

Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

The Royal Irish Academy is committed to the core principles of reliability, honesty, respect and accountability, which underpin national and international policy on ensuring research integrity.

National and International Policy

The issue of research integrity (RI) is of such importance that a large number of national regulatory bodies have been created in the past two decades to set and verify standards. European initiatives also have a bearing on national policies as Europe seeks to harmonize approaches to ensuring research quality. Meanwhile, Data Protection law and the move towards Open Science/Open Access, have created new challenges, such that developments in these areas have implications for RI policy.

Below is a selection of leading organizations, both national and international, whose work is partly or wholly concerned with RI.

[National Forum on Research Integrity \(NFRI\)](#)
[National Academic Integrity Network \(QQI, NAIN\)](#)
[UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#)
[All European Academies \(ALLEA\)](#)
[European Network of Research Integrity Offices \(ENRIO\)](#)
[Office Français de l'Intégrité Scientifique \(OFIS\)](#)

Amongst the many relevant publications of the above bodies, those listed below are the key documents referenced in the RIA's present Code of Conduct for Research Integrity:

[Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland \(NFRI, 2nd ed., 2019\)](#)
[Position Paper on Research Integrity Officer Role & Reporting Structure \(NFRI, 2016\)](#)
[National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment \(NORF, 2019\)](#)
[European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(ALLEA, 2017\)](#)
[Recommendations for the regulation of Research Misconduct \(ENRIO, 2019\)](#)
[RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct \(UKRI, updated April 2017\)](#)
[Research Integrity, a Landscape Study \(UKRI, 2020\)](#)
[Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(revised 2019\)](#)

RIA Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

This Code provides a framework whose purpose is to support best practice in the conduct and management of research in all of its relevant activities, and to outline the procedure for dealing with any apparent infringement. It is aligned to national and international recommendations regarding research integrity standards, drawing in particular on the [Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#) (National Forum on Research Integrity, 2nd ed., 2019) and the revised [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) (ALLEA, 2017). If any conflict or ambiguity arises between the RIA's Policy and policies or recommendations published by relevant national or international bodies, the RIA's Code shall prevail.

The RIA Code covers the following: the overall conduct of research; data practice and management; collaborative research; publication and dissemination; and procedures for addressing apparent infringements.

It is subject to periodic review in the light of recommendations, guidelines and discussion documents produced by national bodies, notably the IUA's National Forum on Research Integrity, of which the RIA is a member, and the National Academic Integrity Network initiated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland. It is informed by principles developed by international bodies, such as ALLEA and the OECD, and by national bodies in other European countries. It also draws on the RIA publication 'Ensuring Integrity in Irish Research' (2010).

a. Scope

This Code applies, without limitation, to all RIA staff, interns and students engaged in the conduct of research under the aegis of the RIA. 'Conduct of research' includes engagement with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges involved, and dealings with research partners and diverse audiences.

External research partners and applicants for grants administered by the RIA must undertake to adhere to the corresponding policy of their own institution, or, if not attached to an institution, must adhere to the RIA's code.

b. Training, supervision and mentoring

As it did in 2020, through the IUA's provision of access to online training arranged by the NFRI, the RIA will continue to ensure that Research Integrity training is available to all researchers across their career path, as recommended in Section 2.2 of the European Code. The Heads of the Research Projects, in providing new researchers with training in research methodology and analysis appropriate to their Project, will emphasise Research Integrity, and will maintain a common approach to research-related issues.

c. Research Data Practices and Management

As is emphasized in the [National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment](#), the aim is to make research data 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'. This applies to data management throughout the research lifecycle, from initial management plan and research methodology to results, interpretation, storage, preservation, publication, and retrieval and publication.

The RIA Research Projects' individual Data Protection & Data Retention Statements, the Transparency Statement of the RIA's publishing house, the Policy and International Relations Data Protection Policy, and the statements of other administrative divisions of the Academy are to be found under [Privacy and Data Protection](#) on the RIA website. These should be read in conjunction with the Royal Irish Academy's GDPR compliance documents.

d. Collaborative working and Team research

At the very outset of any research collaboration involving the Academy, all partners in the project are required to discuss fully, and formally agree, every aspect of their individual and shared responsibilities and the acknowledgment due to each participant.

