



Research Integrity Policy

We expect the research we fund to be conducted according to the highest standards of research integrity. We review our policies, grant conditions and procedures every two years to ensure they remain fit for purpose in upholding the highest standards of research practice.

The following policy is relevant to all individuals involved in research, but in particular applies to:

- Researchers, research support staff and host institutions in receipt of MRF funding
- Applicants applying for MRF Funding
- All individuals contributing to MRF's peer review procedures, including Foundation staff, members of our Scientific Advisory Panel and External Referees.

The Concordat to support Research Integrity

We are a supporter of the [Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), a cross disciplinary national framework for good research conduct and its governance.

As a supporter of the concordat, we are committed to:

1. Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
2. Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
3. Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
4. Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
5. Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly

Host institutions are encouraged to implement these five principles to mitigate the risk of research misconduct occurring, but at a minimum, must have formal written procedures in place to ensure good research practice. Researchers in receipt of MRF funding should be made fully aware of such guidelines.

Research misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Host Institution to investigate all cases of academic misconduct. As per MRF's Terms and Conditions of Grant Aid, Host Institutions must have formal written procedures in place to appropriately handle allegations of scientific misconduct, and copies of such procedures must be made available to MRF on request.

Research misconduct can take many forms, but for this purposes of this guideline, we endorse the following definitions:

- **Fabrication:** creation of false data and other aspects of research (including documentation and participant consent) and recording or reporting them as if they were real
- **Falsification:** inappropriately manipulating research processes or changing or omitting data, imagery and or/ consents such that the research is no longer accurately represented in the research record
- **Plagiarism:** the misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission
- **Misrepresentation, of:**
 - data, for example suppression of relevant findings and/or data, or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence, presenting a flawed interpretation of data;
 - publication history, undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication;
 - interests, including failure to declare competing interests either of the researcher or of the funders of the research;
 - qualifications and/or experience, including claiming or implying qualifications or experience which are not held;
 - involvement, such as inappropriate claims to authorship and/or attribution of work where there has been no significant contribution, or the denial of authorship where an author has made a significant contribution;
- **Failure to meet: legal, ethical and professional obligations, for example:**
 - not observing legal and reasonable ethical requirements or obligations of care for animal subjects, human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment;
 - breach of duty of care for humans involved in research whether deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence, including failure to obtain appropriate informed consent
 - misuse of personal data, including disclosing improperly the identity of individuals or groups involved in research without their consent, or other breach of confidentiality;
 - improper conduct in peer review of research proposals or results (including manuscripts submitted for publication); this includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest;
 - misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for peer review purposes; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence.
- **Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct:**
 - failing to address possible infringements such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers; or
 - failing to deal appropriately with malicious allegations, which should be handled formally as breaches of good conduct.
- Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties through the use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements.

The Foundation takes all reported allegations of misconduct in research very seriously and requires that they are fully investigated by the Host Institution and that the outcome of the investigation is reported as appropriate. The results of this investigation will be taken into consideration by the Foundation. Notification of an allegation of research misconduct is unlikely to result in immediate suspension a research project. However, if the steps taken are deemed unacceptable, or if a case of serious misconduct is proven with no appropriate explanation, the research project, application or panel membership will be terminated.