

Cancer Research UK annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact:
Rlsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Cancer Research UK
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Research Funding Charity
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	Statement covering period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 Approved by the Scientific Executive Board on 03/09/2025
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/funding-for-researchers/applying-for-funding/policies-that-affect-your-grant/guidelines-for-scientific-conduct
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Dan Burkwood, Director of Research Operations and Communications
	Email address: dan.burkwood@cancer.org.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Amy Bradburn, Head of Research Operations
	Email address: amy.bradburn@cancer.org.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

- Policies and systems
- Communications and engagement
- Culture, development and leadership
- Monitoring and reporting

Culture, development and leadership

In order to beat cancer, Cancer Research UK (CRUK) supports the best cancer researchers and fund the highest quality research to make this a reality. Led by our senior leaders, under CRUK's [Research Strategy](#), one of our key enablers is to create a positive research environment and culture so researchers can develop ideas in a supportive, collaborative environment and fulfil their potential.

Our work to promote [positive research culture](#) encompasses different areas including research integrity, career development, equality, diversity and inclusion, open science, research assessment, tackling bullying and harassment. We aim to proactively engage or lead on these sector issues and proactively participate in Concordat Signatories groups and initiatives including for research integrity and researcher development. We expect everyone involved in our research funding to follow the principles, standards and practices for the proper management of research including the principles set out in these Concordats.

Policies and systems

Under our Grants Management Policy Board (GMPB), we regularly review and improve how we assess and fund research and our funding policies. Relevant funding policies – some described in more detail in subsequent sections – strive to promote positive research culture and high standards of research quality and include for example: [Research integrity: guidelines for research conduct](#); [Dignity at work in research](#); [Data sharing and management](#); [Open access policy](#); [Recruitment of human participants in research](#); [Conflicts of interest policy: CRUK-funded researchers and commercial organisations](#); [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) policy](#); [Use of generative AI in CRUK funding applications](#); [Environmental Sustainability in Research policy](#); [Requirements in integration of sex in experimental design](#). Funding policies and requirements form part of our Grant Conditions.

Further policies, plans or statements that contribute to a positive research culture and reduce research waste include: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Research action plan, Researcher Development Concordat action plan; Flexible research careers policies.

CRUK submits annual sector statements under the Understanding Animal Research Concordat, Research Integrity Concordat and Researcher Development Concordat.

Communication and engagement

CRUK is an active member of sector-wide forums that aim to foster good research practices and a positive environment. We share best practice and lessons learned as part of: Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group; Researcher Development Concordat Group; Forum to Tackle Bullying and Harassment in Research and Innovation; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health Research (EDIS); Public Engagement in Data Research Initiative (PEDRI). We are a founding member of the Research Funders Policies Group where we have collaborated to develop joint funding assurance processes and policy positions. CRUK also regularly engages the UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI), the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and NC3Rs. We regularly promote training or career support initiatives to CRUK-funded researchers, including webinars run by UKRN, UKRIO and NC3Rs. We convene our research community to discuss feedback on new approaches to improve research integrity and broader research culture.

Monitoring and reporting

Following review by our Grants Management Policy Board comprised of Research and Operations Heads, our Grant Conditions and funding policies are reviewed regularly by our Scientific Executive Board (SEB) comprising Executive Board members and our Chief Scientist and Chief Clinician. Our Research Committee comprising CRUK Trustees review key principles of important funding policies alongside anonymised high-level summaries of the number and types of investigations into allegations of research misconduct and bullying and harassment reported to CRUK.

