

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2018

The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) is a world-class research institute and a UK higher education institution. We aim to provide the environment and training required not only to develop new researchers but also to foster a culture of research integrity, openness and collaboration among both trainees and established researchers.

The ICR subscribes to and is committed to upholding the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (Universities UK, 2012). We strive to maintain the highest standards of research ethics and integrity, and to ensure transparency around any allegations of research misconduct that may arise.

As recommended in the Concordat, this annual statement is approved by the ICR Executive Board and reports on any research misconduct allegations arising, and sets out the steps that the ICR has taken to sustain and further enhance a positive culture of research integrity.

Addressing research 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 under the ICR's [Misconduct in Research](#) policy. The procedure was written in line with the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) "Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research" published in 2008. It has appropriate 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.

In 2018, the ICR carried out a preliminary investigation into allegations of research misconduct following emails from an anonymous source. The investigation was performed in accordance with the ICR's Misconduct in Research policy and overseen by the ICR's Board of Trustees. The investigation found evidence of data falsification by an individual who had left the ICR in 2008. We confirm that the ICR fulfilled requirements to make reports to external bodies with regards to the initiation and completion of the investigation. Key learning points include the dissemination of educational material and a wider advertisement of research integrity training opportunities. The ICR's Misconduct in Research policy was appropriate to the needs of the institution in this instance, and will be reviewed in 2019 as scheduled.

Supporting and strengthening research integrity

During the calendar year 2018, the ICR has undertaken the following activities and actions to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity issues:

1. The ICR's Good Research Practice Guidelines were reviewed and updated in 2017 and approved by the ICR's Executive Board in January 2018. An external version has been made [publicly available](#) on the ICR external website.
2. As part of the regular cycle of policy review, the following ICR policies and procedures were updated in 2018: the Joint Policy for the Collection, Storage, Use and Disposal of Human Tissue for Research; the Data Storage policy; the Research Data Management Policy; the Data Protection policy; the Sharing Personal Data under Data Protection Law policy; the Research Privacy Policy; the Information Governance Framework policy; the Whistle-blowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Policy and Procedure; the Challenging Bullying and Harassment - Policy and Procedure; the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Terms of Reference; and the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.
3. The ICR Learning and Development team organises a "Research Integrity" training module, covering the issues and practicalities involved in ensuring that our research meets the highest ethical standards. The course is mandatory for research degree students. In 2018, the module has been more intensively and actively advertised to a broader audience that includes all early career researchers and technicians.
4. Part of the ICR's operational strategy "Powering our research: our operational strategy 2017-21" focussed on developing a set of core values to help build a shared understanding of our desired behaviours, attitudes and culture, and to support all staff and students in contributing to our mission of defeating cancer. Built in concertation with staff and students, ICR's [Our Values](#) were launched in Autumn 2018 and include "Acting with integrity", our commitment to "promote an open and honest environment that gives credit and acknowledges mistakes, so that our actions stand up to scrutiny".
5. Drawing on lessons learnt from the recent investigation of research misconduct referred to above, the ICR disseminated educational slides on research robustness and integrity to all staff and students via its intranet. The slides promote discussion, increase awareness and spread best practice on the publication of data, and to get researchers across the ICR thinking more about how to ensure their findings are as robust as possible. The leading involvement of the Chief Executive and his laboratory in the preparation of the material emphasises that the ICR leadership is committed to the highest standards of rigour and integrity in our research.
6. In June 2018, the ICR signed the San Francisco [Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA), which promotes the development of robust and time-efficient ways of evaluating research and researchers. In signing DORA, the ICR will no longer consider journal impact factors in decisions around the hiring and promotion of academic staff. The ICR's recruitment, tenure review and promotion policies have been updated to include an explicit statement that journal impact factors will not be used in these assessments.

External engagement

The ICR values the opportunity to learn about best research integrity practices and has a continued subscription to the UKRIO. The independent charity provides advisory and support services to its subscribers, such as guidance documents on good research practice or case studies on research conduct.