

Annual Research Ethics and Integrity Statement 2021/22

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Supporting and strengthening research integrity

1. The National Museums Scotland Research Ethics Policy was published in 2006. Based upon the Nolan principles¹, **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 Integrity² 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.

¹ [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://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 2021/22

7. There have been a number of actions and activities in 2021/22 to support good research practice across the organisation. These relate to policies, procedures, and training.
8. **Policy: Safeguarding Policy** – This policy was updated in 2021/22 by the Head of Learning and Engagement, taking into account best practice guidance relating to research. This update both protects the researcher and those participating in research. The update has been used by researchers on the AHRC funded project *Materialising the Cold War* in the ethics review and practice. **Next Steps/ Challenges:** next steps are to ensure that all those undertaking research are aware of how this updated policy affects their day-to-day research activity as well as externally funded research.
9. **Practice: Anatomy (ethical research and dissemination)** – Colleagues in our Science and Technology department undertaking research for the exhibition *Anatomy: A Matter of Death and Life* engaged with a range of ethical considerations. To manage these effectively, they liaised with colleagues at Wellcome and in academia to ensure rigour not only in their research conduct but also in the communication and dissemination of the research. **Next Steps/ Challenges:** To share learnings about the ethical issues related to the research and its dissemination as applied to this exhibition with colleagues.
10. **Practice: Community working and partnerships** – Via the AHRC funded project *Exchange: Community-led Collections Research*, in collaboration with National Maritime Museum, we are developing guidelines for practitioners working with community partners. The outputs of this project will be of benefit to researchers and public engagement practitioners working with communities. **Next Steps/ Challenges:** funding is being applied for to produce these guidelines.

11. **External Engagement: Historic England external review of ethics policies and procedures** – In early 2022, Historic England commissioned a review of research ethics and integrity processes and procedures in IROs. The review was undertaken by scholars at the University of Sheffield. We participated in this project with the Research and Academic Liaison Manager joining the review and the Interim Keeper in Science and Technology, the feedback part of the project. The work continues as part of the IRO Consortium (IROC) group. **Next steps/ Actions:** to develop a knowledge bank of best practice for researchers.
12. **Data management, research outputs** – The Research and Academic Liaison Manager has been working with the PIs and research teams of two of our major on-going AHRC projects to implement data management plans and manage the practical issues of cross-institutional collaboration. This involves developing methods to recognise and define research data throughout project delivery, asking researchers to think about what should have permanent identifiers and where the data will be stored. This will enable the research to be effectively shared during and post project. This work also helps other researchers track what activities have already been done. **Next Steps/ Challenges:** Monitoring and developing this work as projects progress and working with the Collections Information team to ensure their capture is properly recorded. Sharing methods with colleagues across the organisation potentially via our regular Seminar series.
13. **Human Remains policies and procedures** – The *Human Remains in Collections* policy was updated in 2021. This is available online via the Collections Policy website pages. As a collections-based organisation, National Museums Scotland has a longstanding history of research on human remains and has been guided by International Museum Ethical Guidelines. **Next step/Challenges:** During 2022-23, the Scottish History and Archaeology department will be undertaking a project related to Osteological artefacts in the collection.
14. **Research training (open access and IPR)** – During 2021/22 we identified the need for training and increased awareness related to IPR and open access for research. In July 22 the Research and Academic Liaison Manager and the Training & Development Manager will be developing a programme to address this. **Next step/Challenges:** meet with internal stakeholders to discuss gaps in knowledge and awareness training priorities.
15. **Publications and authorship** – Discussions have begun on best practices around authorship. This is particularly in relation to colleagues working together on external publications, placement of authorship and what constitutes authorship. This is a relatively new area of consideration but for which there is sector standard guidance³. **Next step/Challenges:** work with internal group to produce recommended guidance and best practice for colleagues authoring papers and present this to the next RSG in April 2022.
16. **Update to Research Ethics Policy/ Code of Ethics** - The process of IRO renewal highlighted the need to update our Research Code of Ethics and procedures to align with the latest Concordat and reflect the wider aspects of research integrity. This work has been on-going over the course of the last Collections Research Strategy and is feeding into in other cross-institutional work such as the Safeguarding Policy, and our developing approach to IPR and open access practices. However, it has yet to be translated fully and embedded into joined up

³ Committee on Publication Ethics [COPE DD A4 Authorship SEPT19 SCREEN AW.pdf \(publicationethics.org\)](#). There is a link to a scorecard on the APA for authorship. [authorship-determination-scorecard.pdf \(apa.org\)](#)

research specific policies. **Next steps/ Challenges:** identify a timeline to review, update and approve revised policy and procedures.

