Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2022

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 Research Committee (DD/MM/YYYY) **Date statement approved by the Board of Trustees (DD/MM/YYYY)**	21/04/2023 18/05/2023
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.icr.ac.uk/about-us/strategy-2022-27/responsibility/good-research-practice
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. Saptha Veerapathiran
	Email address: saptha.veerapathiran@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

Culture and leadership

As a signatory to the Universities UK (UUK) Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) is committed to providing an environment that supports the highest standards of research integrity, ensuring its researchers have ownership of the research process, adhere to the highest standards of rigor and integrity, and work according to applicable ethical legal and professional standards and frameworks.

The ICR has a Lead for Research Integrity who is the Named Person responsible for handling research misconduct matters. To strengthen our culture of Research Integrity, in January 2021, the ICR 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.

Overall responsibility for good research conduct rests with the most appropriate senior level ICR committee, until the end of 2022 with the ICR's Executive Board and from January 2023 with the newly established Research Committee chaired by the CEO. Heads of Division and Team Leaders are responsible for mentoring research staff within their Divisions and Teams, respectively, and for ensuring that all staff and students (a) understand all the facets of research integrity, (b) its importance for their research and the wider research community, and (c) adhere to good practice guidelines and the relevant regulations.

Training and development

In November 2021, the ICR launched a new initiative to support research leaders to deliver training in research integrity and good research practice to their teams at least once annually. All Team Leaders were asked to provide their first session by the end of May 2022 and, after this, were invited to complete a short survey to provide feedback about their experience in developing and delivering the training. The survey analysis showed that 86.5% leaders recognized the importance of research integrity training and agreed that it is beneficial for all research staff. The survey results suggested that these annual team sessions were valuable for maintaining focus on the topic and discussing local issues, but these sessions should be in addition to a centrally organized Research Integrity workshop for all new research staff and students. Taking this feedback into consideration, it was agreed that a hybrid training model should be implemented where all new researchers will attend a centrally organised Research Integrity workshop within their probation period and this training will be further reinforced

by Team Leaders discussing Research Integrity within their teams once a year. In anticipation of the 2023 team training, a presentation detailing the framework of the UUK Concordat, and the importance of good research conduct was prepared by the Research Integrity Champions and circulated to all Team Leaders to use as a starting material for Research Integrity discussions with their team.

In addition to the Research Integrity Training, the ICR provides courses that cover Good Laboratory Practice, Good Clinical Practice, and a course on accessing library resources. Further, the ICR provides several technical courses to help researchers acquire new scientific skills and science communication skills. All ICR staff and students had access to a number of online training courses conducted by Nature Masterclasses – a professional development training platform for researchers to build scientific skills, communication, and careers. This included the "Publishing a research paper" course which covered Research Integrity related topics such as authorship and authors' responsibilities, different types of misconduct including plagiarism, and circumstances that elicit a retraction. Further, the ICR provided training courses such as the 'Adobe Photoshop: processing figures with integrity' and the 'Statistics for Researchers' course which trains researchers on performing statistical analysis with integrity. The ICR also offers support in career guidance and development of researchers through one-to-one support, mock interviews, career counselling and organizing career development and professional development bootcamps.

Policies and systems

The ICR's Good Research Practice guidelines emphasise the importance of integrity and rigour in all research carried out at, and in partnership with, the ICR, and to help ensure that all researchers are aware of their obligations with respect to proper scientific conduct. The document signposts external references and ICR policies and procedures, to support and strengthen research integrity. These include policies for information security and governance; research governance and accountability; research involving human subjects, samples, or data; research involving animals; health and safety; dissemination and publication of results; and practices on intellectual property management. These policies are reviewed and updated regularly and available on the ICR's intranet site.

Monitoring and Reporting

The ICR is committed to honesty and integrity in the way its research is carried out, to openness and co-operation, and to accountability to funding bodies and the public. The ICR monitors and ensures that all research involving human subjects, samples or data is ethical and meets legal and regulatory requirements. We comply with the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research for all research involving human participants. The Committee for Clinical Research (CCR), a sub-committee of the Clinical Research Governance

Committee of the Royal Marsden NHS Trust (RM) and the ICR, is responsible for reviewing and approving all research involving humans.

