UKCORI UK Committee on Research Integrity

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Minutes of the UK Committee on Research Integrity Business meeting, 17 October 2023

Time: 3pm to 4pm

Location: Queen's University Belfast, University Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT7 1NN

Attendees	
Jane Alfred	Claire Henderson, UK Committee on Research Integrity Senior Advisor (virtual)
Nandini Das	Ralitsa Madsen (virtual)
Maria Delgado	Jil Matheson
Louise Dunlop	Miles Padgett (virtual)
Andrew George (Co-chair)	Gillian Rendle, UK Committee on Research Integrity Secretariat Lead
Ian Gilmore	Rebecca Veitch, Head of Research Integrity, UKRI
Rachael Gooberman-Hill (Co-chair)	Jeremy Watson
Chris Graf	

1. Welcome

1.1. The UK Committee on Research Integrity was welcomed to the business meeting.

1.2. There had been no apologies received.

1.3. The action log was reviewed. All actions had been completed and the July meeting minutes had been approved by correspondence.

Secretariat	Block time to discuss evaluation on the October meeting agenda	Complete
Members	Inform secretariat to volunteer to be involved in annual statement launch webinar	Complete

Secretariat	Consider a process to better capture stakeholder feedback	Complete

2. Programme updates and risk assessment

2.1. The committee reviewed the workstream updates.

Annual statement – preparation for 2024

2.2. Members discussed the impact of the 2023 statement and agreed that reception was overwhelmingly positive. It was a very useful conversation starter to encourage organisations to think more about their role in relation to research integrity.

2.3. This committee noted that for transparency, information about the membership of the committee and those that contributed to the content should be added to the Zenodo hosting page for the 2023 statement and all statements going forward.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

2.4. The working group proposed developing a position paper that could be tested with users across the sector. The group was identifying what questions the research community had about AI and research integrity that needed to be answered. The committee was asked to consider and comment on the draft questions that they had compiled. Questions would then be refined and sent out to individuals and groups across the research system for further feedback.

2.5. There is a series of fringe events in November 2023 focused on artificial intelligence, these include involvement by the Alan Turing Institute. It was suggested that committee members may wish to attend events where the topic and agenda looked of relevance.

2.6. Engagement with researchers from Arts, Humanities and Social Science disciplines was a priority for this workstream.

Enablers and inhibitors of research integrity

2.7. The committee noted that initial report findings would be presented for discussion at the November monthly committee update meeting. Members were pleased that work seemed to be progressing steadily.

Indicators of research integrity

2.8. The working group introduced the project approach, objectives and facilitation plan for the workshop pilot taking place in Belfast the following day. It was noted that the

stakeholder engagement work was a consultation rather than a piece of qualitative research, and the language used should reflect that.

2.9.   There was scope for adding further expertise/experience to the advisory group around thinking about outcome measures, and around a government or public sector research enterprise perspective. The committee would consider how to bring strands of work together, for example the enablers/inhibitors evidence review may help to inform this project.

Addressing questionable research practices and research misconduct

2.10.   The working group has completed its review of available evidence on the scale of research misconduct and concluded that the data available does not provide robust information. There is little to no data available on disciplinary spread. The group will focus their recommendations in this area on how more robust data could be collected.

2.11.   Work to learn about assurance and regulatory approaches in other sectors would be commissioned, and committee members noted that the work must be careful in defining terms such as investigation / review / appeal. The workstream will also look at international approaches to research misconduct oversight, particularly the pros, cons, and costs of each system.

2.12.   The variation in how institutions undertake investigations and the outcomes was noted. Members agreed that the message from the committee is that the current system needs to be improved, and that is important that we look at this issue carefully and methodically. There was also strong agreement about the need to decouple correction of the research record from matters relating to intentional misconduct. Publishers will be willing partners in this discussion.

2.13.   The committee acknowledged that opacity of definitions relating to research misconduct can be a problem. This could be an area to be improved through the Signatories' forthcoming review of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

Future governance for the UK Committee on Research Integrity

2.14.   Members agreed the need to decide what roles the UK needs fulfilled in research integrity, and to articulate what functions are required and what problem(s) is trying to be addressed (e.g., cohesion, system level change etc). From this will come discussions of options for delivering those functions to decide whether the current functions of the committee are the correct ones for the UK. The committee noted the research misconduct workstream is seeking answers with regard to required

functions for misconduct oversight, but agreed that this should not delay work focused on what is needed to support and develop research integrity more widely.

