

Responsible Research Conduct Committee

John Innes Centre

The John Innes Centre (JIC) recognises that open communication and transparency in research not only enhances public trust but also safeguard public investment in research.

Throughout their careers, researchers may leave an institution or require temporary leave, leading to the interruption or, in extreme cases, abandonment of ongoing research.

The JIC Responsible Research Conduct Committee was established to support research integrity principles and data management. They have introduced specific processes to support researchers in ensuring their research record is exhaustive, adopts standardised protocols and uses common material databases (strains, primers, DNA etc.) within their labs.

What is JIC and why does it value research integrity?

The John Innes Centre (JIC) is an independent centre of excellence in plant science, genetics and microbiology. With a mission to apply the knowledge of nature's diversity to benefit agriculture, the environment, human health and wellbeing, JIC is a hub of exciting and diverse research.

Myriam Charpentier, Chair of the JIC Responsible Research Conduct Committee, emphasises that "research integrity is essential to ensure that discovery can be done properly, confidently translated, and novel findings can be precisely documented to benefit everyone, from scientist to stakeholder to society." By adhering to good research integrity practices throughout the research lifecycle, any processes, methods, and procedures being followed can be made accessible and transparent to other researchers. Implementing these practices not only enhances the transparency of the research for broader use within the scientific community, but also acts as a safety net for when research projects change hands.

How do the researchers benefit?

By diligently following these procedures, researchers can increase the transparency of their research, reducing the risk of their work being abandoned in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Example shared by the JIC Responsible Research Conduct Committee:

"One student was working on an exciting project and producing good data. Due to unfortunate circumstances, the studentship ended early which precluded the student's further engagement with the project. However, thanks to the protocols in place, a post-doctoral scientist was able to pick up the project. Both the student and the postdoctoral scientist published the work in a major journal within 12 months of the postdoctoral arriving, despite them having never met each other."

By developing standardised procedures that promote transparency and open communication, the Committee has offered researchers a clear framework to enhance their research practice skills, improve the quality of their research, and provide a 'safety net' to ensure the delivery of research projects for the benefit of society.

"Implementing this has been a great way to teach students and postdoctoral researchers good practice in data assessment and transparency." Myriam Charpentier, Chair of the JIC Responsible Research Conduct Committee.