CRUK is also committed to ensuring our trials are registered and results reported for transparency. This means researchers can gain the greatest possible insight from data generated – and maximise benefit for people affected by cancer. We monitor registration and reporting compliance and have shown leadership in this area by publishing these results on our website. An update to the analysis was performed in 2024 and will be reported on the website in 2025.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research

ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

Funding policies

During this period, CRUK **revised the following policies** which are published on our website:

- Research Integrity: Guidelines for Research Conduct (see section 3A for further details)
- Use of animals in research
- Use of GenAI in funding applications
- Conflicts of Interest policy: CRUK-funded researchers and commercial organisations
- Tobacco industry funding to universities

CRUK published **a new funding policy** on:

- **Environmental sustainability in research policy:** this new policy set out CRUK's position on environmental sustainability in research. The requirements described in the policy are intended to complement existing and prospective activities to improve sustainability in research organisations we fund. This includes an expectation that researchers/institutions should reduce general wastage in research by conducting research in an open and robust manner, specifically by following requirements set out in (for example) our Open Access-, Data Sharing and Management- and Research Integrity policies.

Practices to support our research community

During this period, we continued to strengthen research integrity related activities in these areas:

Research Integrity Advisors

We continued to engage with our network of Research Integrity Advisors sharing best practice and discussing relevant topics as needed. Over the course of 2024 we published a series of blogs on the CRUK website, written by the advisors, focused on research integrity and covering a host of topics including:

- How to broaden your understanding of open research
- Reflections from the 8th World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI), with a particular focus on the topics of GenAI and paper mills.
- The role of post-doctoral researchers in upholding research integrity, published during Postdoc Appreciation Week.

Partnerships and practices with other funders

During this period, CRUK:

- **Continued with Registered Reports pilot and the CRUK's Registered Reports Funding Partnership.** The opt in rates from CRUK applicants continues to be high at 48% across our project schemes, however the conversion to registered report submission remains low. University of Bristol are

undertaking an evaluation of the scheme to determine how well the consortium model works, ways to improve and to design instruments to accurately assess the impact of this and similar partnerships.

- Continued to engage the Research Funders Policies Group, including delivering a **Joint Funders Symposium** which brought together a wider group of research funders and relevant parties, to discuss topical items such as use of GenAI in funding process and expert review.
- remain an active contributor to the **joint funders' funding assurance programme**— a recommendation from the Tickell report for funders to align. This assurance procedure includes reviewing research integrity policies at institutions.

Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group

CRUK was an active member of the Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group in 2024, including:

- working with other members of the **Research Integrity Concordat Signatories Group to refresh the Concordat;**

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

We published insights from our observing panels and committees scheme including a case study where we interviewed two early career researchers who took part in the scheme and went on to secure fellowship grants. The scheme remains popular and aims to demystify the grant application process and increase transparency of how expert review is conducted at our expert review panels. As of late 2024, nearly 220 researchers had observed review meetings, and we conducted an anonymous survey of participants who feedback that:

- 98% said it helped them gain a better understanding of what makes a successful application
- 97% said it increased understanding of how funding decisions are made
- 70% said their confidence in applying for a CRUK grant had increased

We published a series of articles themed around research careers which included topics such as bridging the gap between postdoc and group leader and the launch of our new Bridge to Academic Leadership programme. The programme aims to support that often difficult transition stage for early career researchers including developing skills in grant writing, learn how to effectively lead and manage a team in an academic environment and observe our expert review panels.

We conducted and **published results from a survey on the use of narrative CVs in funding applications**. Use of narrative CVs was rolled out into our funding

applications in 2022 and we approached applicants and reviewers for feedback. The large majority were in support of it use and saw the benefits it aimed to provide in research assessment however work still needs to be done in ensuring applicants have sufficient support from their institutions in preparing their narrative CVs, particularly those who are neurodivergent and/or do not speak English as their first language.

Plans for future developments: over the coming year, and so far in 2025, we will:

- Review and update our funding policies related to: Long-term leave, GenAI in funding applications and Open Access.
- Update our **Code of Practice for funding committee's**, which sets out principles for how our expert reviewers carry out assessment of funding applications impartially and to the highest standards of governance.
- Undertake a major **review of our Grant Conditions and how it intersects with our funding policies and requirements**.
- Continue to contribute to the roll out of the **joint funders assurance programme**.
- **publish our EDI in research strategy**, which will expand our plans to reduce cancer inequalities in research and improve research culture;

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

See previous statements.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

Please provide:

- a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).
- information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).
- anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