Within and between RIA Research Projects, and in RIA research collaborations with external partners, all researchers are required to

- agree formally on the goals of the research and on the process for communicating it;
- take responsibility for the integrity of the research, undertaking to comply with the Royal Irish Academy's Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, and accepting its procedures for handling possible conflicts or breaches of the said policy, or, in the case of external partners attached to another institution, undertake to comply with that institution's research integrity policy and procedures;
- agree on the protection of collaborators' intellectual property, and ensure that each researcher is properly informed and consulted about submissions for publication of the research results;

e. Publication/dissemination

Publication policy here applies to formal and informal dissemination of interim or final research results, whether in print form (journal, book or patent), online or in social media.

Researchers

- are fully responsible for the content of a publication, unless otherwise specified;
- ensure that their work is made available to colleagues and to the public in a timely, open, transparent, and accurate manner;
- appropriately acknowledge the work and intellectual contributions of others;
- agree on the taxonomy of contributor roles and/or sequence of authorship in joint publications, taking into account disciplinary norms;
- disclose any conflicts of interest and any financial or other support for their research and its publication;
- issue corrections or retract work if necessary.

Heads of Project have the additional responsibility of ensuring that the above principles are applied within their project.

These criteria should be read in conjunction with the Transparency Statement of the Royal Irish Academy's publishing house.

f. Reviewing, evaluating, editing

Researchers engaging in refereeing, reviewing and evaluation for the Royal Irish Academy undertake to

- do so in a transparent and justifiable manner;

- adhere to prescribed conflict-of-interest guidelines;
- maintain confidentiality unless there is prior approval for disclosure;
- respect the rights of authors and applicants, and seek permission to make use of any element of their work.

g. Ethics statements

The Academy requires the research it funds to be conducted in an ethical manner. RIA staff, external collaborators, and grant applicants must indicate whether their proposed research raises any special ethical issues, and, where appropriate, must confirm that they have secured approval for the proposed research from their respective institution's Research Ethics Committee (or its equivalent).

Independent researchers without access to formal ethical scrutiny and approval must briefly describe any potential ethical issues as defined in publications by authoritative bodies, one such being the manual on [Ethics Self-assessment](#) provided by the EU Commission. They must explain how any such issues will be addressed. The independent researcher's ethics self-assessment and proposed plan for managing ethics issues will be reviewed by an Ethics panel convened by the RIO, to include the RIO, the Vice-President for Research, one to two experts in the principal research field(s), and, where applicable, the RIA leader of the collaborative research project in which the independent researcher proposes to engage.

All researchers should be aware of the legal requirements that regulate their work.

h. Addressing apparent breaches of research integrity

The RIA is committed to applying 'transparent, robust and fair processes' to address allegations of research misconduct, should they arise. The investigation procedure is based on the following principles: integrity of the enquiry; uniformity; fairness; confidentiality; no detriment. These principles, and how they may govern the investigation process, are developed in the IUA's Research Integrity Report (2019), Sections 4.2 and 4.3. For RIA policy in this regard, see RIA Code of Conduct for Research Integrity: Procedures.

RIA Code of Conduct for Research Integrity: Procedures

In line with the national approach outlined in the Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (NFRI, 2019), the RIA is committed to using 'transparent, robust and fair processes' to deal with allegations of research misconduct, if any such arise. Research misconduct 'does not include 'honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or judgment in evaluating research methods or results, or misconduct unrelated to the research process. Similarly, it does not include poor research per se unless this encompasses an intention to deceive'.

Misconduct may be considered to be of major gravity (for example, fabrication or falsification of data, plagiarism), or of minor gravity but nonetheless unacceptable.

Regarding these classifications, the Royal Irish Academy adopts the definitions set out by the NFRI (op. cit., 'Table 1: Description of core research misconduct and unacceptable practices by scientists and scholars, based on OECD definitions').

