# Annual Statement on Research Integrity
## 2022-2023

King's College London is a world-leading, research-intensive institution. We are committed to ensuring that the research conducted by our staff and students is consistently of the highest quality and conforms to the most rigorous standards. The proper conduct of research requires all our researchers to uphold certain principles and professional responsibilities to ensure integrity in the work they do and in the behaviours they exemplify. This is important to instil confidence in academic communities, funding bodies, and the public that the data, findings, and results produced by our researchers are reliable and trustworthy.

The Research Integrity Office (RIO) is committed to the promotion of good conduct and integrity in research and to supporting the university's research community (to include any individual engaged in research in King's name) through the provision of training and guidance, as well as the development of policies and procedures, to safeguard public trust in all our research. We expect that all research undertaken at King's, whether by those at the outset of their academic journeys or by more experienced colleagues, is conducted with the core values of research integrity in mind, to produce research of the highest standards. The principles of honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability are key to maintaining research integrity at King's. We work closely alongside our colleagues within the wider department of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity, as well as within the Research Management & Innovation Directorate, and beyond.

This statement on research integrity at King's College London relates to the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and has been drafted to fulfil our obligation to commitment 5 of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. As before, we attempt to capture the breadth and depth of our initiatives coordinated centrally and locally, though we acknowledge that such a report can never be fully comprehensive as there are undoubtedly activities undertaken by staff and students that fall under the banner of research integrity but are not recorded as such.

This year's statement uses the model template developed by the UK Research Integrity Office with the Concordat Signatories Group and so the format and scope of information presented differs from that of previous years.

# Section 1: Key contact information

| Question | Response |
|---|---|
| 1A. Name of organisation | King's College London |
| 1B. Type of organisation:<br><br>higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state) | Higher education institution |
| 1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY) | 21/11/2023 |
| 1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable) | www.kcl.ac.uk/research-integrity |
| 1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity | Name: Stephen Large |
| | Email address: stephen.large@kcl.ac.uk |
| 1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity | Name: Natasha Awais-Dean; Serena Mitchell |
| | Email address: research-integrity@kcl.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 |
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| Since 2019, King's College London has had a dedicated stand-alone function to ensure the maintenance of high standards of research integrity and promotion of a positive research culture. The Concordat to Support Research Integrity provides the framework for all activities of the Research Integrity Office (RIO), which adopts a four-pillar approach to achieve this, covering: policies and procedures; training; engagement; and research misconduct.<br><br>As reported in last year's statement, a third Research Integrity Manager (RIM) took up post in September 2022. Each RIM had responsibility for researcher engagement within three faculties, with research misconduct investigations or more complex research conduct enquiries being divided equally following triage. A 0.6FTE Open Research Project Coordinator joined the RIO in November 2022 to support the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) Open Research Programme (ORP).<br><br>**Policies and systems**<br>We expect all King's research to be conducted in accordance with the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) Code of Practice for Research and this expectation is set out on |

our externally facing webpages, where research-active members of the university are also directed to adhere to the commitments for researchers under the Concordat. Assurances on proper and timely reporting to funding bodies of issues related to research integrity or bullying and harassment are provided by the Memorandum of Understanding existing between the RIO and HR and the Pre-Award Reporting Standard Operating Procedure. A framework is in place to support authorship dispute resolutions, where these are not appropriately handled under the research misconduct procedure. King's has a formal Procedure to investigate and resolve allegations of research misconduct ('the Procedure') to ensure that we manage fairly, robustly, and effectively any allegations of potential research misconduct. This Procedure aligns with the model version published by UKRIO.

### Training

The RIO offers termly training on the fundamentals of research integrity to all research-active staff and students and all colleagues within research support related roles. This training is bookable via the King's training portal, SkillsForge. This interactive 90-minute session receives consistently positive feedback through evaluation. More bespoke, disciplinary-focused training is offered by the RIO in collaboration with our local Research Integrity Advisors (see below for more information on this network). This offers more in-depth consideration of research issues through a discussion-based format using a range of relevant case studies and dilemmas. Topics under the research integrity banner are delivered by other central teams: Libraries & Collections, including on research data management and open research; the Centre for Research Staff Development, for example on building successful collaborations and managing research funds; and the Centre for Doctoral Studies, such as on writing grant applications and analysing qualitative data.

