Template: annual statement on research integrity

If you have any questions about this template, please contact: RIsecretariat@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)	17 November 2025
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 research policies drawn principally from the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2012, revised 2019 and 2025):

- Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook
- Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook Appendices

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. Research of the highest integrity that supports the institutional mission filters from research staff through to students via their teaching, creating a thriving community of responsible musicians. In tandem, the Research Office provides managerial and administrative support for the research environment. It helps research staff and students to develop collaborations, projects, funding applications, policies and training at the Academy. This has centralised a previously more dispersed model for research integrity by providing an accessible focal point for the encouragement, oversight, management, training and guidance of researchers throughout the institution. The

Academy's 2024-25 annual statement on research integrity builds upon the 2023-24 text to provide an updated picture of its research culture.

Research Ethics is overseen by the Academy's 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 Ethics Committee before data gathering commences. Ethical review applications are made by completing the Research Ethics Review Form contained within the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook Appendices. 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, including detailed explanation on a separate sheet and, where appropriate, a risk management plan.

The Academy's Ethics Committee is a subcommittee responsible to Research Committee for all matters related to research. 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 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 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 Ethics Committee is drawn widely from across the Academy to encourage a broad variety of perspectives and input:

> OFFICERS
> Chair: a senior member of teaching staff and member of Research Committee, but not a member of the Research Management Team
> Deputy Chair: a senior member of teaching staff with research experience
> Secretary: a member of the Academic Secretariate or Research Office
> EX OFFICIO
> Research Manager
> APPOINTED
> Three members of teaching staff with research experience from at least two different departments
> One member of non-teaching staff with a student-facing role (e.g. Department Administrator, Registry, Orchestral office)
> CO-OPTED
> External specialists as required

Such diverse expertise is crucial to the process of ethical review, and promoting participation in Committees remains an important and growing strand of professional development at the Academy.

Membership of Research Committee is likewise 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 ultimately reports to Governing Body. But the constitution and operation of 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 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, rigour, transparency, open communication, care, respect, fairness, and accountability in all areas of research integrity, including:

- Artificial intelligence (particularly AI informed transcription tools)
- Confidentiality and anonymity in data sets
- Data monitoring, encryption and storage protocols
- Environmental implications of research project design
- Fair distribution of resources and benefits
- Informed consent
- Methodological ethics
- Ownership and authorship
- Participant experience and vulnerable groups
- Rationale for the research
- Risk and potential harm
- Health and safety
- Staff development

Promoting a positive research culture is a multidirectional process at the Academy, for it is the responsibility of individual practitioners to uphold ethical practices in their professional work, meanwhile it is the responsibility of institutions and

organisations to set research standards, communicate them effectively, and provide support to ensure that research integrity and ethics protocols are met.

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 institutional 2023-2026 Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan | Royal Academy of Music). Seven strategic aims in the Research Strategy 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, 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, multidimensional 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 up-to-date Research web pages (Research | Royal Academy of Music) for use by all staff and students and external audiences; maintaining an up-to-date Research Office SharePoint site with policy resources accessible to all staff and students; delivering termly training sessions for staff, and, where appropriate, doctoral students; circulating termly research newsletters to all staff and students; undertaking an annual review of policies through Research Committee; promoting the active engagement of staff with policy and resource development via Research Committee or Research Office feedback; 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; and embedding research integrity and ethics training into doctoral supervision.

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, particularly the MMus, are required to submit a Research Ethics Review application for any research that falls within the scope of issues addressed by the Academy's Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook. Integrity and ethics review is included within research skills training for students on taught programmes. Assistance in completing the Research Ethics Review application form (contained in the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook Appendices) is provided by research project supervisors and course leaders of research modules, or where appropriate the Research Office. 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 1:1 meetings, feedback at termly training events, or in response to Research Office resources produced (such as its SharePoint site). In this work, the Academy's status as a small specialist institution supporting researchers in a single subject discipline greatly assists, allowing routes for more direct involvement and engagement by staff and students in matters of research integrity that help to shape, and are shaped by, the wider institutional ethos.