The ICR adheres to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 which regulates any experimental or other scientific procedure on protected animals that may cause pain, suffering, distress, or lasting harm. The ICR Animal Welfare and Ethics Review Body (AWERB) reviews all proposed research involving animals and advises on the best practice and ethics for using animals. As in previous years, the AWERB produced a comprehensive annual report for the ICR Executive Board and the Board of Trustees, summarising the work of the Committee. The AWERB Terms of Reference were revised in 2022 to broaden membership to include Senior Scientific Officers and Staff Scientists as scientist staff committee members, a role which was previously held by only Team leaders.

The Health Safety and Environment (HS&E) team ensures that all staff and students undertake mandatory HS&E induction training and comply with the relevant HS&E Policies and Procedures. Relevant risk assessments are carried out for work with genetically modified organisms, unsealed radioisotopes, hazardous chemicals, clinical specimens, and biological agents.

The ICR has a systematic procedure for monitoring and investigating any formal allegations of misconduct in research from both within and outside the Institute (See Section 3 for details). The ICR also has a Code of Practice for Plagiarism and Examination Offences which applies to all students registered on any of the ICR's taught courses and research degrees.

All ICR researchers co-operate with both internal and external monitoring and audit visits. The ICR Clinical Trials and Statistics Unit (CTSU) is responsible for providing monitoring and audit for clinical research projects at the ICR. In addition, there is internal audit of human tissue management.

Communications and engagement

An intranet-based research integrity resource is available which is a repository of information, policies, tools and internal and external training links on research integrity-related topics including data management; experimental design, reproducibility and rigour; and image manipulation. It has been widely promoted as a resource for all research staff to deepen their understanding of research integrity and why it is important.

In 2022, the ICR continued its subscription to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and participated in its annual conference and webinar series. Relevant webinars and other events were promoted to ICR research staff and students.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Activities and actions undertaken during calendar year 2022 to support and strengthen a positive research environment include the following:

- Team-leader led Research Integrity Training – As described above, in 2022 the ICR launched the Team Leader led Research Integrity training with the help of the Research Integrity Champions and analysed the effectiveness of this training with a survey. The survey indicated that a majority of the team leaders believed that their research staff members benefitted from the Research Integrity discussions, and that it would be useful to have centrally organized Research Integrity workshops with external speakers who are experts in different facets of Research Integrity. This is now an action plan for 2023.

- In October 2022, the ICR unveiled its new five-year strategy for 2022-2027 – "Defeating Cancer". This new strategy is underpinned by the ICR's vision to be an excellent organisation by providing exceptional facilities and support, attracting talented staff and students, and working together as One ICR supporting a sustainable future. Within this strategy, the ICR restated its commitment to support researchers in retaining the highest standards of scientific integrity through a programme of research culture training and our commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

- The ICR and its hospital partner, The Royal Marsden (RM), are committed to ensuring that all clinical research conducted is of the highest scientific and ethical standards and satisfies all regulatory requirements. The storage, use and disposal of human tissue for research are regulated under the Human Tissue Act (HTA) 2004. The ICR and the Royal Marsden have a joint policy for the removal, storage, use and disposal of human tissue for research and a joint Tissue for Research quality manual both of which were updated with major changes and approved by the Joint Clinical Research Governance Board in 2022.

- In 2022, all ICR research teams storing HTA-relevant materials on ICR premises undertook self-audits on HTA standards compliance and sample traceability and a desk audit on the numbers and types of HTA-relevant material stored on ICR premises. HTA standards compliance and sample traceability spot checks were also carried out on lab teams identified as storing HTA-relevant materials under the ICR HTA licence. Further, weekly dissemination meetings were held with representatives from all relevant research teams.