### Communications and engagement

Effective engagement with faculties is facilitated through the Research Integrity Champion (RICh) and Research Integrity Advisor (RIAd) networks, designed to ensure that research integrity is embedded within our academic communities. These networks support more bespoke localised training efforts (as outlined above), provide the RIO with visible, local advocates for research integrity, and assist the RIO in understanding discipline-specific norms. Success of these networks is reflected by the inclusion of King's as a case study in the UKRIO guidance on this model and is additionally evident in a range of ways, as outlined below:

- Inclusion of research integrity on faculty and departmental meeting agendas.
- Research integrity being integral to new staff induction process.
- Internal faculty web presence, including in staff handbooks and online message boards.
- Discussion of research integrity in grant set-up meetings with Principal Investigators.
- Local promotion of research integrity events (online and in-person).
- Information on good practice shared in faculty and/or departmental newsletters.

The Libraries & Collections (L&C) team has a dedicated researcher focused web presence to provide information and advice on good open research practices and additionally communicates via various newsletters and by providing verbal updates at institutional, faculty and departmental meetings.

In addition to maintaining strong internal networks across King's, the RIO engages in the national conversation on research integrity through a range of mechanisms.

- Subscribers to UKRIO: in the reporting period contributed to the consultation of an online training course.
- Institutional members of UKRN and a contributing member of the ORP.

- Members of the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum: in September 2022, hosts of the first in-person meeting since the outbreak of the pandemic; and part of the steering group for the October 2023 meeting.

## Culture, development and leadership

The RICh and RIAd networks support the promotion of a positive research environment, with the Research Integrity Advisor network in particular allowing for colleagues to lead and drive change within their local areas. The ability to self-nominate to this role means this opportunity is open to all. Individual faculties have a range of initiatives to address the areas of culture, development and leadership of their researchers.

- Social Science & Public Policy (SSPP): publication subvention fund (up to £2500 per individual) to promote Open Access research; in May 2023, the launch of the 'EDI Principles in Research Grants'[1] policy; requirements for 10 days of Continued Professional Development for research staff included in the Workplace Allocation Model; in May 2023, launch of PGR strategy which includes reference to research culture; and limited funds available to support ad hoc initiatives.
- Faculties, including the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM) and King's Business School (KBS), held faculty-wide discussions with staff and students in May 2023 as part of the consultation process for the Wellcome Trust research culture bid.
- The Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care (NMPC): research integrity integral to the Inclusive Research Practices Implementation Plan; research integrity part of the 2-yearly training programme.
- Natural, Mathematical & Engineering Sciences (NMES): RIAds are listed on departmental SharePoint sites; research integrity issues can be reported via the EDI anonymous reporting tool or, in Physics, at Research Deep Dives.

## Monitoring and reporting

The department of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity tracks training delivered across the university. This records the area receiving the training, the audience (staff or students), approximate numbers of attendees, and the subjects covered by the training. This enables us to identify gaps in our coverage, thereby allowing us to adopt a targeted approach in the future.

A comprehensive log of all enquiries received by the RIO has become more sophisticated to reflect the nuances of issues. The log now captures the different stages of an investigation and records reporting required by funders of bullying & harassment.

| 2B. Changes and developments during the period under review |
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During the period under review (1 September 2022-31 August 2023), awareness of research integrity has continued to increase steadily and there have been developments within the sector. The Research Integrity Office has responded accordingly by working collaboratively with others both internally and externally to ensure our researchers remain abreast of issues and are enabled to conduct their research robustly and with the highest standards of rigour.

### New initiatives, and new or revised policies, practices or procedures

The RIO creates new guidance, develops new initiatives, or revises relevant policies, practices or procedures as appropriate to meet the needs of our research community. Examples of the RIO's activities in this regard follow.

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[1] Available internally only.

- Design of a more coordinated approach to reporting on bullying and harassment investigations (whether through the grievance or disciplinary processes) to funders where required. Better awareness of the processes outlined in the MoU with HR (through enhanced working relationships) has led to increased reporting, allowing the RIO to maintain accurate records also for pre-award purposes, thereby ensuring compliance with funder policies.
- Development of guidance to identify how to embed research integrity within research collaborations. This covers a range of collaborations, across geographical, institutional, disciplinary, and sectoral boundaries.
- Leading on a cross-university approach to the responsible use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools (such as Chat GPT) in research.
- Consulted on guidance to embed EDI in participatory research.
- Formalised process for research integrity and research misconduct expert review in relation to due diligence checks on potential research partners.
- Contributing to Electronic Lab Notebooks project with FoDOCS. To be introduced across health faculties and NMES to allow for the accurate documenting, retrieval, and timestamping of data, to improve research integrity.
- Development of a quick card 'Research Integrity on a page' in collaboration with the RIAd for the School of Education, Communication and Society (SSPP). This was designed to facilitate raising awareness of research integrity and support offered by King's and colleagues are encouraged to share this widely. Feedback from this has been universally positive.
- Liaison with publishers via COPE for better sector coordination.

