Annual Research Ethics and Integrity Statement 2022/23

Supporting and strengthening research integrity

1. The National Museums Scotland Research Ethics Policy was published in 2006. Based upon the Nolan principles[1], **dignity**, **respect**, **selflessness**, **honesty**, **integrity**, **objectivity**, **accountability**, **openness**, and **leadership**. These principles are the basis of international research integrity codes including that of the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity[2] supporting good research practice and a healthy research culture.

2. Our Research Ethics Policy applies across all research intended for academic publication and/or public dissemination regardless of source of funding or method of output as well as work with Research students, Research Associates, Visitors and Staff where no other Research ethics/ integrity processes exist or have been undertaken or where it is appropriate that National Museums Scotland conducts its own.

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[1] The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[2] WCRIF - Singapore Statement on Integrity

Policy Context

3. The Director of National Museums Scotland, through their chairing of the Research Strategy Group (RSG) is responsible for adherence of these policies and practices related to research.

4. Day to day management is undertaken by the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee which reports to the Research Strategy Group.

5. To ensure research ethics and integrity are embedded, several procedures are in place: these are available in Annex 3. As part of the Research Projects Approvals Process (RPAP) and Research Ethics and Integrity Process (REIP), the Head of Department, appraising and approving the Research Ethics and Integrity Checklist is tasked with considering and implementing formal training for staff likely to be involved in any areas engaging research ethics. Alternatively, informal mentoring can be useful to grow expertise and share experience as to how research ethics issues have been identified and resolved in previous cases.

6. The Research Ethics and Integrity Committee (REIC) is chaired by the Director of Collections, and has senior leadership representatives from Collections, as well as representation from other key directorates including External Relations and Public Programmes, with one subject matter academic external expert representative. The Committee keeps the Research Ethics and Integrity Procedure under review and makes recommendations on changes.

Actions and Activities to support Good Research Practice 2022/23

7. There have been a number of actions and activities in 2022/23 to support good research practice across the organisation. These relate to policies, procedures, and training.

8. **Policy and strategy:** The new NMS Research Strategy 2022-2027 was developed and published during FY22/23. This strategy embeds, in new ways, the development of a research culture and is a step change for National Museums Scotland. **Next steps:** Identify the impact on research policies, procedures and practices.

9. **Policy and practice:** The AHRC funded project called *Exchange* examined the co-curation of museum collections. The project was extended into 2023/24 to allow more time to develop the toolkits and resources for museum professionals undertaking research for interpretation in our spaces. **Next Steps/ Actions**: Communication of the findings will be held in 2023/24.

10. **External Engagement:** During 2022/23 the Research and Academic Liaison Manager continued to engage with sector colleagues in understanding best practice in the sector on research ethics. **Next steps/ Actions**: To develop a knowledge bank of best practice for researchers on research ethics.

11. **Human Remains policies and procedures:** Following the update to the Human Remains in Collections policy in 2021 (available online), NMS engaged two osteoarchaeological specialists who investigated the collections in FY22/23. **Next steps**: Consider ways in which to effectively resource this collection and the results from those collections to ensure the appropriate care of the collections.

12. **Communications (Research outputs):** In September 2022, NMS appointed a new Library Services Manager. Dr Jill Dye has led several developments including initiation of the procurement of a new library management system to better support research and boosting NMS use of transformative agreements. **Next steps/ Actions**: FY23/24 will see the promotion of the use of the Research Repository (see below) and associated transformative publishing agreements to encourage openly accessible content on the repository.

13. **Inclusive practice and data management**: an AHRC CDP student undertook a project with the Collections Data and Digitisation team to better understand how what we enter information into our Collections Information system. Specifically, the research has been

highlighted how research is essential to updating colonial, out of date terminology. **Next steps/ Actions**: Share these benefits with wider NMS staff and implement more consistently the practice of decolonising our collections records furthering potential research on them.

14. **Communications (Website and intranet updates)** A museum wide overhaul of the website was announced in FY2022/23. This has paused the major changes to the web updates. **Next step/ Actions**: Using NMS internal communication channels to promote our inclusive research practice.

Actions and Activities to support a healthy research culture 2022/23

15. **Developing confidence** - In January 2023, NMS hosted a Repository Training Programme for Cultural Heritage Professional, NMS's new Research Repository, facilitated by the British Library. This training was essential to better understand how to maximise the benefits of a research repository and how to communicate those benefits to researchers. [Repository Training Programme for Cultural Heritage Professionals](#) **Next steps/ Actions**: Communicating the benefits of the repository to researchers.

