigation**
Fabrication	0	0	0	0
Falsification	1*	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (e.g., data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
Other	2**	0	0	0
Total:	3	0	0	0

* We had 1 case bought to us as an Allegation of Research Misconduct but on review it was decided that it was appropriate to address the allegation under the Disciplinary Policy.

**We had 2 incidents where we were alerted to errors in published manuscript (one published in 2010, one published in 2017). In both cases these errors were genuine mistakes in assembling the data into figures. The manuscript authors submitted updated versions of the manuscripts to the journal requesting that these to be published as corrections.