- A tiered quality system for tertiary and exploratory endpoints, for Good Clinical Practice (GCP) in labs analysing samples from Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medicinal Product (CTIMP), was developed and approved by the Joint Clinical Research Governance Board in 2021. In June 2022, two workshops were held for relevant teams to disseminate and implement the tiered quality system.

- The ICR strictly adheres to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Animal Research and is committed to provide continuous training on carrying out regulated procedures on protected animals. In 2022, the ICR Biological Services Unit regularly shared a range of guidance documents on fostering a culture of care, licence holder responsibilities, and efficient application of the 3Rs in animal research to animal licence holders outlining how the highest standards of animal welfare must be supported.

- The ICR continues to uphold the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research to provide accurate information about how animals are used in our research and continue to demonstrate best practice in animal research and embed openness within the organisation. In 2022, the ICR was re-awarded a Leader in Openness award for another three years, recognising our commitment to communicating clearly and openly about our animal research.

- ICR scientists, along with the support from Structural Genomics Consortium (SGC), Wellcome and Cancer Research UK, previously developed the new Chemical Probes Portal – an easily accessible online resource for scientists to identify the optimal small-molecule reagents called chemical probe, and to avoid probes whose activity has been inaccurately described in the older literature. In 2022, the portal was updated with a new process to sift through massive datasets and to include information and expert opinion on hundreds of new chemical tools.

- The ICR continued its programme of an annual Information Governance month, holding the latest in September 2022 to uphold a culture of awareness of the standards and responsibilities that exist around data and information. Topics covered include How to comply with the Clear Desk and Screen Policy; Data Protection Checklists and Data Protection Impact Assessments; Common information security incidents and how to help prevent them; and Records Management.

- In 2022, the ICR reviewed and updated the following policies and procedures: the Records Management Policy; the Information Governance Framework, the Data Protection Checklist and Impact Assessment Policy

- As a part of the ICR's race equality program, the ICR launched a reverse mentoring program in January 2022, where junior colleagues from various ethnic minority backgrounds became mentors to senior leaders in the ICR. This was an opportunity for senior leaders to listen, learn and build their understanding of the experiences of under-represented groups at the ICR and to drive changes to improve race equality within the ICR.

- In 2022 , the ICR launched the 'Above and Beyond Awards' as a part of the ICR's reward and recognition theme of our Culture and Engagement strategy and invited nominations

for five different categories. The winners for each category were recognised and rewarded at the 'One ICR' event in October 2022.

- In 2022, the ICR updated its policies on 'Raising a grievance' and Challenging, bullying and harassment and revised the language in these policies to address the reluctance of staff and students to raise complaints about inappropriate behaviour and research misconduct in the workplace. In addition, the ICR introduced mandatory trainings such as Active Bystander and A Supportive Workplace. The ICR also increased the number of Wellbeing Advisers, with whom staff and students can speak in confidence.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

- As described in Section 2A and 2B, the introduction of research integrity discussions within different groups by their team leaders was well received as reflected in the survey analysis. The recommendation of additionally providing central institute-wide training on different aspects of Research Integrity was also approved by the Research Integrity Champions and the Executive Board. The action for 2023 is to implement the hybrid training model by scaling up of the course capacity of the ICR's central Research Integrity workshop to accommodate all new research staff and organize it once every month. The ICR has made this course mandatory for all new research-based staff members and will monitor it through the probation form.

- In 2022, the ICR continued the promotion of intranet-based integrity resource which covers a wide range of topics and the ICR's first point of contact for research integrity matters attended the annual UKRIO conference and various webinars conducted by UKRIO. In 2023, the ICR will continue its participation in the UKRIO Annual Conference 2023 and training events organized by UKRIO.

- In 2023, the ICR will undertake a review of the Misconduct in Research policy (see below) and will review its Good Research Practice Guidelines.

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 Misconduct in Research policy which is available on the ICR's website. The policy was written in line with UKRIO's "Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research" 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. The policy was last updated in October 2020, and will be reviewed in 2023

based on UKRIO's new edition of its Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research which was launched on March 10th 2023.

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				
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1	0	N/A	N/A
Misrepresentation (e.g., data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
*Other**				
Total:	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**