

Annual Research Ethics and Integrity Statement 2023/24

| | |
|---|---|
| Supporting and strengthening research integrity..... | 1 |
| Policy Context | 1 |
| Actions and Activities to support Good Research Practice 2023/24..... | 2 |
| Actions and Activities to support a healthy research culture 2023/24..... | 3 |
| Ethical approval of research proposals: review of processes..... | 3 |
| Assurance Statements: Research Misconduct..... | 3 |
| Annex1: Definitions..... | 3 |
| Annex 2: Annual Statement Key Criteria..... | 4 |
| Annex 3: Key Documents, Strategies and Policies | 4 |
| Annex 4: Research Misconduct | 5 |

Supporting and strengthening research integrity

1. The National Museums Scotland Research Ethics Policy was published in 2006. Based upon the Nolan principles:¹ Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability & Stewardship, Openness, Honesty, Leadership, Duty, Respect. 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.

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.

¹ The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and in Scotland 9 principles including [Key Principles of Public Life | The Standards Commission for Scotland](#)

² [WCRIF - Singapore Statement on Integrity](#)

4. Day to day management is undertaken by the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, usually chaired by the Director of Collections, 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 2023/24

There have been a number of actions and activities in 2023/24 to support good research practice across the organisation. These relate to policies, procedures, and training:

7. **Policy and practice:** As identified in the Research Ethics and Integrity Statement in 2022/23, the AHRC Exchange project was one of the stimuli for the development of a Participatory Practice Policy for National Museums Scotland. **Next Steps/ Actions:** Communication of the findings will be held in 2024/25.
8. **External Engagement:** During 2023/24 the Research and Academic Liaison Manager (RALM) continued to engage with sector colleagues in understanding best practice in the sector on research integrity. i.e. seminars on the Technicians Commitment and inclusive research. **Next steps/ Actions:** RALM to update the research procedures to be inclusive of the developments such as the Technicians Commitment.
9. **Human Remains policies and procedures:** Following the update to the Human Remains in Collections Policy in 2021 (available online), National Museums Scotland applied for AHRC RICHES programme to support the creation of a Scottish Archaeological Human Remains Collection (SAHRC) facility with Historic Environment Scotland. The Human Remains in Collections Policy has since been updated and published. **Next steps:** Employ a Curator of Osteoarchaeology to support the collection.
10. **Communications (Research outputs):** in FY23/24 we promoted the use of the Research Repository (see below) and associated transformative publishing agreements to encourage openly accessible content on the repository. In 2023/24 we also committed to develop a knowledge bank of best practice for researchers on research ethics **Next steps/ Actions:** There is still more work to be done to develop these knowledge banks and work continues into 2024/25.

11. **Inclusive practice and data management:** Work continued to define and deliver projects that improve the quality and inclusiveness of our collections records. **Next steps/ Actions:** Share these benefits with wider National Museums Scotland staff and implement more consistently the practice of decolonising our collections records furthering potential research on them.

Actions and Activities to support a healthy research culture 2023/24

12. **Developing confidence** – Copyright expert, Naomi Korn was engaged in March 2024 to discuss intellectual property from research. This workshop delivered over two days was essential to increasing confidence amongst staff about what IP is created from research in the humanities. **Next steps/ Actions:** Further internally led workshops will be delivered during 2024/25.
13. **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 and IP creation workshops.

Ethical approval of research proposals: review of processes

14. There was no cause to convene the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee in 2023/24. In light of the new Participatory Practice Policy, new ethics procedures will need to be developed so that reviews can be undertaken proportionately and at an earlier stage.

Assurance Statements: Research Misconduct

15. 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.
16. No allegations of misconduct were relayed to the Director of Collections during FY23/24.

*Approved by Research Strategy Group
7th November 2024*

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 2³ 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

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>

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
Participatory Practice 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](#)