

# Template: annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact:  
[Rlsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:Rlsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk).

## Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
<b>1A. Name of organisation</b>	CRUK Scotland Institute (previously CRUK Beatson Institute)
<b>1B. Type of organisation:</b>  higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Independent research performing organisation
<b>1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)</b>	Statement covering period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024  Approved by the CRUK Scotland Institute's Board of Directors on 03/03/2025
<b>1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)</b>	<a href="https://www.crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk/about/research-integrity.html">https://www.crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk/about/research-integrity.html</a>
<b>1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity</b>	Name: Dr Catherine Winchester Head of the Research Integrity Service
	Email address: c.winchester@crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk
<b>1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting</b>	Name: Dr Catherine Winchester Head of the Research Integrity Service
	Email address:

**more information on matters of research integrity**

c.winchester@crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk

## **Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.**

### **Description of actions and activities undertaken**

#### **2A. Description of current systems and culture**

We advocate the core values of research integrity (honesty, ethics, rigour, openness, transparency, accountability and care & respect) in the entire research lifecycle, from experimental design through data generation, analysis, management and preservation, to the dissemination and publication of research outputs. Research integrity is fundamental to all aspects of our research and as such, all activities are overseen by the Head of the Research Integrity Service and endorsed by the Institute Director and Senior Management Team. We provide a positive workplace culture, where our research community is enabled to realise their full potential. This is championed by the People & Culture Team.

- **Policies**

Research integrity at the CRUK Scotland Institute is underpinned by the following policies relating to responsible research practices and a culture that is collaborative, inclusive and diverse:

- Code of Good Practice in Research
- Data Preservation
- Data Protection
- Ethics
- Financial Conflict of Interest
- Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer
- Misconduct in Research
- Press and Social Media

- Publishing and Open Access

- Statement on Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct Under United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Research-related Activities for Foreign Institutions

- Whistleblowing

In addition, we have policies that encompass generating a positive research culture: Career Development, Equal Opportunities, Bullying and Harassment, Adoption Leave and Pay, Maternity Leave and Pay, Paternity Leave and Pay, Shared Parental Leave and Pay, Special Leave, Flexible Working, Hybrid Working, Immigration and Visa and Long Service.

- **Systems**

We have systems in place to ensure our research is conducted and disseminated in a responsible manner.

Researchers at the CRUK Scotland Institute are supported, advised and protected, by the Head of the Research Integrity Service, who oversees research integrity training and raises awareness of best practice; supports data stewardship; develops and implements research policies and guidelines; conducts pre-submission manuscript reviews; supports and assesses post-publication data queries; coordinates the research integrity champions; engages with the sector to share and identify best practice; and is the internal and external point of contact for matters relating to research conduct and breaches of research integrity.

The CRUK Scotland Institute is fully committed to open access publishing and as such our papers are published under the CC BY 4.0 Attribution 4.0 International licence and are archived at Europe PubMed Central to maximise readership and use. We encourage researchers to use the [CRedit](#)<sup>1</sup> taxonomy to define authors' precise contributions and ensure appropriate credit is given and that authors are accountable for their data, as well as acknowledging other contributions to published work. To promote transparency and reproducibility in our papers, we encourage the publication of protocols, appropriate and responsible data presentation, such as the use of [SuperPlots](#)<sup>2</sup>, and clear and precise descriptions of data and metadata, in compliance with [FAIR](#)<sup>3</sup> standards. We have a mandatory process for archiving data associated with all publications and depositing large data sets in repositories, as well as promoting the sharing of all other data. To facilitate best practice in reporting, we have guidelines for preparing manuscripts, which can be used in conjunction with our publication checklist (available from our inhouse research integrity toolkit). In addition, all manuscripts are reviewed by the Head of the Research Integrity Service prior to journal submission or posting on pre-print servers and checked for text plagiarism using [iThenticate](#)<sup>4</sup> and for image anomalies

using [Imagetwin](#)<sup>5</sup>.

We have over 40 [research integrity champions](#)<sup>6</sup>, embedded within each research group and each core facility team. This voluntary role, mainly undertaken by early career researchers, enables grassroots activity in promoting and supporting research integrity. The champions play an invaluable part in disseminating information, implementing research policies and supporting the stewardship of published data in their groups, as well as engaging in projects with the Head of the Research Integrity Service and attending a yearly meeting of the research integrity champions.

