

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2022

1 Introduction.

This report outlines the work across the academic year 1st August 2022 – 31st July 2022

1.1 *The Concordat and the School.*

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, is fully committed to the spirit and substance of the *Concordat for Research Integrity*. The concordat is designed to help institutions continue to further embed research integrity into their activities. The concordat is formed of 5 commitments. In line with the concordat, Central commits to:

- maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research, which means maintaining honesty and rigour, transparent and open communication, and care and respect.
- ensure research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
- support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers. This includes clear policies and procedures, training and development opportunities for researchers, management systems to ensure policies are implemented, awareness of appropriate behaviour of researchers and systems to intervene at an early stage where researchers require support.
- use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
- work together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.
- foster an environment of robust debate and engagement with research ethics and integrity.

1.2 *The School's policy and procedures in relation to research integrity.*

The School's commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of the *Concordat's* intentions can be traced through its policies and procedures, principally through:

- The Research Ethics and Integrity Handbook.
- The School's Strategic Plan.
- Ethical Policy Framework.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Standards of Professional Conduct Policy.
- Academic Strategy.
- Handbook for Supervisors of Research Degrees Candidates.
- Research Degrees Programme Code of Practice and Specification.
- Research Degrees course documentation.
- Research Handbook.

1.3 Activities.

The commitments to the enhancement of research integrity are not only present in policy, but are also embedded through the cycles of training, development and enhancement, including:

- Staff training and development.
- Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) training and development.
- The Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (REISC), which reports to Research Committee, Academic Board and The Governing Body.
- The Research Committee.
- Reporting lines to the Governing Body.
- Regular review of policies and procedures.
- Visiting Research Fellows, where appropriate.

2 Developments and activities for 2021-22

Developments for the year under review are determined by the agreed planned activities expressed in the previous report.

2.1 Training for all research-active staff.

In March 2020, the Chair and Secretary of the Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee delivered training on research ethics and integrity which was made available to all research active staff as part of the School's Staff Development Programme. The Chair and Secretary also delivered training to postgraduate researchers as part of the annual postgraduate research training provision. The Chair also delivered training to Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Committee members (as well as members from CUK Institutional Research Ethics Committees) and a training seminar for the UK Research Integrity Office. The Chair of the REISC also delivered an on-line session for the UK Research Integrity Office on research ethics in practice research. The Vice Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) and the Chair of REISC have also contributed to discussions on ethics and integrity as part of the CUK Research Forum. A staff member was also invited to be part of the Accountability for Research Integrity Workshops run by UK CORI in March 2022. In this way, training activity was not only zoned inside Central, but also outside in its wider networks. Training activity is ongoing. The Vice Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) and the Chair of REISC meet regularly – at least fortnightly to discuss matters relating to Research and Integrity and both ensure that sector developments feed into Research Committee and REISC. The Chair of the REISC contributed to the development of a report explore research integrity indicators produced with the Institute for Cancer Research, GuildHE and UKRI.

2.2 Ethics beyond Research Ethics.

It is important to note that all research training sessions delivered by staff at Central start from wider discussions and explorations of research ethics and integrity. The Chair of the REISC also chaired the Executive Management Group Working Party to review the schools approach to the

Ethics Framework Policy. The Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee contributed to the draft statement of intent for the School's overall Ethics Framework, as follows:

At Central we approach ethics as an important part of our context, culture and environment. Ethics reaches into every area of the School and its business. We see ethics as a set of principles, practices and behaviours that focus on honesty and integrity in our actions as individuals and as a community. We do this through a commitment to social responsibility, transparency, doing no harm, informed consent and by acting in the interests of others. A healthy ethical environment is one where we constantly are open to learning how to do ethics better and to develop Central's values, which underpin the academic and professional integrity of the School.

2.3 Equality Impact Assessment of Research Ethics and Integrity Processes.

During the year under review, EIA activity was made up of various initiatives, including the subcommittee discussing the accessibility of the guidance and handbooks and extending this discussion into committee membership, which will be under review in the coming year. Additionally, as part of the standing item reviewing the ethics application forms, the subcommittee changed the wording of the form in the light of the expression of an ethics prompt question resonating negatively with members of the Central community. The activity of the subcommittee for the coming year as laid out below will focus on developing more accessible forms (that will also potentially help streamline the processes of applying for ethics clearance).

2.4 UKRI Committee on Research Integrity

At the end of the year under review, we watched with interest the developments of the UK Committee on Research Integrity (CORI). Our Vice Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange sits on the committee and other members of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee have met members of UK CORI to talk about research ethics and integrity in small and specialist, and monotechnic, institutions.

3 Data (to be added before the final date)

Applications Received Between 1st August 2022 – 31st July 2022

Staff:

Received	Low Risk	Full	Number to CUK
11	11	0	0

Postgraduate Research Students:

All Postgraduate Research Students are expected to submit to the Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Committee for review

Received	Low Risk	Full	Number to CUK
2	2	0	2

Taught Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students:

Low Risk Received	Low Risk, number to REISC	Full	Number to CUK
23	0	0	0

In addition, the Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee managed 18 applications from Conservatoires UK.

4 Research Misconduct

4.1 Reports of misconduct.

Details of research misconduct investigations¹:

	Number of formal investigations completed			Number of allegations upheld (in whole or part)		
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Fabrication	0	0	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	1	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Breach of duty of care	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Details of any allegations upheld in part	0	0	0	0	0	0

5 Planned Developments 2022-23.

In line with current practice, we will continue to engage with materials published by external organisations that examine and report on UK research ethics and integrity, including Universities UK (UUK), UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) and appropriate international sources and developments.

5.1 Committee Membership

A number of REISC members are leaving at the end of 2021-23 which provides a good opportunity to consider the membership of the subcommittee. The new membership of REISC was agreed in August 2022.

5.2 Review and improve the recording of taught students data

We want to track more carefully how taught students are engaging with ethics process, working with the Programmes Office to better improve how data for taught students applications for ethics review. This will also involve an audit of the current data being collected from course leaders in order to understand better the needs of staff members in supporting taught students with research ethics and integrity.

5.3 Develop all staff training on research ethics and integrity

We believe it is important that training around research ethics and integrity is available to all staff members on an annual basis. This year, this training should also be closely connected to how staff members are enabled to support taught students in relation to research ethics and integrity (in light of the planned developments outlined in 5.2).

5.4 Review the usability of the Research Ethics and Integrity Handbook and Ethics Review Forms

In the context of accessibility, version control and usefulness of forms, we will explore online versions of the Ethics Review Forms. We will explore alternative ways of displaying the information in the Research and Integrity Handbook, to make this more accessible and user friendly.

Approved by: Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee

Approved by: Research Committee

Received by: Academic Board: 12th October 2022

Received by: Board of Governors