17. Update to the Research Projects Approvals Process – The original process was introduced in 2018. It is overdue for a review. **Next steps/ Challenges:** identify a timeline to review, update and approve revised policy and procedures.

18. Communications: Website and intranet updates – In the latest revision of our website, more policies related to research integrity have been made available. We updated the website to include our commitment to the 2017 All European Academies European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and a point of contact for any allegations. We also updated the Access and Benefit Sharing procedures and provided training to colleagues in our Natural Sciences department. **Next step/Challenges:** Following the review and Research Ethics Policy review, identify a timeline and strategy to communicate these updates.

Actions and Activities to support a healthy research culture 2021/22

19. Knowledge Sharing: – Research Ethics and Integrity guidance including Open Access and IPR as it relates to research has been identified as a need. The aspiration is to build a knowledge bank as they relate to heritage, museums and archives in general as both research investigators and facilitators of research. **Next steps/ Challenges;** identify a timeline and resources needed to produce the knowledge bank and ways to continue to share knowledge.

20. Developing confidence - In addition to formal training, we have been inducting new members to the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee (REIC). Normally the domain of academic colleagues, we provided 1:1 training and guidance for non-academic colleagues sitting on the REIC. This had the effect of bringing a wider disciplinary and professional expertise to the committee covering expertise, for example, in how to deal with sensitive issues. **Next steps/ Challenges:** Confidence building will be expanded into building forums to discuss ethical best practice on the most common themes⁴.

21. Knowledge Sharing: PDRA Forum – During 2021/22 a Postdoctoral Researcher forum was created by the Director of Collections to bring together Postdoctoral Researchers from across the departments in Collections. It was agreed that this forum would continue. **Next step/Challenges:** Identify other gaps and opportunities to develop research culture.

22. Research Impact – We have a range of methods in place now to document and share research impact including, for example, regular reporting on research funding, academic papers published, and research students. We also continue to develop our Research Repository to share research outputs. Additionally, large, externally funded research projects meet quarterly to discuss research outputs and their impact and monitor the systems and

⁴ UKRIO lists these as: “Research involving human participants, human tissue or remains, or personal data, including provisions for vulnerable participants. * Other types of health and social care research. * Research involving animal subjects/ animal materials, both those are covered by UK legislation and those which are not covered. o Data management and protection. * Off-site and lone working. * Research outside the UK. * Internet-mediated research, including research involving social media platforms. * Environmental protection. * Research involving cultural objects. * Conflicts of interest/ competing interests (including an institutional due diligence process) * Publication and authorship. * Open research. * Research misconduct: reporting and investigation. * Reproducibility.” [UKRIO-Self-Assessment-Tool-for-The-Concordat-to-Support-Research-Integrity-V2.pdf](#) p10 accessed 8/9/22

methods in place to document and share this information with internal and external audiences. To ensure we continue to grow in this area, the need to review and update how we measure and report on research impact has been identified. **Next steps/Challenges:** The Research Strategy Group will be invited to review and discuss meaningful ways of measuring research impact appropriate to our aims and objectives. The aim is to develop best practice guidelines organisation-wide use to recognise and record impact for our own practice and for other stakeholders.

23. Other activities related to research integrity identified: through this process we have identified the need to better identify, record and communicate issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion in research and sustainability. Our EDI Action Plan recognises this as an issue for researcher recruitment and this will inform how research is undertaken and how this impacts our research culture.

Ethical approval of research proposals: review of processes

24. There were two projects that required the REIC to meet. Both projects, funded by the AHRC, were approved by the Committee. The external academic representatives (from two different Scottish Higher Education institutions) on the Committee were both asked for their assessment of the process and both confirmed, independently, the ethics review process was fit for purpose.

Summary of actions/ next steps

25. The process of research good practice has been led by externally funded projects and funder requirements. The challenge is to ensure that research, funded by grant in aid, is also included. The next steps and actions identified in this annual report will be reviewed and prioritised as resources allow and to consider how to improve research culture from sources such as using published guidelines on [UKRIO-Royal-Society-Integrity-in-Practice.pdf](#)

Assurance Statements: Research Misconduct

26. 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.
27. Two research integrity investigations were undertaken in FY2021/22. One involved an accusation of plagiarism and upon investigation by senior management was found to be uncorroborated; clearer expectation management measures have been put in place. The second concerned intellectual property ownership and an investigation held that there was no evidence of intentional wrongdoing from either party. As a result, we are improving our guidance and training to researchers on acceptable good practice on authorship (via the Committee on Publication Ethics) and renewed the importance of agreements for collaborative research.

Approved by Research Strategy Group
September 2022

Annex1: Definitions

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

“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 2⁵ 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.

⁵ [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>

- 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)
 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](#)