- **Training**

Research integrity training is mandatory for all researchers at the CRUK Scotland Institute, from PhD students to group leaders, and forms part of the induction process for all new researchers and technicians. Attendance is monitored and recorded by the Head of the Research Integrity Service.

Training is delivered as face-to-face workshops and seminars by the Head of the Research Integrity Service and scientists with relevant research experience. The training programme includes an induction and sessions on integrity in scientific communication, integrity in managing research data and responsible image processing. As well as outlining our policies and expectations the programme raises awareness of reproducible and responsible research practices, encourages behaviour change and offers opportunities to discuss important issues and new initiatives underpinning research integrity, and provides an opportunity to reflect on good research practises within specific fields. It also serves to highlight support and guidance available at the CRUK Scotland Institute. Our training is bespoke and covers generic issues, but course content is specific to the local environment and the research being conducted.

Good research practice training continues informally within research groups and guidance on experimental design, data acquisition, processing and analysis is also captured in the training researchers receive from the [CRUK Scotland Institute's Advanced Technology](#)<sup>7</sup> facility staff.

In addition, researchers receive generic eLearning training to foster positive research culture; Developing Team Trust and Culture, Bullying and Harassment, Equity and Diversity, Unconscious Bias, Positive Mental Health at Work, Leadership Styles and Quality, Cyber Security and Phishing, and General Data Protection Regulation (UK).

The Senior Management Team and Group Leaders receive training in [lab leadership](#)<sup>8</sup> and coaching in [leadership](#)<sup>9</sup> and [strategic thinking skills](#)<sup>9</sup> to support

delivery of the Institute's vision.

- **Communications and engagement**

To identify and share best practices and to stay up to date with current developments we are members of several national research integrity organisations:

- Cancer Research UK's research integrity group
- Scottish Research Integrity Network (SRIN)
- UK Reproducibility Network ([UKRN<sup>10</sup>](#))
- UK Research Integrity Office ([UKRIO<sup>11</sup>](#))

The Head of the Research Integrity Service disseminates information internally via email, interactions with the research integrity champions, content in the research integrity training programme and the inhouse research integrity toolkit.

- **Culture, development and leadership**

Developing a positive work culture at the CRUK Scotland Institute is led by the Head of People & Culture, who is responsible for delivering an open and inclusive Human Resources team, a Learning and Organisational Development programme, the Institute's EDI strategy and Health and Wellbeing support. This is underpinned by the work of the Head of the Research Integrity Service to enable researchers to operate in a collaborative and inclusive research environment that aims for all researchers to thrive and conduct responsible research. In addition, researchers are encouraged to join and participate in a variety of activities across the Institute, enabling everyone's voice to be heard; EDI Forum and Advocates, Disability and Neurodiversity Group, LGBTQ+ Community and Allies, Staff Forum, Postdoc Forum and Eco Committee. We hold regular 'townhall' meetings to disseminate information and to gather opinion. Researchers are supported by the wellbeing advice in the Employee Assistance Programme on the HR portal and trained mental health first aiders.

Researcher development is at the forefront of our research culture. As well as training researchers with technical, scientific and professional skills they are supported through mentoring (internal programme and external programmes, for example, CRUK's Women of Influence mentorship scheme), advisers and annual performance and personal development reviews. Key competencies, such as building relationships, collaboration, communication and presentation skills, curiosity and innovation, leadership and management capability and scientific outreach opportunities are provided to ensure we are taking a holistic approach to

researcher development.

Effective leadership is an important aspect of our research culture and as such all new Group Leaders attend the [EMBO Laboratory Leadership](#)<sup>8</sup> course. We also run [leadership](#)<sup>9</sup> coaching and training programmes across the Institute to continue leadership development for more experienced research leaders.

- **Monitoring and reporting**

Queries relating to breaches of research integrity or allegations of research misconduct and investigations are recorded by the Head of the Research Integrity Service. In accordance with our Misconduct in Research Policy, the Head of the Research Integrity Service reports all concerns and initial informal investigations to the Institute Director. Preliminary misconduct investigations are reported to the Chair of the Board of Directors and all formal investigations are reported to CRUK and any other funder of the research/researcher concerned. Investigations involving researchers and data generated at external organisations are reported to the relevant funders and employers. Any problems identified in publications are reported directly to the journal concerned.

