Good Research Conduct and Research Integrity

NERC (in line with UKRI) requires its funded researchers (both those employed by NERC in its Research Centres and those employed by other organisations but funded from NERC grants) to observe the highest standards of research integrity. UKRI is considering the need for new research integrity policies, but in the meanwhile, the RCUK Policy still applies to NERC.

The RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct aims to help researchers and research organisations to manage their research to the highest standards, and provides guidance on the reporting and investigation of unacceptable research conduct.

The RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct is set in the context of the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, which RCUK signed in July 2012, and should be read in conjunction with the Concordat. The RCUK Policy and Guidelines and the Concordat are available via the UKRI website.

As a signatory to the Concordat, RCUK is committed to producing an annual narrative statement on research integrity. These are available on the UKRI website.

NERC, as an employer of researchers, is required under the terms of the Concordat to publish its own annual narrative statement. These have been agreed by the NERC Management Board and are below:

NERC Report 2017/18

As a publically funded body, we have a responsibility not just to our staff, grant holders and partners, but to society. By acting with the highest standards across all our operations, we build on our public mandate to deliver excellent science. We recognise and comply will all relevant legislation, including minimising environmental impact and promoting equality and diversity. We aim to go beyond what is required and in May 2016 NERC launched its first Corporate Responsibility (CR) Statement ‘Responsible Business’.

The Statement sets-out four priority areas:
1) Environment: Living our values in the environment in which we work.
2) Transparency: Transparent business practices, with partners that share our values.
3) Community and work place: Engaging and supporting our community, internally and locally.
4) Standards: Research with integrity, carried out by a diverse, representative and outstanding body of researchers.

Under the ‘Standards’ priority area we are committed to carrying out research to the highest standards, with integrity, and by a diverse, representative and outstanding body of researchers. NERC recognises and embraces its responsibility to promote ethical behaviour and good conduct in research. We will embed this in our funding mechanisms, and exemplify this aim in the way we interact with our research community. Together with our sister research councils and the UK research community more broadly, we are committed to national leadership in this area, identifying, articulating and implementing best practice.
Since 1 January 2014, there is now a harmonised Research Council policy on “Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research” which applies to NERC and which is held on the Oracle Knowledge Base, accessible by all staff. NERC is content that this policy meets its needs. Additionally, Research Centres also cover Research Misconduct is also covered by NERC’s Research Centres as part of their induction programmes for new staff. There were no allegations of misconduct in research that were investigated under this policy in 2017/18.

NERC Report 2016/17

Since 1 January 2014, there is now a harmonised Research Council policy on “Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research” which applies to NERC and which is held on the Oracle Knowledge Base, accessible by all staff. NERC is content that this policy meets its needs. Additionally, Research Misconduct is also covered by NERC’s Research Centres as part of their induction programmes for new staff. There were no allegations of misconduct in research that were investigated under this policy in 2016/17.

NERC Report 2015/16

Since 1 January 2014, there is now a harmonised Research Council policy on “Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research” which applies to NERC and which is held on the Oracle Knowledge Base, accessible by all staff. NERC is content that this policy meets its needs. Additionally, Research Misconduct is also covered by NERC’s Research Centres as part of their induction programmes for new staff. There was one allegation of misconduct in research that was investigated under this policy in 2015/16. The allegation was not upheld.

NERC Report 2014/15

Since 1 January 2014, there is now a harmonised Research Council policy on “Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research” which applies to NERC and which is held on the Oracle Knowledge Base, accessible by all staff. NERC is content that this policy meets its needs. There were no cases involving breach of the policy in 2014/2015.

NERC Report 2013/14

Since 1 January 2014, there is now a harmonised Research Council policy on “Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research” which applies to NERC and which is held on the Oracle Knowledge Base, accessible by all staff. NERC is content that this policy meets its needs. There were no cases involving breach of the policy in 2013/2014. In line with the general direction of travel of harmonisation of policies across Research Councils, NERC’s Ethics Policy will also be the subject of review at a future point in time to be agreed, but likely to be 15/16.

Concerns relating to the conduct of NERC-funded research or researchers should be directed to:

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