

## **Conservatoires UK (CUK) Research Ethics**

### **guidelines on good research conduct**

#### **Introduction**

Conservatoires UK (CUK) expects all members of staff and students to observe the highest ethical and professional standards in their research and is committed to ensuring that all researchers should be able to pursue their work in an atmosphere free from prejudice and harassment. From an external perspective, research councils and charities now dictate that the research they fund must adhere to the highest standards of integrity. They also require that institutions have in place formal written procedures for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct. If institutions do not have such a policy in place, researchers will be ineligible to apply for funding.

CUK has therefore adopted the Research Councils UK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2009), Integrity, Clarity and Good Management. These form the standard of practice to which the College expects its researchers to adhere.

These Guidelines also include a section on research and equal opportunities which should be read in conjunction with each CUK institution's Equality and Diversity Policies. They are supported by a procedure to address allegations of research misconduct, linking to each institution's staff disciplinary procedures and regulations governing student conduct.

These Guidelines apply to all members of CUK institutions involved in research. This includes staff and undergraduate and postgraduate students. It also applies to those who are not members of CUK institutions but who are conducting research within their premises or using their research facilities.

#### **Principles of good research conduct**

The RCUK Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct lays down in detail the principles by which researchers should conduct their work. All individuals engaged in research should be familiar with these and comply with them. In summary, at all times researchers are expected to:

- maintain professional standards
- observe legal and ethical requirements laid down by CUK institutions or other properly appointed bodies involved in the research field
- recognise the importance of good leadership and co-operation in research groups
- take special account of the needs of young researchers
- document results and keep secure primary data
- question findings
- attribute honestly the contribution of others
- take steps to ensure the safety of all those associated with the research
- report any conflict of interest, actual or prospective, to the appropriate person.

#### **Research misconduct**

Research misconduct includes the following, whether deliberate, reckless or negligent:

- failure to obtain appropriate permission to conduct research
- deception in relation to research proposals
- unethical behaviour in the conduct of research, for example in relation to research subjects
- unauthorised use of information which was acquired confidentially
- deviation from good research practice, where this results in unreasonable risk of harm to humans, other animals or the environment
- fabrication, falsification or corruption of research data
- distortion of research outcomes, by distortion or omission of data that do not fit expected results
- dishonest misinterpretation of results
- publication of data known or believed to be false or misleading
- plagiarism, or dishonest use of unacknowledged sources
- misquotation or misrepresentation of other authors
- inappropriate attribution of authorship
- fraud or other misuse of research funds or research equipment

- attempting, planning or conspiring to be involved in research misconduct
- inciting others to be involved in research misconduct
- collusion in or concealment of research misconduct by others.

It does not include:

- honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or judgment in evaluating research methods
- misconduct unrelated to the research process
- poor research unless this encompasses the intention to deceive.

### **Research misconduct procedure**

CUK institutions have a responsibility to investigate allegations of research misconduct. They also have a responsibility to protect researchers from malicious, mischievous or frivolous allegations.

All those to whom these regulations apply should report any incident of misconduct, whether witnessed or suspected. Members of staff and students are encouraged to raise concerns about suspected research misconduct in confidence with their institution's CUK REC representatives. Those who raise concerns in good faith will not be penalised in any way for doing so. Allegations should normally be made in writing, accompanied by any available supporting evidence, and will be considered in accordance with the institution's Disciplinary Procedures for staff or students.

CUK institutions have a Policy on the Reporting of Serious Malpractice and Abuse (or equivalent), which sets out how members of staff should raise concerns they may have about malpractice or impropriety.

Where the research is funded in whole or part by an outside grant, the institution shall have regard to the guidance issued by the relevant funding body. The institution shall ensure that any such body is given appropriate and timely information as to the instigation and progress of an investigation and any referral under disciplinary regulations.

In the event of a finding of misconduct, where the person responsible is subject to the regulation of a professional body, the institution shall consider whether it is appropriate to inform the professional body of any finding.

Where the person responsible has published research, especially research to which the misconduct relates, the institution shall consider whether it is appropriate to inform journal editors or others of any finding.

According to the UCEA Update 10:126, in the event of establishing that there has been misconduct in carrying out research or an investigation reveals that serious errors have occurred, it may become necessary to retract articles or submissions in journals and other publications. The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) has produced an information note to raise awareness of the need for retractions in academic journals and reminds researchers that good practice in research means reporting concerns about the conduct of research, including its publications and dissemination.