## **2B. Changes and developments during the period under review**

- **Policies, practices and procedures**

We revised our manuscript pre-submission integrity review by introducing an integrity review questionnaire for researchers to complete to assist in best reporting practices, and we introduced a quality control check process for collaborative manuscripts and reviews. To further support researchers with high quality publishing practises we updated our publishing checklist and publishing guidance on the Institute's intranet. Research integrity reviews were conducted on 78 primary research papers by the Head of the Research Integrity Service and 43 review / commentary / collaborative articles underwent our quality control check. We checked all our first year PhD students' literature reviews and 11 final year PhD student theses for text plagiarism using [iThenticate](#)<sup>4</sup>.

We added a Menopause policy and a Code of Professional Conduct to our portfolio of policies that encompass generating a positive research culture.

- **Training**

The research integrity training programme was updated again in 2024 to encompass national initiatives for responsible and open research and to encourage researchers to reflect on good research practises within their field. We held 6

research integrity induction workshops, 5 integrity in scientific writing & communication workshops, 6 integrity in managing research data workshops and 1 responsible digital image processing seminar, for newly appointed research staff and as refresher sessions for long-standing staff.

- **Communications and engagement**

The Head of the Research Integrity Service shared practice and advised on revisions to policies and guidelines relating to research practices for CRUK, the UK Committee on Research Integrity (UKCORI), UKRIO, UKRN, the Scottish Research Integrity Network and the Concordat to support research integrity signatories group.

The Head of the Research Integrity Service participated in sector projects; the Concordat to support research integrity [consultation survey](#)<sup>12</sup> and revision workshop, UKCORI's [Research Integrity Indicators Project](#)<sup>13</sup> and UKRN's [Open & Responsible Researcher Reward & Recognition Project](#)<sup>14</sup>.

The Head of the Research Integrity Service gave a presentation at the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting of the Scottish Research Integrity Network. She also presented a [poster](#)<sup>15</sup> at the [World Conference on Research Integrity](#)<sup>16</sup> and gave an oral presentation at the [International Research Culture Conference](#)<sup>17</sup>(IRCC), on facilitating the publishing of reproducible and high-quality research. The IRCC meeting was also attended by the Institute's Research Management and People & Culture teams.

The Head of the Research Integrity Service contributed to articles for CRUK's cancer news blog ([Research with integrity – making a statement](#)<sup>18</sup>) and UKCORI's case study on [research integrity champions](#)<sup>19</sup>.

- **Culture, development and leadership**

The People & Culture team worked with staff across the CRUK SI to define our values (Innovate, Respect, Integrity, Teamwork and Excellence) and work is ongoing to embed and embody these values.

To enable our EDI strategy and to support female retention in science we considered the language we use on recruitment adverts and maintained gender balanced interview panels and applicant shortlists. We celebrated a range of events including Ramadan and Diwali, promoting diversity and inclusion, and enriching our community with experiences and insights.

We introduced quarterly Postdoc drop-in sessions to enable postdocs to discuss any career and wellbeing support they needed. These sessions were hosted by the People & Culture team with participation from relevant members of the Faculty

and professional support services. Postdocs were encouraged and supported to make funding applications to develop their research niches and were awarded ~£0.57 million.

We invested in the development of our leaders and managers, supporting them to create a good working environment that provides psychological safety and fosters motivation and creativity. As part of this attention was given to our annual review process, encouraging managers to have quality conversations, where performance is jointly appraised, and objectives and development jointly agreed.

- **Monitoring and reporting**

We introduced a [research integrity mailbox](#)<sup>20</sup> for raising concerns about potential breaches of research integrity and for reporting suspected research misconduct, which is listed on the Institute's [research integrity webpage](#)<sup>8</sup> and on the intranet.

## **2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments**

Our research integrity action plan continued to be developed in 2024, incorporating refinements to our pre-submission manuscript research integrity review process and content for our research integrity training programme, as well as identifying areas such as generative AI, responsible research practice guidance, Open Research, FAIR data principles, additions to existing policies, adoption of new policies, Trusted Research and research culture as areas to evolve.