Other mechanisms or routes for feedback from the Academy's broader cohort of teaching-only staff could be via Q&A time in regular Town Hall meetings or by other departments contacting the Research Office with queries, as issues of research and good research practice are integral to the overall workings of Higher Education.

Monitoring and reporting

Research Committee acts as the oversight committee of Ethics Committee, with devolved authority for the review of staff and students' research. An annual report containing statistics and broad discussion of the decisions of the Ethics Committee is made to the Research Committee. Summary details of reviewed research projects and outcomes are retained for institutional reporting and audit, and, subject to confidentially and security requirements, can be made available for public scrutiny through the Freedom of Information process. 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 (see section 3).

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 2024-25, the Academy implemented significant enhancements to its research integrity and ethics infrastructure. At the core of this work was the new Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook, designed in 2023-24 but which became operational from September 2024 (replacing the previous Guide to Good Research Practice and Research Ethics Policy). It was updated midway through the academic year under review to draw upon the latest guidance from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and the 2025 *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (Concordat). The Academy also became a subscriber to UKRIO in January 2025, providing a suite of resources for research staff and students.

Changes made during 2024-25 thus represent the implementation and continuation of initiatives begun in 2023-24, as well as the development of other further new initiatives to promote good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers.

Policy
The Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook provides policy guidance on matters of research integrity and ethics, covering issues particular to Practice/Artistic research – including collaboration and co-production in research, intellectual property and understanding different participant roles in complex artistic interactions – and the wider historical and sectoral context. As part of these improvements, the constituency of Ethics Committee now includes a greater range of representation,

with tighter operating procedures to achieve a better balance of reviewers and maintain the principle of competence.

The Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook was designed in 2023-24, then tested and monitored in practice during its implementation in 2024-25. This process led to the issue of a version 2 in March 2025, to provide clarity on any aspects of confusion (such as language or signposting of information) identified through user feedback and was supplemented with additional guidance in light of the 2025 Concordat. The Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook and updated iterations were communicated in a range of appropriate formats to target specific audiences: (1) on the Academy website for access by staff, students and external applicants (Research strategy, policies and ethics | Royal Academy of Music), (2) via the Research Office SharePoint site, (3) through introduction of the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook at a training event on the theme of research integrity and ethics for staff and doctoral students, (4) via presentation by the Chair of Ethics Committee as part of the PhD seminar series, and (5) via course convenors and research supervisors as part of PhD and MMus mentoring.

Ethics is an area of growing importance and visibility within the broader contemporary conservatoire landscape. Indeed, the Academy is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in all activity across the organisation involving our staff and/or students. As part of annual review processes in 2024-25, ethics governance was looked at more holistically, cohering into three key strands across the Academy: research ethics, performance ethics, and academic module ethics. New policies and guidance were developed in relation to performance ethics and academic module ethics, for launch in the next academic year 2025-26, extending the remit of the Academy's Ethics Committee. Many of the recent developments in this space stem from growing regulatory oversight in research, which helpfully informs aspects of ethical consideration for academic modules and performance ethics. The Academy's broadening approach to ethical review is not there to prevent research, teaching or performances from taking place. Instead, it provides a framework to support all members of the Academy community, ensuring that such research, teaching or performances are conducted with honesty, rigour, transparency, care and accountability, in dialogue with sector wide conservatoire practices.

Training
In January 2025 the Academy joined UKRIO and from May rolled out its online training course, *Introduction to research integrity,* to staff with a Significant Responsibility for Research, doctoral students, interested research-active staff, Ethics Committee members, and professional services staff who support research.

The UKRIO training forms a particularly important part of the programme for Ethics Committee members to gain awareness of sector wide principles and example ethical issues that may require consideration. Understanding of the administrative process of conducting Ethics Committee business is gained through clear and regular communication by the Secretary, where much of the business of the Ethics Committee can be discharged using electronic communication. In-person meetings are then often reserved for enhancing aspects of the ethical review process and to provide training through discussion, drawn from internal (Research Committee) or external (CUK Research Ethics Committee) expertise and feedback on sector developments.