Other parts of KCL also contribute to developing new initiatives, policies, processes, and procedures. A multi-disciplinary research grant was submitted with investigators from several faculties (the bid is awaiting response). This aims to integrate arts and humanities into healthcare education and practice, thereby improving the integrity of clinical research. Libraries & Collections revised the Research Publications Policy in March 2023, while under revision in 2023 are the Research Data Management Policy and the Institutional Affiliation & Acknowledgement of Funders Policy.

## Training

Within the reporting period, the RIO continued to deliver the termly research integrity training session, available through the KCL training portal SkillsForge. Local Research Integrity Advisors and other advocates of research integrity within faculties signpost colleagues to this. This continues to be offered as an online course. One in-person session was offered but uptake was low, suggesting that researchers prefer to participate in this general introductory training virtually.

As noted above, training on topics that address good research practices is delivered by the RIO and other colleagues. In the reporting period, the RIO provided training on research integrity to more than 550 researchers. Almost 2000 researchers engaged with training in this area and in research ethics and research governance combined, delivered by the teams within the department of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity. Local, more focused training and engagement was supported by academic participation as outlined below.

- September 2022: HR Management (King's Business School) workshop on Responsible Research led by RIAd and colleague, funded by Faculty Innovation Fund.
- October 2022: FoDOCS PGR induction included research integrity as part of the session on EDI and wellbeing.
- October 2022: FoLSM PGR induction event included introduction on research governance, research ethics and research integrity.
- October 2022: Mathematics (NMES) awareness-raising session led by RIO.

- October 2022: Chemistry (NMES) MRes student session on research integrity and open research co-delivered with local staff.
- October 2022: Engineering (NMES) PGR induction event included introduction to research integrity.
- February 2023: FoLSM PGR induction event included introduction on research governance, research ethics and research integrity.
- May 2023: HR Management (King's Business School) workshop on Responsible Research led by RIAd and colleague, funded by Faculty Innovation Fund.
- May 2023: ECS, RIAd-led session 'Did a Robot Write My Report?' to explore the nature of authorship.
- May 2023: SSPP Research Away Day.
- May 2023: RIO met with A&H Early Career Committee to discuss the wider promotion of research integrity.
- May 2023: NMES Graduate School training programme session on research integrity.
- June 2023: FoLSM PGR induction event included introduction on research governance, research ethics and research integrity.
- June 2023: A&H Research Culture Afternoon included dilemma-based roundtable discussions on research integrity facilitated by the academic RIAds to raise awareness and support better understanding of research integrity in an arts and humanities context.
- July 2023: FoDOCS Faculty Research Away Day for PIs included session on research integrity led by RIAd using case studies and supported by RIO.
- n/d: A&H identification of areas for targeted training to include plagiarism, fairness and credit in research collaborations, and co-production/working in or with Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) or less advantaged communities.
- n/d: FoLSM provided research integrity training to DTPs and CDTs.
- n/d: Physics (NMES) identification of authorship on peer reviewed publications at Research Away Days.
- n/d: L&C training on research data management delivered on request and available monthly, bookable on KCL training portal.
- n/d: L&C training on Open Access publishing delivered on request.
- n/d: King's Business School training on research integrity led by RIAds and supported by RIO in the departments of HRM and Public Services Management & Organisation (PSMO).

Following the Wellcome Trust audit, as reported in last year's statement, the RIO produced 4 x 20-minute videos on the following topics: introduction to research integrity; research integrity at King's; research misconduct; research misconduct investigation panel guidance. An initial version of these are available through the King's Virtual Learning Environment, KEATS, to all staff and students but further development of the material is ongoing.

### Developments
Following an external review of the existing research culture initiatives in place, resource was made available for dedicated professional services support in this area. A Project Manager worked with the Dean of Research Culture for 6 months until August 2023. In this time, a range of listening exercises were held with faculty staff, research culture webpages were published, and a funding round was announced for local schemes on research culture. Recruitment for a permanent 1FTE Head of Research Culture and 18-month 2 x 1FTE Research Culture Managers was successful, with postholders in place by Autumn 2023.

L&C recruited a 2-year FTC Research Community Engagement Manager to support researcher engagement and outreach activities. In the reporting period, L&C launched an Open Research X (formerly Twitter) account.