## **2D. Case study on good practice**

In 2024, the CRUK Scotland Institute introduced an *In Vivo* Study Plan to enhance the planning, execution, and documentation of *in vivo* research. The *In Vivo* Study Plan incorporates elements of the [ARRIVE](#)<sup>21</sup> and [PREPARE](#)<sup>22</sup> guidelines, emphasising ethical compliance, robust experimental design, and meticulous record-keeping. It also facilitates aligning *in vivo* studies with UK Home Office Project Licence objectives, incorporates the [3Rs principles](#)<sup>23</sup>, and ensures clear justification for animal use. In addition, it promotes shared responsibility by involving Group Leaders, Project Licence holders, and researchers in planning and approvals, while post-study meetings encourage reflection and refinement of practices.

The concept of the *In Vivo* Study Plan arose from an initiative to update a collaboration form to encompass all *in vivo* studies and enable digital auditing,

ensuring that Personal Licence holders are effectively mentored and supervised by Project Licence holders. The initiative was led by a Staff Scientist and endorsed by the CRUK SI's Head of Transgenic Models. A series of workshops with representatives from each lab were organised to gather feedback and contributions from a range of perspectives to co-create the plan. Input from these discussions, along with guidance from the ARRIVE and PREPARE guidelines shaped the final draft of the *In Vivo* Study Plan. A soft launch occurred between September and December 2024, allowing researchers to trial the plan, provide feedback and adjust to its use.

## Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

### 3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

- Summary of processes for dealing with allegations of research misconduct

Our **Misconduct in Research** policy sets out our procedure for making an allegation of research misconduct and how we deal with any such allegation, including the investigation steps, timescale, team, reporting and recommendations. The named person for making allegations of research misconduct is the Head of the Research Integrity Service, Dr Catherine Winchester, who undertakes an initial informal assessment of the validity and seriousness of any allegation. In addition, we have a [research integrity mailbox](#)<sup>20</sup> that can be used by internal and external individuals to make allegations of research misconduct. Signposting on how to make an allegation of research misconduct is on the [CRUK SI's website](#)<sup>6</sup> and in the FAQs of the research integrity section of the intranet. After the initial informal assessment, a report is submitted to the Institute Director who determines whether there is sufficient evidence of research misconduct to proceed with an investigation, which comprises of preliminary and formal stages. The preliminary investigation is undertaken by two staff members who have no conflicts of interest in the case, are unbiased and have expertise to evaluate the appropriate research issues. The preliminary investigators conclude whether the investigation should end or proceed to a formal investigation, in a report submitted to the Director. At this time, a summary of the report is submitted to CRUK's Chief Executive Officer, Director of Research Funding, Communications and Partnerships, Head of Research Funding Operations and Senior Policy & Governance Manager. The formal investigation panel includes an external member, as well as appropriate members of staff, who may or may not have been involved with the preliminary investigation. Their report is submitted to the Director, Chair of the Board of Directors, CRUK's Chief Executive Officer, Director of Research Funding, Communications and Partnerships, Head of Research Funding Operations and Senior Policy & Governance Manager, and if appropriate other funding organisations.

Our **Whistleblowing** policy is designed to enable staff that have a reasonable and honest suspicion of malpractice or impropriety, including research misconduct, to raise such concerns. Any concerns raised are taken seriously and investigated responsibly, without fear of reprisal. The Institute has appointed an independent third party, NAVEX, to provide an external whistleblowing hotline service that is

available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Our **Bullying and Harassment** policy aims to create an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all, and in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued. All complaints of harassment or bullying are dealt with promptly, either informally by addressing the harasser or seeking advice from HR or the complainant's Group Leader or following our formal procedure, whereby an investigation is undertaken using the CRUK Scotland Institute's Disciplinary and Grievances procedures. If necessary, counselling or training will be offered to the complainant and those accused of bullying or harassing behaviour. This policy aligns with CRUK's Policy on Dignity at Work in Research.

The CRUK Scotland Institute's Misconduct in Research policy and the Whistleblowing policy were last reviewed in 2022 and are due to be reviewed in 2025. The Bullying and Harassment policy and procedure is subject to ongoing review. The publicly accessible web links to our policies are not yet in place.

