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Minutes of the UK Committee on Research Integrity Business meeting, 1 October 2024

Time: 14:45 to 15:45

Location: UK Research and Innovation, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

Attendees	
Andrew George (Co-chair)	Jil Matheson
Rachael Gooberman-Hill (Co-chair)	Miles Padgett (virtual)
Jane Alfred	Tolulope Ayanbola, UK Committee on Research Integrity Strategy Advisor
Nandini Das (virtual)	Clare Marchment, UK Committee on Research Integrity Senior Advisor
Louise Dunlop	Irene Fernow, UK Committee on Research Integrity Secretariat Lead
Ian Gilmore	Elizabeth Saunders, UKRI Senior Strategy Advisor
Chris Graf	Rebecca Veitch, UKRI Head of Research Integrity Strategy
Ralitsa Madsen	

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The UK Committee on Research Integrity ('the Committee') was welcomed to the business meeting.
- 1.2. Apologies were noted from Maria Delgado and Jeremy Watson. Nandini Das and Miles Padgett attended the meeting virtually.
- 1.3. The meeting objectives were to:
 - ratify next steps for ongoing workstreams
 - discuss and approve plans for the 2025 annual statement
- 1.4. Members were reminded that the minutes of the June 2024 committee meeting were approved on 19 September 2024.

1.5. The action log was reviewed.

Month of meeting	Assigned to	Action	Progress
June 2024	Secretariat	Secretariat to update links in terms of reference and add a note to the document of when they were reviewed.	Complete
June 2024	Members	Committee members to provide comments on key comms lines to the secretariat by 10 July 2024.	Complete
June 2024	Secretariat	Secretariat to update links in terms of reference and add a note to the document of when they were reviewed.	Complete
June 2024	Secretariat	To confirm the status of the alignment of the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity with the European Code of Conduct and status of the mapping.	Complete

1.6. The principles set out in the [UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and those in [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) are closely aligned. The Committee discussed whether there might be opportunity for formal acknowledgement of alignment as a means of supporting researchers to work across regions and between the UK and Europe. Further exploration would be required to consider the possibility of such formal acknowledgement.

2. Next steps for workstreams

2.1. The Committee discussed progress across its workstreams and considered next steps.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

2.2. There has been good progress in relation to ongoing cross sector consultation and the recent AI discussion document will soon be published on the Committee website.

2.3. Committee members discussed the publication of the UK Research and Innovation policy ‘[Use of generative artificial intelligence in application preparation and assessment](#)’ dated 23 September 2024. Members welcomed its publication and the recognition within the policy, of the many positive benefits from using AI in research.

- 2.4. Members further discussed the need for transparency in relation to the use or application of AI within all aspects of research. The Committee noted that policies from other organisations, and a joint funder statement from 2023, expect disclosure of use or application of AI in preparation of grant funding applications and agreed to offer their insights to inform any future UKRI guidance or policy developments in relation to AI.

Actions:

- The **Committee** to publish their AI discussion document on the UK Committee on Research Integrity website
- The **Committee** to write to UKRI to ask about, and to offer their insights into, the UKRI guidance 'Use of generative artificial intelligence in application preparation and assessment' that was published on 23 September 2024

Poor Research Practice and Research Misconduct

- 2.5. The Committee welcomed the appointment of [RAND Europe](#) to deliver the '[Addressing research misconduct in the UK](#)' tender. Members noted that the commission was proceeding well, with the next cross sector working group into 'poor research practice and research misconduct' meeting due to take place on 2 October 2024.

Action:

- **Secretariat** to publish short progress summaries on the UK Committee on Research Integrity website following meetings of the working group into 'poor research practice and research misconduct'.

