

# Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

## between the Research Integrity Office (RIO) and Human Resources (HR) at King's College London

The following MOU sets out the expectations and responsibilities of the HR team and Research Integrity Office in respect of allegations of bullying and harassment and allegations of research misconduct made against any member of King's College London who might conduct research<sup>1</sup> in King's name. It has been created primarily to ensure that KCL fulfils its obligations to funding bodies under the terms and conditions set out by such bodies, to mitigate against risk that might emerge from any breach of the same terms and conditions.

### **Allegations of Bullying and Harassment**

Some funding bodies require mandatory reporting of bullying and harassment, but the stage at which such notification is to be made can vary. It has been agreed that the Research Integrity Office will make any necessary reporting to a funding body.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this MOU research is defined as 'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared [...] It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction'. This definition has been taken from 'Annexe A: Definitions', The Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019) which adopts the definition used in the Research Excellence Framework.

It is therefore paramount that the RIO is informed at as early a stage as possible of a formal allegation of bullying or harassment made against any researcher.<sup>2</sup>

Any allegation of bullying and/or harassment made against a researcher and brought to the attention of an HR People Partner (whether this is to be dealt with locally or centrally) must be reported to the Responsible Officer for bullying and harassment, the Director of HR Remuneration and Policy. The Responsible Officer will notify the Director of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity, who, in turn, will liaise with the appropriate Research Integrity Manager<sup>3</sup> for checking of the funding status of the respondent.

If the respondent has any funding in place or submissions pending, the Research Integrity Office will confirm the funder requirements for notification. If notification is required at allegation stage, the RIO will communicate the necessary details to the funder. HR will provide the appropriate information to the RIO to enable such notification. Should there be a requirement for notification to a funding body at a later stage in the process, for example if the allegation is upheld, the RIO will inform HR. HR will ensure that the RIO is updated at the appropriate time to enable timely notification. For any submissions pending, it may be necessary for the RIO to additionally communicate information about the allegation to Research Grants and Contracts.

## **Allegations of Research Misconduct arising from Bullying and Harassment Investigations**

In the course of an investigation into allegations of bullying or harassment, issues that potentially fall under the definition of research misconduct may arise. Research misconduct is defined as behaviours or actions that fall short of the expected standards or ethics, research or scholarship required to ensure that the integrity of research is upheld. In line with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2019), examples of research misconduct are outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the [\*Procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of research misconduct\*](#) (the 'Procedure').

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<sup>2</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, 'researchers' are defined in accordance with UKRIO's Code of Practice for Research (2009) as any individual who conducts research, including (but not limited to): as an employee; as an independent contractor or consultant; as a research student; as a visiting or emeritus member of staff; or as a member of staff on a joint clinical or honorary contract. This includes to research carried out by students leading to an award governed by the College's *Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes*, and does not cover research undertaken by undergraduate or postgraduate taught students.

<sup>3</sup> This will either be the Research Integrity Manager (Arts & Sciences) or the Research Integrity Manager (Health).

Should any such matters be brought to the attention of the HR People Partner or the Case Management Team, it is essential that the Research Integrity Office is notified at the earliest convenience to determine whether it is necessary to invoke the Procedure.

Any matters of potential research misconduct must not be handled by HR or independently by departments.

## **Allegations of Bullying and Harassment arising from Research Misconduct Investigations**

In the course of an investigation into allegations of research misconduct, issues that potentially fall within the scope of bullying and/or harassment may arise. The Research Integrity Office will notify the appropriate HR People Partner of the potential issue and write to the initiator, copying in the relevant HR contact, to advise that certain parts of their complaint must be referred to HR for follow up.

### **Further Information**

It may be possible for an investigation into allegations of research misconduct to run concurrent to an investigation into allegations of bullying and harassment.

However, it may be determined by the Responsible Officer for research misconduct, the Senior Vice President (Operations), or the Responsible Officer for bullying and harassment that one investigation should be concluded prior to the commencement of the other. It is therefore paramount that communication between the Research Integrity Office and HR is maintained and consistent.

For any queries about this memorandum of understanding, please contact the Research Integrity Office ([research-integrity@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:research-integrity@kcl.ac.uk)).