### **Research and equal opportunities**

All individuals involved in research should be able to pursue their work in an atmosphere free from prejudice and harassment. CUK is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all within all of its activities. If individuals feel they may be experiencing discrimination at work, then there are a number of external organisations that can offer them advice and support in addition to Human Resources staff at CUK institutions. Details of these are provided on the HERO website which also includes details of specialist support and advice for female researchers.

### **Access to sensitive or extremism-related research material**

In accordance with the 'Prevent' responsibilities of higher education bodies, intended to 'prevent' radicalisation/extremism, research students and staff will need to seek approval within their own institution to gain access to electronic or other material related to subjects concerning radicalisation and extremism. Such access will not be withheld where the student or member of staff has good academic reasons to access such material, in accordance with academic freedom principles.

Where access is provided, the conservatoire will give attention to ensuring that such material is securely stored, whether in secure physical or electronic storage, and will be disposed of securely when no longer needed.

The institutional contact for requests to access such material will be the most senior member of staff in the conservatoire with responsibility for research and this will normally be a member of the senior management of the institution.

Conservatoires will be guided by the Universities UK guidance in this area, currently available at: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/OversightOfSecuritySensitiveResearchMaterial.aspx>. As this guidance says: 'Universities play a vital role in carrying out research on issues where security-sensitive material is relevant. This guidance document concerns the storage and circulation of security-sensitive research material. If circulated carelessly, such material is sometimes open to misinterpretation by the authorities, and can put authors in danger of arrest and prosecution under, for example, counter-terrorism legislation. Certain procedures for independently registering and storing this material – through research ethics processes – are recommended in this guidance.'

# RCUK Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct: Integrity, Clarity and Good Management

## CONTEXT

This code is relevant to all individuals involved in research, irrespective of the subject of research, entry route into research or any other consideration, and including:

- researchers;
- research support staff;
- students;
- research managers and administrators.

All are expected to observe the highest standards of research integrity and to embed good practice in all aspects of their work, including the training of new researchers. They must operate honestly and openly in respect of their own actions and in response to the actions of others involved in research.<sup>1</sup>

The spectrum of inappropriate behaviour is wide, ranging from minor misdemeanours which may happen occasionally and inadvertently, to significant acts of misappropriation or fabrication. Poor practices, such as weak procedures or inadequate record-keeping which may jeopardise the integrity of the research but might only require further training or development rather than formal disciplinary action, are normally a matter solely for the employer.

<sup>1</sup> See Council for Science and Technology, *Universal Ethical Code for Scientists* (2006)

This code therefore concentrates on entirely unacceptable types of research conduct. Individuals involved in research must not commit any of the acts of research misconduct specified in this code.

## UNACCEPTABLE RESEARCH CONDUCT

Allegations should be investigated by the individual's employer and proven cases must be notified to the research funder.

Unacceptable conduct includes each of the following:

### **Fabrication**

This includes the creation of false data or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent.

### **Falsification**

This includes the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery and/or consents.

### **Plagiarism**

This includes the general misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission.

**Misrepresentation**, including:

- 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;
- undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication;
- misrepresentation of interests, including failure to declare material interests either of the researcher or of the funders of the research;
- misrepresentation of qualifications and/or experience, including claiming or implying qualifications or experience which are not held;
- misrepresentation of 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.

**Mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary materials**, including failure to:

- keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed and the results obtained, including interim results;
- hold records securely in paper or electronic form;
- make relevant primary data and research evidence accessible to others for reasonable periods after the completion of the research: data should normally be preserved and accessible for ten years, but for projects of clinical or major social, environmental or heritage importance, for 20 years or longer;
- manage data according to the research funder's data policy and all relevant legislation;
- wherever possible, deposit data permanently within a national collection.

Responsibility for proper management and preservation of data and primary materials is shared between the researcher and the research organisation.

**Breach of duty of care**, which involves deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence:

- disclosing improperly the identity of individuals or groups involved in research without their consent, or other breach of confidentiality;
- placing any of those involved in research in danger, whether as subjects, participants or associated individuals, without their prior consent, and without appropriate safeguards even with consent; this includes reputational danger where that can be anticipated;
- not taking all reasonable care to ensure that the risks and dangers, the broad objectives and the sponsors of the research are known to participants or their legal representatives, to ensure appropriate informed consent is obtained properly, explicitly and transparently;
- 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;
- improper conduct in peer review of research proposals or results (including manuscripts submitted for publication); this includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence;
- misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for peer review purposes.

### **Acknowledgements**

These Guidelines are adapted from the Guidelines on Good Research Practice written by Dr Dawn Edwards (Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, RNCM) for St Mary's University College, Twickenham, which drew, in turn, on the Wellcome Trust Guidelines (2005).