Research Excellence Framework (REF)

- 2.6. Engagement and dialogue in relation to the development of the REF 2029 is ongoing with colleagues from Research England as host for the REF work led by the four UK higher education funding bodies.
- 2.7. On 6 September the Committee gave a presentation on the Indicators of Research Integrity report to inform discussion at [Workshop 7: Integrity and the research process in REF People, Culture and Environment \(PCE\)](#). The report was well received by the attendees, who welcomed insights on how the identification of the indicators on research integrity may inform development of similar indicators as part of the REF 2029 PCE element.

Concordat to Support Research Integrity ('the Concordat') refresh

- 2.8. The Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group are carrying out the 5-year refresh of the Concordat. The Committee's co-chairs are chairing the process for the Group. The Committee were informed that the Concordat in-person consultation workshop, held on the 26 September, was lively, positive, and engaged. An online

follow-up workshop is scheduled for 11 October with the refreshed Concordat due to be published in early 2025.

3. Annual Statement 2025 initiation

- 3.1. The Committee discussed the content and structure for the 2025 annual statement. Members reflected that a format where the five research integrity principles were woven through key topic areas could provide an engaging and accessible format for stakeholders across the research, policy, and industry landscape.
- 3.2. Members agreed that the statement should be informed by existing evidence, ongoing stakeholder engagement and articulate the importance of research integrity to foster a healthy research culture and deliver wider societal benefits from research. Examples of evidence that the statement might cite could be from the UK Reproducibility Network's (UKRN's) open indicators project.
- 3.3. Members discussed evidence and data sources and agreed to commission analysis of published research integrity annual statements from research performing organisations including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and government departments, plus explore the inclusion of Independent Research Organisations (IROs). Members noted additional evidence areas and data sources to explore including:
 - Retraction Watch data, in keeping with previous year's statements
 - data concerning trust and confidence in the research system (for example, IPSOS MORI)
 - data that provides insight into the economic and societal benefit of research integrity, potentially including future projections

Actions:

- **Members** to reflect on structure and additional data and evidence requirements to inform the annual statement.
- **Secretariat** to produce a project plan for production of the UK Committee on Research Integrity 2025 Annual Statement for publication summer 2025.
- **Secretariat** to plan and commission analysis of published Research Integrity Annual Statements.

4. Any other business

- 4.1. The Committee discussed upcoming engagements and members' availability for attendance.

5. Standing items

- 5.1. **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations**

- *Relating to the AI workstream:* The Committee reflected on the fact that there are entire communities with no or limited access to AI, and also communities who want to be excluded (for example academic communities dealing with historical texts). The question of bias remains, and it will be important to frame some recommendations from the working group around this.
- *Relating to the research misconduct workstream:* The Committee were pleased to note that EDI has been carefully considered within RAND Europe's tender response. Members noted that engagement should include people at all levels of seniority.
- *Other:* members noted genomics as a challenging area and considered examples of best practice, including in relation to EDI.

Action:

- **Members** to share examples of any known case studies in relation to EDI and research integrity.

5.2. **Communication matters arising**

Members discussed the importance of ongoing communication and engagement activities to champion research integrity and share best practice with stakeholders across research, policy, and industry. Members briefly discussed the five missions of government and the role of research and research integrity in all of these. Members further reflected on ongoing and future evaluation plans to inform the continued work of the committee.

5.3. **Reflections on the meeting, ways of working**

The Committee reflected on the meeting, and all supported the view that the Committee can build on their role and reach across the wider research sector to move forward with strengthened confidence, continuing to build the evidence for research integrity and make informed recommendations.

An important focus of the day was the continuing need to highlight the value of research integrity for the UK, economically, socially and for environmental sustainability. Research integrity takes investing in and is a valuable investment to make; a valuable reminder in times of financial pressures and constraints.

Members agreed that the format of the day had been extremely useful and gave them valuable time for discussion.

6. Close, and date of next meeting

- 6.1. Members of the committee were thanked for their time and positive contributions. The next committee meeting will be held on 27 January 2025 in London.

Actions

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- **Secretariat** to publish short progress summaries on the UK Committee on Research Integrity website following meetings of the working group into 'poor research practice and research misconduct'.
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