Strategic plan

2.15.   The committee noted that the strategic plan would be presented for annual review at the committee meeting in January 2024.

Stakeholder engagement

2.16.   Committee members would continue to engage with their lead organisations, using the annual statement as a basis for engagement throughout 2023.

Risk register

2.17.   The committee discussed and approved the amendments to the risk register and requested the addition of up and down arrows on each version to indicate visually where there were any changes from the previous version.

Action: Secretariat to list the membership of the committee on the Zenodo hosting page for the 2023 statement and to all statements going forward

Action: AI working group to draft a position paper/set of questions about AI to share with the committee in the first instance

Action: Secretariat to add change arrows to the risk register

3.   Evaluation

3.1.   The committee agreed a focus on evaluation was timely as several workstreams were being initiated, objectives created and their achievements monitored.

3.2.   Members approved the proposal to conduct a set of structured interviews to build a mid-term evidence base for the evaluation of the committee's impact. Possible question areas may include: engagement with the committee so far; how research integrity practice developed over the past year; how has the committee impacted on research integrity work; looking to the future, what does the UK need to enhance integrity?

3.3.   The proposal to add a success question to the engagement log and to have a feedback question at the end of each engagement or stakeholder meeting was positively received. Members will continue to record all their stakeholder interactions and all their successes to create a full and rich set of material through which we can understand the committee's work.

Action: All members to update stakeholder engagement and success logs

4.   Communication and engagement

4.1.   The committee discussed the proposal to introduce a programme of short blogs to provide expert views or expert opinions on the committee website.

4.2.   Members recommended that the instructions to authors should be clear and robust and to include information about how blogs are curated and how to respond/add corrections. Blog should be kept fresh with new content at regular and agreed time increments and in keeping with an overall strategy and timeline.

4.3.   It was agreed that the blogs would be authored by committee members initially.

Action: Co-chair RGH to finalise blog guidance and series of blogs topics/authors

5.   Any other business

5.1.   The committee highlighted that Horizon Europe applicants would be required to sign up to the European code of research integrity and it was not clear whether this has yet been mapped against the UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity. It was agreed that the committee would ask UKRI if this had been done.

Action: Secretariat to ask UKRI whether the European Code of Research Integrity had been mapped against the requirements of the UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity

6.   Standing items
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

6.1.   The committee noted the following EDI considerations:
- *Relating to the workstreams* – The committee was asked to consider who is involved in the workstreams and who benefits from the work as well as what any unintended negative consequences might be.

Action: All members to consider three questions in relation to the workstreams as follows:

1. Who is involved in the workstreams?
2. Who might benefit from the outputs of the workstreams?
3. What negative unintended consequences might be generated from the workstreams?

Communication matters arising

6.2.   Members agreed that the committee would ask to add an item about the committee meeting and workshop taking place on the next day to the Queen's University Belfast weekly/fortnightly newsletter that goes out to all students and staff.

Reflections on the meeting and ways of working

6.3.   The committee thanked Queen's University Belfast for the generous hospitality and conveyed its appreciation for the talk by the guest speaker that took place earlier in the day.

Action: Committee to add an item about the meeting to the Queen's University Belfast newsletter.

7.   Close, and date of next meeting

7.1.   Members of the committee were thanked for their time and contributions. The next committee meeting will be held on 30 January 2023 hosted by the British Academy.

7.2.   The co-chairs thanked members for their engagement, energy, and contributions and drew the meeting to a close.

Actions

- **Secretariat** to list the membership of the committee on the Zenodo hosting page for the 2023 statement and to all statements going forward
- **AI working group** to draft a position paper/set of questions about AI to share with the committee in the first instance
- **Secretariat** to add change arrows to the risk register
- **All members** to update stakeholder engagement and success logs
- **Co-chair RGH** to finalise blog guidance and series of blogs topics/authors.
- **Secretariat** to ask UKRI whether the European Code of Research Integrity had been mapped against the requirements of the UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- **All members** to consider three questions in relation to the workstreams as follows:
  1. Who is involved in the workstreams?
  2. Who might benefit from the outputs of the workstreams?
  3. What negative unintended consequences might be generated from the workstreams?
- **Committee** to add an item about the meeting to the Queen's University Belfast newsletter