Research Integrity: Guidelines for Research Conduct: These guidelines set out how researcher communities and Host Institutions that receive CRUK funding are expected to maintain good research conduct and support research integrity. These state that, in the event of an allegation of research misconduct relating to a CRUK-funded researcher, it is the responsibility of the Host Institution that holds the CRUK grant to carry out an impartial, fair and timely investigation of all allegations of research misconduct made against its staff and/or students. CRUK's policy sets out that CRUK should be notified about any allegations no later than the point at which a decision is made to conduct a formal investigation. The Host Institution must keep CRUK informed during the process of investigation and on completion of the investigation, it must provide CRUK with the outcome of the investigation as soon as it is known and provide the final investigation report. Investigations should conclude promptly and in general within one year of receiving the allegation. The policy is reviewed every 2 years and was last updated in September 2024 to:

- clarify expectations of both individuals and Host Institutions;
- outline more clearly why CRUK has a legitimate interest in being notified of investigations, in handling this data and what we do with information reported to us;
- outline the timeframe in which we require Host Institutions to report a decision to start an investigation to CRUK;
- outline the process for circumstances when researchers get in touch with CRUK directly to raise concerns;
- specify what CRUK requires to be reported by the Host Institution following the outcome of an investigation;
- align our policy approach with other major research funders.

Dignity at Work in Research policy: This policy sets out our position and commitment to fostering a culture in research where everyone is treated with dignity. In relation to tackling bullying and harassment, it outlines the conditions that anyone involved in our research activities and their Host Institutions must meet when applying for funding and for the duration of their funding. The policy also applies to members of our funding Committees and Panels. Under our policy, Host Institutions funded by CRUK must: have an effective workplace conduct policy and take reasonable steps to implement it; disclose any active formal disciplinary findings for bullying and harassment against applicants; and notify us of formal investigations into CRUK researchers. This policy is reviewed every two years. It was last updated in February 2025 to include broader safeguarding issues, in parity with other major funders, and align reporting timelines with the Research Integrity policy.

Reporting investigations into allegations of research misconduct and bullying and harassment to CRUK: Both policies outline why CRUK asks to be informed about investigation and provides reassurance on what we do with the information. When investigations are reported to us, matters are addressed fairly, promptly and in a confidential, restricted access manner. We will only take a response on upheld findings that is appropriate as a funder and work with the Host Institution to minimise the impact on any staff working on the affected grant(s) should sanctions be taken. Any information shared with CRUK is stored in accordance with data protection law requirements and updated and/or deleted in line with our retention policy and reviewed regularly to assess whether it can be removed.

Supporting research integrity as an ‘employer of researchers’: CRUK is primarily a funder of research: we support research through the provision of research grants to academic research institutions such as universities and research hospitals. In addition to our grant funding activity, we are also an ‘employer’ of a small number of researchers in the broad sense described in the Concordat. Researchers are employed directly or indirectly by Cancer Research Horizons (CRH - CRUK’s innovation engine) and our Centre for Drug Development (CDD). These research teams work differently and with inherently different performance incentives from those who work in higher education institutions, to which the Concordat is primarily directed. For example, researchers employed by CRUK are not required to apply for research grants, nor is their performance evaluated via publication metrics. As far as possible CRUK seeks to act in accordance with the spirit and intention of the Concordat. The CDD’s practices are regulated by Good Laboratory, Manufacturing and Clinical Practice Guidelines (GLP, GMP and GCP Guidelines, respectively) and is subject to audit and inspection by the Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; all CDD staff receive training accordingly. CRH has policies and procedures to support the integrity of its research, which forms part of the induction and training of all researchers. Any misconduct of CRUK-employed researchers can be reported to the concerned individual’s line manager, the Executive Director of Research & Innovation or via our Whistleblower Policy. Any allegation would then be investigated under our employment policies. There have

been no allegations of research misconduct in relation to any CRUK-employed researchers during the reporting period.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

Note: The table below notes any completed investigations into allegations of research misconduct reported to CRUK during the period of **1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024**.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
Other*				
Total:	0	0	0	0

*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.