Faculty developments include the following:

- Creation of an A&H online Faculty Research Hub (delivery anticipated in Autumn 2023) to be a one-stop shop signposting researchers to the available support. An area will be dedicated to research integrity and include relevant dilemma-based materials, which have been developed in collaboration with RIO.
- Increased numbers of RIAds in FoLSM to ensure greater visibility across sites and schools.
- Creation of training toolkit in FoLSM.
- Increased numbers of RIAds in King's Business School, due to role being embedded within the role description of departmental Research Leads.
- Creation of NMES Research Hub with section on research integrity.
- Chemistry (NMES) holds quarterly 'Research Chats'.

| 2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments |
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**Review of progress and impact of initiatives related to activities mentioned last year**

It is clear that at King's, awareness of research integrity has been progressively growing. Indicative of this is that the RIO has seen a steady increase in the number of enquiries (formal and informal) on research practices and requests for training or resources. To respond to this, many plans are developing centrally and locally to enhance provision of support in this area for the future.

**Plans for future developments**

- Building on an initial review by RIO of training delivery across Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity, there are plans to embed an evaluation process of our training within our work practices.
- RIO to continue development of the training videos (see above) to respond to feedback from academic and PS colleagues, improve accessibility, and create accompanying resources. This will enable wider dissemination of RIO training across KCL.
- Through the RIO's participation in the UKRN ORP, the next couple of years will see a rollout of several new training sessions and a train the trainer programme on various topics related to open research and reproducibility for staff and students across all faculties at King's. Alongside the provision of training, RIO will participate in the open research indicators workstream with the aim of developing tools to assess open research practices to enable better institutional support. In the reward and recognition workstream RIO will also participate in a collaborative community of practice, piloting tools such as a maturity framework and self-assessment tool.
- RIO to create tools for evaluating integrity cases to identify in a more coordinated approach areas for policy and training development.
- A survey conducted during the ECS (SSPP) training session referenced above exposed a lack of knowledge with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and ways to report concerns with research practices. These will be areas of focus for 2023/34 through collaboration between the RIO and ECS.
- In A&H, research integrity (and research culture) will be part of new staff induction for 2023-24, while in the same year research integrity will be included in PGR induction. Departmental level training will be adapted to include more bespoke, dilemma-based discussions. Research integrity will continue to be

included at the annual Research Culture Afternoon. 2023/24 will also see the launch of the Research Development Programme, with a dedicated session on research integrity.

- FoDOCS intend to develop enhanced training in research culture for all staff in 2023/24 and to update the research integrity online presence to include case studies relevant to disciplines within the faculty.
- FoLSM plan to embed research integrity within Schools' induction programmes for staff and students and develop tailored training for faculty executive and PS staff, for example informing technicians on appropriate recognition or providing administrative staff support in signposting. There are plans to work with the Vice Dean, People and Culture to create internal online presence on research integrity and research culture. An ECR conference scheduled for November 2023 will include a session on research integrity. There will be better coordination between the roles of Confidential Advisor and RIAd.
- NMPC plan to deliver a Research Division roadshow.
- NMES to continue developing the research integrity section on their research hub. The Department of Chemistry is considering including research integrity as part of recruitment processes and within the Workload Allocation Model, and aligning it with EDI. The Department of Physics plans to hold another Research Integrity Staff Training event in 2023/24.
- KBS to continue locally run training sessions in 2023/24 to promote research integrity and to encourage it as part of the discussions through informal networking between academic and PS staff. Research integrity will be embedded within annual induction sessions for new academic staff, which will be recorded so that staff joining in-year can access the same information. There are plans to develop better internal and external online presence of both research integrity and research culture. A Research Lead Away Day scheduled for September 2023 will incorporate research integrity on the agenda.
- L&C will make Open Access Publishing training bookable via the KCL training portal.

**Issues hindering progress, e.g. resourcing**
At King's, we acknowledge that the research integrity landscape is constantly shifting and that as an institution we must respond swiftly. Research integrity is therefore a process of continual improvement that can only be achieved through slow, incremental changes to enhance the quality of our research.

External factors, such as changing funder requirements, the geopolitical situation, and national R&D policy developments can impact our progress. In addition to these, there are internal constraints. The RIO has seen a steady increase in research integrity queries and concerns; this is likely attributed to increasing awareness of the RIO at King's and an increasing awareness of research integrity nationally. Issues brought to the attention of the RIO are also becoming more complex, and whether they are managed informally, or investigated formally, they often require coordination across many stakeholders and take a considerable amount of time to resolve. With more focus being diverted to casework, there has been less time within the RIO to devote to develop enhanced training options (such as an online training module), finalise policy and guidance documents, or work more closely in partnership with local RIAds.