The Research Integrity Officer is a senior academic researcher appointed by the RIA. In cases where s/he has a conflict of interest in relation to the complaint, or is the subject of the complaint, or cannot act for some other reason, an ad hoc Research Integrity Officer shall be appointed.

1. Process

In the event of the research integrity of a project or individual researcher being called into question, the Research Integrity Officer shall conduct an investigation into the matter in the following manner.

- 1.1. The parties involved in the procedure must ensure that any interests they may have which might constitute a conflict of interest are disclosed and managed in line with the RIA's Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment policy.
- 1.2. Any researcher, individual or external body wishing to report an act of research misconduct should contact the Research Integrity Officer.
- 1.3. The Research Integrity Officer shall request that any such report be put in writing, and will normally acknowledge receipt within five working days.
- 1.4. Detailed and confidential records shall be maintained by the Research Integrity Officer on all aspects of the procedure.
- 1.5. The individual against whom a formal complaint has been raised has the right to be informed and the right to reply.
- 1.6. Unless and until the contrary is proven, a person accused of research misconduct will be presumed to be innocent.
- 1.7. The Research Integrity Officer may choose to conduct a preliminary review of complaints received, depending on the seriousness of the issues, the credibility of the complaint, and the feasibility of confirming the complaint with credible sources. She/He may consult with an expert or experts in the relevant field(s) of science.
- 1.8. The Research Integrity Officer shall on a confidential basis, insofar as is possible, consult with an Officer of the Academy, with due regard for gender balance. They may opt to consult with an expert or experts in the relevant field(s) of science. The preliminary review will be conducted in a timely manner, normally within 14 working days. The principles of natural justice will be applied at all stages.
- 1.9. The preliminary review shall be limited to determining whether the evidence of research misconduct is such that the Research Integrity Officer should refer the matter for consideration under a formal process. The identity of the Respondent is confidential to the Research Integrity Officer and to the individuals s/he has consulted
- 1.10. Following the preliminary review, if the Research Integrity Officer and the Officer of the Academy consulted determine that further investigation is not required, the matter may be dismissed or passed to the appropriate Officer to be addressed as appropriate. The complainant will be notified that the complaint has been received and dismissed.

1.11. If, following the preliminary review, the Research Integrity Officer and the Officer of the Academy consulted conclude that the complaint may give rise to a concern, the Research Integrity Officer shall refer the complaint to HR to be investigated in accordance with the applicable RIA policy and procedure.

1.12. The Research Integrity Officer will notify the complainant, advising that the matter has been referred for consideration under RIA policy.

1.13. If a complaint or allegation of research misconduct is made against a person who, at the time of the complaint or allegation, is not a serving staff member or whose retirement/resignation from the RIA occurred more than three months earlier, the Research Integrity Officer may conduct a preliminary review, in a timely manner. If, following the review, the Research Integrity Officer considers that there is evidence of research misconduct s/he may, following consultation with an Officer of the RIA: a) advise the complainant to contact an institution of which the person who is complained about is a member; b) notify other institutions or entities that have a legitimate, material interest in the outcome of the matter.

1.14. No person should suffer penalty for making an allegation of research misconduct in good faith. However, if the Research Integrity Officer concludes that a complaint is frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious, s/he may recommend that action be taken against the complainant under the appropriate disciplinary procedure. In the case of such a complaint being made by a person who is not a serving staff member or whose retirement/resignation from the RIA occurred more than three months earlier, the Research Integrity Officer may refer the matter to the institution to which the complainant is attached.

1.15. There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Research Integrity Officer under this paragraph 1, since it refers to preliminary procedures only. Respondents have rights of response and appeal under the appropriate RIA procedures in the event that further investigation is undertaken.

2. Responsibility

2.1. It is the responsibility of the President, Council, Officers, Vice-Presidents and senior staff of the RIA, to maintain a research environment that promotes a culture of research integrity and mutual cooperation.

2.2. Researchers are expected to keep themselves informed of, and to comply with, all relevant requirements of RIA and national research integrity policy. They have a responsibility to report any perceived breach of the Research Code, provided that there are clear grounds for concern.