

Template: 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	Royal Academy of Music
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	24 June 2024
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	About Research Royal Academy of Music (ram.ac.uk) Research strategy, policies and ethics Royal Academy of Music (ram.ac.uk)
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Timothy Jones
	Email address: t.jones@ram.ac.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: Dr Cydonie Banting
	Email address: cbanting@ram.ac.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

Policies and systems

The core principles of Research Integrity and Ethics are built into the fabric of the Royal Academy of Music's ('Academy') current systems and culture, reflected in institutional policies drawn principally from the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2012, revised 2019):

- Guide to Good Research Practice;
- Research Ethics Policy;
- Open Access Policy.

As a single subject institution focused on the pre-professional training of musicians at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, responsible research practice at the Academy amongst staff and students sits within a broad strategic context of integration into the conservatoire environment as a whole. Practice/Artistic Research of the highest integrity filters from researchers through to students via their teaching, creating a thriving community of responsible musicians.

Research Ethics is overseen by the Academy's Research Ethics Committee. All research involving human participants, personal data, or risk by addressing highly sensitive topics, conducted by Academy researchers or involving participants who are Academy students, must be reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee before data gathering commences. Applications for ethical approval are made by completing a Research Ethics Approval Form. Under standard operating procedures, those that satisfy the low risk criteria undergo a shorter, streamlined approval process, whereas full applications require a lengthier, more extensive review process.

The Academy's Research Ethics Committee is a subcommittee responsible to Research Committee. The outcomes of research ethics review applications are reported to the next Research Committee

meeting as a rolling agenda item. Appeals against the decision of the Research Ethics Committee can be made in writing to the Chair of Research Committee. Further, for applications of particular complexity, the full expertise of Research Committee can be consulted by the Research Ethics Committee, in addition to that of the Conservatoires UK (CUK) Research Ethics Committee, an external body representing 11 conservatoires on which two Academy staff members currently sit (one academic and one professional services).

Membership of Research Committee is drawn widely from across the Academy to encourage a broad variety of perspectives and input, including senior management, researchers, and professional services staff. Research Committee is responsible for Research Integrity more broadly and accountable to Academic Board, which is ultimately reports to Governing Body. But the constitution and operation of the Research Ethics Committee is kept distinct from institutional governance via the above structure to ensure that operational considerations such as corporate image or other institutional protections are separate from the practice of the Research Ethics Committee.

Allegations of research misconduct can be received from both internal and external complainants through a variety of channels (see section 3A). These are investigated under the Academy's Discipline and Appeal Policy, which situates and embeds the wider institutional ethos of responsible research practice within standards of discipline and performance that are applicable to all employees in the conduct of Academy affairs.

Culture, development and leadership

The Academy's policies and systems help to foster and maintain its institutional culture of honesty, accountability, fairness, respect, rigour, and accountability in all areas of research integrity, including intellectual property, conflicts of interest, data protection, staff development, and health, safety and assessment of risk.

The Academy's approach to Research Integrity and Ethics is underpinned in leadership terms by its Research Strategy, developed during the 2023-24 academic year in response to the draft 2024 institutional Strategic Plan. Seven strategic aims support the administration, management, and governance of the institutional research environment: (1) Improve the visibility and communication of research, (2) Increase capacity for research and the quality of research output, (3) Align research with institutional priorities of Belonging, (4) Maximise external research income, (5) Support and enable research impact, (6) Encourage collaboration in research and (7) Develop and formalise research governance. Research Integrity and Ethics work straddles many of the strategic aims above, to be addressed through a range of deliverables which are reviewed annually by Research Committee.

Any changes to formal policy are overseen by the Deputy Principal (the Director of Research), whose institutional leadership and overall responsibility for research integrity is discharged via the tiered committee structure outlined above that reports into Academic Board and Governing Body. Academic Board includes representation from across the Academy, with staff and students alongside ex officio senior management.

Communications and engagement

The Academy operates a holistic and layered approach to communication and engagement with staff and students on matters of Research Integrity and Ethics. The Deputy Principal convenes termly Research Committee meetings and in the intervening periods liaises directly with a variety of stakeholders including programme leaders, the Research Management Team (made up of three senior academic staff) and Research Office (made up of two professional services staff). Information is then disseminated via appropriate channels to staff and students, often through the Research Office.

Communication strategies of the Research Office include maintaining an up-to-date SharePoint intranet page with policy resources accessible to all staff and students; delivering termly training sessions for staff; undertaking an annual review of policies through Research Committee; promoting the active engagement of staff with policy and resource development via Research Committee feedback; and delivering presentations to the PhD cohort at the beginning of each academic year, introducing the Research Office and its remit, including governance, integrity and ethics.