16. **Knowledge Sharing**: The internal cross-organisation Open Access (OA) Steering Group (renamed from IPR Working Group) expanded its remit to include open access research outputs.   **Next step/ Actions**: OA group to discuss appropriate OA publishing models

17. **Research Impact** – The Research Strategy Group was invited to review and discuss meaningful ways to measure research impact. This is to be implemented in the next Research Strategy Group meeting in November 2023. **Next steps/ Actions**: We will continue to develop and share best practice guidelines on the theory of change and recording impact during 2023/34.

Ethical approval of research proposals: review of processes

18. One project, on *The knowledge of Practice of the making of Chitrali Shu*, funded by Arcadia (programme name Endangered Knowledge Material Programme) required the REIC to meet and was approved by the Committee.

Summary of actions/ next steps

19. Implementing the Research Strategy will be the focus of the next FY2023/24. In particular, there will be a focus on developing our inclusive research practice and research with outcomes.

Assurance Statements: Research Misconduct

20. Annex 4 outlines areas that are considered for misconduct. Processes for research misconduct are the least developed of all our processes in this area and largely rely on the Whistleblowing procedures which are internally facing.

21. No allegations of misconduct were relayed to the Director of Collections during FY22/23.

Approved by Research Strategy Group
November 2023

Annex1: Definitions

Extracted from the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity 2019:

"Research: Drawing on the UK funding bodies' definition used in the Research Excellence Framework, as described in Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (Hefce, Hefcw, SFC, DEL, 2011), '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'.

Researchers: Following the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Code of practice for research (2009), 'researchers' are defined as any people who conduct 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.

Research integrity: There is no universal definition of research integrity. This concordat identifies five core elements of research integrity, and these are described under commitment 1. The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010), referenced within this concordat, provides a further definition. In addition, the UKRIO has set out principles of research integrity in its Code of Practice (UKRIO, 2009)"

Updated FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf (universitiesuk.ac.uk)
Singapore statement - World Conferences on Research Integrity (wcrif.org)

Annex 2: Annual Statement Key Criteria

UKRIO Self-Assessment Tool for the concordat version 2[3] provides details in key criteria for the annual statement. This includes the "processes and actions" including audits and investigations. Including:

- Public engagement and impact activities conducted by your institution, particularly involving research participants or patients, which included coverage of research integrity.

- External conferences, workshops or other events on research integrity to which your institution has contributed.

- Information on any academic research into research integrity or related fields, such as research ethics or research culture, undertaken by researchers from your institution.

- Collaborations with external organisations to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues, whether UK-based institutions or those from other countries.

- Regional, national or international initiatives on research integrity which your institution has contributed to or participated in."

Annex 3: Key Documents, Strategies and Policies

Reference documents

UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2019)
Singapore statement on Research Integrity (2010)
Montreal Statement on Research Integrity
ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017)

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[3] UKRIO-Self-Assessment-Tool-for-The-Concordat-to-Support-Research-Integrity-V2.pdf pages 60-66 accessed 8/9/2022 and https://doi.org/10.37672/UKRIO.2021.02.self-assessment

Technicians Commitment
Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct (2013)
Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
UKRIO Self Assessment Tool v2

National Museums Scotland Documents Available Online
Research Ethics - Code of Ethics – cited as policy – last updated 2006.
Collections Development Strategy
Collections Care and Conservation Policy
Collections Information and Access Policy
Human Remains in Collections Policy
Access and Benefit Sharing: Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol
Collections Due Diligence
Data Privacy
Freedom of Information Requests

National Museums Scotland Documents Not Available Online
Acceptable Use ICT Policy
Code of Conduct
Data Protection Policy
Fraud Policy
Gift Acceptance Policy
Information Security Policy
Intellectual Property Policy
Pre-Employment checks - safeguarding
Records Management Policy
Respect and Dignity Policy
Risk Assessments
Risk Management - External Funding Procedure
Research Projects Approvals Procedure
Research Ethics and Integrity Procedure
Travel and Subsistence Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Safeguarding Policy

Annex 4: Research Misconduct

In accordance with ALLEA the three main areas concerning research misconduct can be summarised as relating to fabrication, falsification and plagiarism:

> "•Fabrication is making up results and recording them as if they were real.
>
> • Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment or processes or changing, omitting or suppressing data or results without justification.
>
> • Plagiarism is using other people's work and ideas without giving proper credit to the original source, thus violating the rights of the original author(s) to their intellectual outputs."

ALLEA-European-Code-of-Conduct-for-Research-Integrity-2017.pdf