

2. GOOD RESEARCH CONDUCT

2.1 Terminology - integrity, good research conduct, good research practice and research misconduct

This Code uses the following meanings. Research integrity is what we are trying to achieve, and five core elements are set out in the Concordat (see 2.2.1 below). Good research practice is what we do to achieve integrity in our research (and is outlined in more detail below at 2.2). Good research conduct is demonstrated when our research practice is of a sufficiently high standard to ensure that integrity is upheld. Research misconduct, as defined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, is behaviours or actions that fall short of the standards of ethics, research and scholarship required to ensure that the integrity of research is upheld. Research governance is the framing within which we manage research to ensure research integrity is achieved. This framing includes principles, legal and regulatory provisions, standards of good practice, policies, guidance, systems, management and supervision and spans institutions and, in some cases, national boundaries.

2.2 What is good research practice?

2.2.1 The Concordat to Support Research Integrity sets out a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. Good research practice is defined by the Concordat to Support Research Integrity as research which is conducted to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

The core elements are set out as:

- **Honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings.
- **Rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.
- **Transparency** and open communication in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public.

- **Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record.
- **Accountability** of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this concordat.

2.2.2 The Concordat to Support Research Integrity, first published in 2012 and revised in 2019, is signed by a number of key research funders, including UKRI. The Concordat sets out expectations of the signatories in relation to good research conduct, and compliance is a condition of research funding from those organisations. *'It provides the principles and commitments to ensure that research produced by, or in collaboration with, UK universities, research institutes and others undertaking research is underpinned by the highest standards of rigour and integrity'* (page 4 of the Concordat). The expectations set out in the Concordat are the broadly accepted standards against which universities and researchers should judge research integrity and is, therefore, a fundamentally important document for all researchers. Staff and students engaged in research are expected to familiarise themselves with the [Concordat](#).

2.3 Why is good research practice important?

Research integrity underpins the value of research. Good research practice has a direct impact on the quality of research, its value to those who might use it and, therefore, the impact it may have. Demonstrable research excellence goes hand in hand with demonstrable excellence in research practice and processes. Together, these contribute to the reputation of both researchers and the University. Good research practice also contributes to public trust in research, and protects human and animal research participants, those otherwise affected by research processes and outcomes, and the environment. It also ensures that the best possible value is obtained from research funding.

The converse is also true. The Concordat to Support Research Integrity says of research misconduct:

'It can cause harm to people and the environment, wastes resources, undermines the research record and damages the credibility of research. The concordat recognises that academic freedom is fundamental to the production of excellent research. This means that responsibility for ensuring that no misconduct occurs rests primarily with individual researchers.'

UWE Bristol places the highest possible emphasis on integrity and excellence in research practice. This is also a matter of compliance with key funder requirements, without which the University would be unable to receive research funds from funders who are signatories to the Concordat.