- **Summary of how the CRUK Scotland Institute creates and embeds an environment for reporting instances of research misconduct**

The CRUK Scotland Institute creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff and students feel comfortable to report instances of research misconduct through discussion during the research integrity training programme with the Head of the Research Integrity Service, signposting on our research integrity toolkit on the intranet and on our research integrity page on the [CRUK Scotland Institute's website](#)<sup>6</sup> and our research policies. In line with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, our research integrity induction emphasises researchers' responsibility to report research misconduct. In addition, the Head of the Research Integrity Service is available for staff and students to have confidential discussions, raise concerns or report research misconduct.

- **Lessons learned from investigations into allegations of research misconduct**

Assessing concerns relating to questionable research practices and potential breaches of research integrity is important for understanding the integrity of an organisation's research, ensuring responsible research practices and the dissemination of robust and reliable data. In our experience concerns are far more common than formal allegations of research misconduct and having a fair and unbiased structured process to objectively assess these has been invaluable for encouraging researchers to be open and transparent in self-reporting, and for the Head of the Research Integrity Service to identify potential problematic data or mistakes in papers and research practices. It is important that the assessment is

unbiased and evidence-based by reviewing original data. Lessons learned have been incorporated into research integrity training and processes.

<b>3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken</b>				
<b>Type of allegation</b>	<b>Number of allegations</b>			
	<b>Number of allegations reported to the organisation</b>	<b>Number of formal investigations</b>	<b>Number upheld in part after formal investigation</b>	<b>Number upheld in full after formal investigation</b>
Fabrication	0	0	N/A	N/A
Falsification	0	0	N/A	N/A
Plagiarism	0	0	N/A	N/A
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	N/A	N/A
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	N/A	N/A
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	N/A	N/A
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	N/A	N/A
<i>Other*</i>	2	0	N/A	N/A
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<p>In 2024, there were no formal research misconduct investigations at the CRUK Scotland Institute. However, anonymous allegations of problematic data or research misconduct posted on PubPeer or raised by individuals and journals, were objectively reviewed by the Head of the Research Integrity Service in accordance with our Misconduct in Research Policy and research integrity assessment process. None of the initial assessments performed by the Head of the Research Integrity Service proceeded to a preliminary or a formal misconduct investigation.</p> <p>Allegations of problematic data were indirectly reported to the CRUK Scotland Institute (classified as 'Other' in the table above). These allegations related to PubPeer posts that had previously been objectively and unbiasedly assessed by</p>				

the Head of the Research Integrity Service.

## Links

1. <https://credit.niso.org>
2. <https://rupress.org/jcb/article/219/6/e202001064/151717/SuperPlots-Communicating-reproducibility-and>
3. <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>
4. <https://www.ithenticate.com>
5. <https://imagetwin.ai>
6. <https://www.crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk/about/research-integrity.html>
7. <https://www.crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk/advanced-technologies.html>
8. <https://lab-management.embo.org/dates#group-leaders>
9. <https://www.capartnersconsulting.com>
10. <https://www.ukrn.org>
11. <https://ukrio.org>
12. <https://engagementhub.ukri.org/ukri-strategypolicyengagement/2024-concordat-to-support-research-integrity-consu/>
13. <https://ukcori.org/our-work/exploring-indicators-of-research-integrity/>
14. <https://www.ukrn.org/open-and-responsible-researcher-reward-and-recognition-or4/>
15. <https://osf.io/6bve5/>
16. <https://www.wcrif.org/conferences/8th-wcri-athens-2024>
17. <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/ncrc/ircc/>

18. <https://news.cancerresearchuk.org/2024/01/23/research-with-integrity-making-a-statement/#:~:text=Commitment%20of%20the%20Concordat,secretariat%20of%20the%20Concordat%20signatories.>
19. [https://ukcori.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CRUK-Scotland-Institute-Research-Integrity-Champions.pdf?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://ukcori.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CRUK-Scotland-Institute-Research-Integrity-Champions.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)
20. [researchintegrity@crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk](mailto:researchintegrity@crukscotlandinstitute.ac.uk)
21. <https://arriveguidelines.org>
22. <https://norecopa.no/PREPARE>
23. <https://nc3rs.org.uk/who-we-are/3rs>