

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2019

The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) is a world-class research institute and a UK higher education institution. We subscribe to and are committed to upholding the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (Universities UK, 2012¹).

As required by the Concordat, an annual statement is approved by the ICR Executive Board and presented to the Board of Trustees which 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.

Processes for dealing with 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 policy was written in line with the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) "Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research" published in 2008, and describes the appropriate principles and mechanisms to ensure that investigations are transparent, robust and fair, carried out in a timely manner, and protected by appropriate confidentiality. Following the release of the [updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) in October 2019 and UKRIO's announcement that they are reviewing their 2008 Procedure, the ICR has started a review of its Misconduct in Research policy in consultation with UKRIO.

Formal investigations of research misconduct

There were no formal investigations of research misconduct in 2019.

Supporting and strengthening research integrity

a. Governance

The Institute of Cancer Research's [Guidelines on Good Research Practice](#) have been developed to 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 provides guidelines on good practice in research, signposting external references and ICR policies and procedures, where applicable. It applies to all staff (including those with an honorary contract and visiting workers) and students carrying out research at, or on behalf of, the ICR. Overall responsibility for good research conduct rests with the ICR's Executive Board.

¹ A new Concordat was released in 2019 and the ICR is reviewing any gap we may have to identify any improvement we may have to make to ensure we are fully compliant with the new Concordat.

b. Review of policies and procedures

The ICR has a number of policies and procedures for supporting and promoting research integrity. All ICR policies and procedures undergo periodic review. The following relevant ICR policies and procedures were updated in 2019: the Anti-Fraud Policy; the Challenging Bullying and Harassment Policy; the Disciplinary Policy; the Policy On The Acceptance And Provision Of Gifts And Hospitality; the Alcohol and Drugs policy; the HS&E Evaluation of Compliance; the Health, Safety and Environment Policy Statement; the Grievance Policy; the Risk management policy; the Information Governance Framework; the Records Management Policy; the Freedom of Information Policy; the Biological Safety Committee Terms of Reference; the Corporate Leadership Board Terms of Reference; the Executive Board Terms of Reference; the ICR Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Terms of Reference; and the Institute Health, Safety and Environment Committee Terms of Reference.

c. Training and personal development

Consistent with commitment 3 of the Concordat to support the development of a research environment that nurtures good practice and creates a culture of research integrity, the ICR provides a regular face-to-face interactive training: '*Research Integrity*'. Open to staff and students, the session is mandatory to students and promoted widely.

The ICR's provision of training available to all staff and students also includes sessions in areas such as: good research practice; research culture; academic writing, publication, authorship and Open Access; intellectual property; statistics and experimental design and analysis; research ethics and governance; data management; leadership and supervision; and training and mentorship.

d. Research involving human subjects, samples or data

The ICR and its hospital partner, The Royal Marsden, are committed to ensuring that all clinical research conducted is of the highest scientific and ethical standards, and satisfies all regulatory requirements. All ICR research involving human participants is subject to ethical approval, through submission to the joint ICR/Royal Marsden Committee for Clinical Research prior to submission to the NHS Research Ethics Committee.

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. In 2019, the ICR and Royal Marsden completed the implementation phase of FreezerPro, the HTA compliant system that provides centralised database for sample and tissue information management in a joint project to improve data quality and traceability of human samples. Training was provided to all teams who use FreezerPro and additional

support pages, downloadable documents and FAQs have been provided on the ICR intranet to support users in maintaining an accurate and consistent database.

In April 2019, the ICR updated its mandatory online data protection training module which covers important information about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) introduced in May 2018, and the necessary information for all staff and students across the ICR to act responsibly when handling personal data. In July 2019, the ICR reached 100% data protection training completion for staff and students. We also established a Data Quality Champions Network aimed at training representatives from across the organisation to be able to promote and advise their colleagues on data protection best practice.

e. Research involving animal subjects

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. Our Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) scrutinises all proposals using animals, ensures that highest standards of animal welfare are met, advises on best practice and promotes the implementation of the 3Rs (reduce, refine, replace). In 2019, AWERB produced a comprehensive annual report to the Executive Board and the Board of Trustees, summarising the work of the Committee performed over 2018-19.

The ICR is committed to enhancing public understanding of the need for animals in cancer research and has signed the [Concordat on Openness on Animal Research](#). In 2019, the ICR was selected as a Leader in Openness by Understanding Animal Research, an independent organisation whose mission is to “explain why animals are used in medical and scientific research”.

f. Other activities

During the calendar year 2019, the ICR also undertook the following activities and actions to continue to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity issues:

1. ICR scientists published a [special report](#) on public resources available for chemical probes, guiding readers on how to navigate the various online resources available to select the best high-quality chemical tools for their research. The publication highlights the importance of choosing the most appropriate chemical probe in biomedical resources to ensure that results are accurate, robust and reliable.
2. Wellcome Trust and CRUK modified their terms and conditions to require that institutions confirm upon grant submissions that there are no allegations (under investigation or upheld). The ICR consequently updated its grant application approval procedure to include a certification from the lead applicant that complies with this requirement.

External engagement

The ICR recognises the importance of collaborating and networking with national and international colleagues, institutions and organisations working on research integrity in the higher education sector. The ICR was represented at the UKRIO annual conference in May 2019 and at the Westminster Higher Education Forum seminar on the “Next steps for protecting research integrity in the UK” in September 2019.

The ICR also values the opportunity to learn about best research integrity practices and has continued its subscription to the UKRIO in 2019.

Following the creation of regional AWERB ‘Hubs’ by the Animals in Science Committee to help the diffusion of best practice in matters relating to animal species protected under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, the ICR is a member of the AWERB South East Hub.

Creating a positive research environment

The ICR aims 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. With this in mind, 2019 has seen a wide range of actions and outcomes related to creating and embedding a supportive research environment:

1. As part of an ICR-wide initiative to create an inclusive workplace, we reviewed our training and implemented a “Supportive Workplace” 3-hour workshop for new staff and students to inform participants on our zero tolerance on bullying and harassment as well as on the support available to staff.
2. As part of the review of the Challenging Bullying and Harassment Policy to strengthen our procedures for reporting, capturing and acting upon staff concerns, the ICR also updated its guidance outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, and providing advice for those who feel they are being bullied or harassed, or who have had a concern raised about them.
3. The ICR launched a series of wellbeing sessions to support staff and students with help on how to deal with mental health issues in the workplace and to improve their resilience.
4. In June 2019, the ICR successfully renewed its HR Excellence in Research accreditation, which is awarded by the European Commission and Vitae. The panel recognised our work to support the employment, training and career development of research staff.
5. The ICR was awarded the Athena SWAN Charter Silver Award for 2019-2023 in recognition of our work on diversity and access to opportunities.