Student Union President and PhD student representation on Research Committee ensures a route for incorporating student insight and communicating outwards the Academy's strong values-based approach to research integrity. Students, including those on taught programmes, are required to submit an ethics approval application for any research that falls within the scope of the Research Ethics Policy. Integrity and ethics review is included within research skills training for students on taught programmes and assistance in completing the ethics review form is provided by research project supervisors and course leaders of research modules. This affirms awareness of the ethical implications of research work amongst the student cohort through course design and structure.

Research staff engagement on matters of integrity and ethics is encouraged via the Research Office, through individual meetings, feedback at termly training events, or responses to Research Office resources produced (such as its SharePoint intranet area). In this work, the Academy's status as a small specialist institution supporting researchers in a single subject discipline greatly assists, allowing routes for direct involvement in matters of research integrity that help to shape, and are shaped by, the wider institutional ethos.

Other mechanisms for feedback from the Academy's broader cohort of teaching-only staff are via Q&A time in regular Town Hall meetings and through staff consultation sessions for the Third Century Plan (following the Academy's bicentenary in 2022), within which issues of research and good research practice are integral to the workings of Higher Education.

Monitoring and reporting

Research Committee acts as the oversight committee of the Research Ethics Committee, with devolved authority for the review of staff and students' research. Summary details of all reviewed research projects and outcomes are retained for institutional reporting and audit. Academic Board is the parent committee of Research Committee through which reporting filters.

An Annual Monitoring Report incorporating an overview of institutional research activity and an action plan for the next academic year is provided by the Research Office to Standing Committee for consideration by the Board of Governors.

Direct lines of reporting mean that research integrity issues are dealt with at the appropriate level, via the most suitable policy or system, with potential or actual breaches documented and investigated.

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.

In the period under review, the academic year 2023-24, the Academy has implemented significant enhancements to its Research Integrity and Ethics infrastructure. The development of a Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook for implementation from 2024-25 to replace the Guide to Good Research Practice and Research Ethics Policy has been the locus for a major review and revision of the practices and procedures that support staff and students in ethical research conduct. The Handbook provides new guidance on matters of research integrity, particularly that relate to Practice/Artistic Research in music, including collaboration and co-production in research and intellectual property, and understanding different participant roles in complex artistic interactions. Written primarily for a staff readership, its contents will be communicated in appropriate formats to students via course convenors and research supervisors.

Firstly, the constituency of Research Ethics Committee has been updated. From the academic year 2024-25, membership will be expanded to include a greater range of representation and experiences. It will include the Chair (a senior member of teaching staff and member of Research Committee but not a member of the Research Management Team), plus a secretary, a senior member of teaching staff with research experience, teaching staff with research experience from at least two different departments, and one member of non-teaching staff with a student-facing role (e.g. from Department Administrators, Registry or Concerts Office). Such diverse expertise is crucial to process of ethical review, and promoting participation in Committees is an important and growing strand of professional development at the Academy.

Secondly, the operating procedures of Research Ethics Committee have been updated. From the academic year 2024-25, full ethics applications will be reviewed by four members of the Committee, selected by the Chair, to achieve a better balance of reviewers and maintain the principle of competence. A clearer timeframe for the ethical review process has been established, and

assessment of full ethics applications will normally be completed within four weeks of submission. Committee members will abstain from the review process if they identify conflicts of interest.

Thirdly, a programme of ethics training for Research Ethics Committee members is being developed. From the academic year 2024-25, the Chair of Research Ethics Committee will be responsible for formulating training which includes awareness of sector wide principles, example ethical issues likely requiring consideration, and the administrative process of conducting Research Ethics Committee business. Reviewers will be better prepared to offer recommendations and feedback to applicants on the basis that ethical decisions were made. Training will be ongoing, reviewed annually, and form a central part of Committee meetings, which may draw upon additional internal (Research Committee) or external (CUK Research Ethics Committee) expertise.

Fourthly, monitoring and reporting by Research Ethics Committee has been strengthened. For the 2024-25 academic year and beyond, an annual report containing statistics and broad discussion of the decisions of the Research Ethics Committee will be made to Research Committee.

Further to the production of a Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook, the Academy set up a Research Office in April 2023 as a new managerial and administrative support function for the research environment. This has centralised a previously more dispersed model for research integrity and positive research culture by providing a more accessible focal point for oversight, management, training, and guidance of researchers throughout the institution.

In the period under review, the academic year 2023-24, the Research Office has established itself and begun a series of initiatives to promote good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers. Termly training in research culture activities have so far included a Research Office Launch Event and Practice/Artistic Research event involving expert guest speakers. Planned upcoming sessions in 2023-24 include training on Research Impact and an introduction to the Research Catalogue database. A future session on Research Integrity and Ethics is intended for 2024-25. The Research Office has increased support for researchers when writing external funding applications, which include consideration of Ethics and Responsible Research Innovation (RRI), through tailored 1:1 feedback. The formalisation of internal processes that support research activity, such as hosting public research events, making recordings or organising practice-led workshops, has also raised awareness of Research Integrity and Ethics issues amongst the staff and student population.