The additional Research Integrity Manager appointed to the RIO in September 2022 left just before the end of the reporting period. This will affect progress into the academic year 2023/24. Lack of resource has also been identified in some faculties as preventing more training capability.

| 2D. Case study on good practice (optional) |
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| *Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.* |
| Senior THRIVE programme within the IoPPN. |

# Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

| 3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct |
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**Processes/Policies**

King's College London is committed to conducting its business in a fair and transparent manner. As an institution, we are committed to creating an inclusive and respectful environment for all members of our community. We are a large and complex organisation, with many different stakeholders, and therefore many different routes for resolving varied concerns or complaints.

A simple way for students, staff, and visitors to report incidents of inappropriate behaviour and access support services is through the Report + Support portal. Our Bullying & Harassment Policy outlines the University's commitment to preventing and effectively addressing bullying and harassment, enabling a culture where all individuals are valued and supported to succeed.

The University has a formal Procedure to investigate and resolve allegations of research misconduct (the 'Procedure'). The Procedure should be reviewed every three years. The current version was updated in November 2022 following approval by the Academic Board to include indicative timeframes for key stages of the Procedure. These are reflected throughout the Procedure and set out for clarity as Annex 2. Minor amendments to this were made in April 2023 to reflect more accurately the updated role title of Vice President (Research) to Vice President (Research & Innovation).

The Procedure is to be carried out in accordance with the principles of fairness, confidentiality, integrity, prevention of detriment, and balance, and these are defined with Annex 1 of the Procedure. There are appropriate mechanisms and safeguards in place within the Procedure to ensure adherence to these principles and that the process is transparent and robust. Accompanying guidance for managing an appeal, to promote a robust and fair process, is made available in the event of an appeal. This was updated in April 2023.

King's makes every effort to meet its obligations to external bodies, including regulatory and professional bodies, regarding the initiation or completion of a formal investigation. To the knowledge of the Research Integrity Office, KCL has met such obligations.

Any concerns, complaints, or allegations may also be made under the King's Whistleblowing Policy.

**Creating a safe environment for concerns to be raised**

The network of Research Integrity Advisors was developed to support informal liaison processes. Enquiries reported from various faculties suggests this approach has been successful and that students and staff feel comfortable in approaching a trusted colleague.

Processes (formal and informal) for reporting concerns about research conducted in King's name is communicated to our community of research-active staff and students through our

training sessions and is also visible on our webpages. The RIO provides assurance to researchers that they should feel safe to report poor research practices, either to us or at local level. The RIO encourages researchers to approach us or local contacts (ordinarily the Research Integrity Advisors) if they feel that they or others have failed to meet the expected standards of good research practice, so that we can offer appropriate advice on how to mitigate any risk, and then advise on the next steps should it be appropriate to report research misconduct.

Information about the Procedure is available on our Research Misconduct webpage, along with advice and support, to all staff, students, and individuals external to the university who wish to raise an issue about the conduct of research undertaken in King's name.

During an investigation, we may signpost to mental health support provided by King's to staff and students, where appropriate.

To demonstrate King's commitment to appropriately signposting and handling all complaints of any nature, including those related to research, a public-facing webpage for all institutional complaints processes is in development.

### Lessons learned
The RIO intends to update the Procedure further, following consultation with the Research Integrity Champions in 2019/20 over proposals to make King's response to allegations more proportionate and timelier. The proposals resulted from greater experience and knowledge gained from recent, complex cases. Involvement in recent cases has brought to light further key considerations for our new revised procedure. New clauses will be embedded within the procedure that will allow us to address these complexities, for example how to manage appropriately anonymous allegations of research misconduct, how to work effectively when legal input is sought from any party, and how to manage third-party notifications and work collaboratively with other parties. Within the reporting period, the appeal process was clarified and updated guidance was approved to ensure more robust, transparent and fair actions can be carried out at this stage.

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**3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken**
*Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted. An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.*

| Type of allegation | Number of allegations | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of allegations reported to the organisation | Number of formal investigations | Number upheld in part after formal investigation | Number upheld in full after formal investigation |
| Fabrication | | | | |
| Falsification | | | | |
| Plagiarism | | | | |
| Failure to meet legal, ethical and | | *2* | | *1* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| professional obligations | | | | |
| Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history) | *1* | *1* | | |
| Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct | | | | |
| Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation) | | | | |
| *Other** | | | | |
| **Total:** | **1** | **3** | **0** | **1** |

**\*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.**

*[Please insert response if applicable]*