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.

The major revision of policies, practices and procedures undertaken in 2023-24 that support Academy staff and students in ethical research conduct (see section 2B) will be tested and monitored in practice during their implementation in 2024-25. As part of this process, the Research Office will complete a review of all new systems using the UK Research Integrity Office's Concordat Self-Assessment Tool ([Concordat Self-Assessment Tool - UK Research Integrity Office \(ukrio.org\)](https://www.ukrio.org/concordat-self-assessment-tool)).

Once the functioning of all new systems has undergone such evaluation, levels of engagement by staff members will be analysed, to help target the development of training and mentoring opportunities, including on Research Integrity and Ethics, to particular points in researchers' careers. Initiatives for early career researchers to help bridge the gap between PhD students completing doctoral study at the Academy and their entry into the academic sector will be explored, alongside the viability of a formal mechanism for transferal between 'teaching only' and 'teaching and research' contracts. This will aid in the development of a sustainable staffing strategy that connects research activity with staff reward and advancement, to foster a positive research culture and ensure a fair basis for participation within the Academy's broader Belonging agenda.

Other areas for strategic improvement include:

- Reviewing the Open Access Policy and its links to ethical research practices in the conservatoire context;
- More work on understanding and communicating issues of Research Integrity and Ethics in the arts and humanities amongst staff and students by drawing insights from research networks, including via CUK and University of London partners;
- Exploring the coordination of Research Office activities in Research Integrity and Ethics with Knowledge Exchange where appropriate;
- Monitoring how Research Integrity and Ethics activities may be affected by AI and surrounding institutional policy, by working closely with Research Committee to keep informed of sector developments and implement appropriate governance;
- Engagement with HR to incorporate the presence of Research Integrity and Ethics issues in staff induction processes, and consider whether a specific Research Misconduct Policy may promote further awareness of integrity;
- Exploring options for external peer review of how Academy Research Integrity and Ethics processes are designed;
- Grow ethics and training procedures embedded within taught programmes, particularly at the MMus level.

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.

Not applicable.

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.

Allegations of research misconduct can be received from both internal and external complainants through a variety of channels. This includes reporting via whistleblowing, HR, line management structures, or any other route through which concerns are raised. The Academy does not currently have a specific policy for handling research misconduct. Rather, all allegations are investigated under the provisions of the Discipline and Appeal Policy (August 2021), where: "Rules set standards of conduct and performance at work; procedures help ensure that the standards are adhered to and also provide a fair method of dealing with alleged failures to observe them."

Minor issues are dealt with informally by the employee's immediate manager in a private, informal meeting. Confidential written records of the issue are kept, including the nature of the allegations, agreed outcome(s), actions taken and timescales. Where a matter of research misconduct may be more serious but falls short of constituting good cause for dismissal, the standard procedure applies, involving a written statement of grounds for action and invitation to a meeting. Depending on the outcome of the disciplinary procedure, some form of disciplinary action may be taken.

The Discipline and Appeal Policy is available on the Academy's intranet and signposted in section 4.2 of the new Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook, currently undergoing approval via Academic Board and due for internal circulation and upload to the Research Office SharePoint

resource in September 2024. Once approved, the Handbook will also be uploaded to the 'Research Strategy, Policies and Ethics' page of the Academy website, replacing the Guide to Good Research Practice and Research Ethics Policy: [Research strategy, policies and ethics | Royal Academy of Music \(ram.ac.uk\)](https://www.ram.ac.uk/research-strategy-policies-and-ethics).

The Discipline and Appeal Policy is supported by a set of complementary institution-wide policies applicable to all Academy staff and directs readers to other relevant areas, such as:

- Conflicts of Interests Policy (approved September 2022, due for review September 2025)
- Dignity at Work Policy (approved 2020, due for review 2024)
- Data Protection Policy (approved February 2023, due for review 2025)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (approved October 2020, due for review 2024)
- Ethics and Conduct Policy (approved September 2019, due for review 2024)
- Financial Procedures and Fraud Policy (approved May 2021, due for review 2024)
- Health and Safety Policy (approved November 2022, due for review September 2024)
- Open Access Policy (approved April 2022, due for review in 2024)
- Safeguarding Policy (approved June 2022, due for review May 2025)
- Whistleblowing Policy (approved April 2021, due for review September 2024)

The Academy's small scale means that instances of research misconduct or breaches of research integrity and ethics are rare. Thus, opportunities to test processes within the conservatoire environment are more limited.

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.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:				

***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.**

Not applicable.