The UKRIO training for doctoral students complements existing dedicated training mechanisms channelled at the supervisor/supervisee level through mentorship embedded within Postgraduate Programmes.

Other ongoing termly training in research culture activities has so far included a Research Office Launch Event and seminars on Practice/Artistic Research, Research Impact, Environment and Social Governance in Research, and Research Integrity and Ethics. The latter, hosted in February 2025, was open to research staff, doctoral students and Ethics Committee members, where the Chair of Ethics Committee introduced the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook and a guest speaker from UKRIO presented on the sector landscape and considerations for arts and humanities research, with time for questions and staff engagement.

The Research Office continues to provide 1:1 tailored feedback for researchers preparing external funding applications, which include consideration of Ethics and Responsible Research Innovation (RRI). In the period under review, this process has been developed to include an internal peer review process to improve support where the substantive research area of the application lies outside the specialisms of the Research Office. Further, 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, through questions on the application forms prompting consideration.

<u>Monitoring and reporting</u>
Monitoring and reporting were strengthened in the major revision of policies, practices and procedures undertaken in 2023-24 now being implemented in practice in 2024-25. As a result, Ethics Committee will produce its first annual report (covering the 2024-25 academic year) for the autumn term 2025 Research Committee, to contain statistics and broad discussion of the decisions on ethical approval.

In January 2025, the Research Office began undertaking an institutional review using the UKRIO Concordat Self-Assessment Tool (Concordat Self-Assessment Tool - UK Research Integrity Office (ukrio.org)). This substantial piece of work is due to be completed by January 2026. The results will be shared with Research Committee in two phases: in autumn term 2025 and spring term 2026. A status indication (met, partially met, or not yet met) and corresponding evidence is mapped against each of the self-assessment questions to identify areas of strength and weakness in the Academy's research culture, with the aim that any recommendations for revisions to policy, procedures and guidance in light of its findings can being to be implemented in the 2026-27 academic year.

In the period under review, the Research Manager joined the Academy's Belonging Committee to support the fostering of a positive research culture within the Academy's broader Belonging agenda (Belonging | Royal Academy of Music) and joined the Environment and Social Governance (ESG) Committee to embed research into the Academy's ESG Strategy 2024/25-2026/27 (Environmental, Social and Governance | Royal Academy of Music). Consequently, the Research Office has begun data capture on staff travel for the purposes of research to establish a benchmark for the current position. As a growing facet of research integrity, reporting of ESG research related outcomes to Research Committee will enable the institution to monitor how sustainability has been taken account of in the Academy's overall research integrity strategy and activities.

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 Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook project in 2023-24 led to comprehensive amendments of the Academy's policies, training, reporting and monitoring systems that were implemented in the period under review, 2024-25. The functioning of these new systems across a full academic year of operation has enabled preliminary evaluation of engagement levels by research staff and students. The Academy is continuing to develop baseline data, but aims in 2025-26 to 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 continue to be explored, alongside the viability of a more formal mechanism for

transferal between 'teaching only' and 'teaching and research' contracts. This work is underway and feeds into longer-term strategic thinking on how research activity is connected with staff reward and advancement at the Academy.

Other areas for strategic improvement referenced in the 2023-24 annual research integrity statement include the following, with progress updates below each:

- Reviewing the Open Access Policy in light of concepts of open research in research integrity, in relation to the conservatoire context;
  - Deferred due to maternity leave in the Research Office, so will be undertaken in 2025-26.
- 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;
  - Started, ongoing, and has so far led to productive conservations around issues of research integrity and ethics as they pertain in particular to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029's People, Culture and Environment (PCE) statement.
- Exploring the coordination of Research Office activities in research integrity and ethics with Knowledge Exchange where appropriate;
  - Appointment of a Knowledge Exchange and Research Coordinator in the Research Office from April 2025, and is ongoing.
- 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;
  - Ongoing, and with reference to the Academy's AI Policy (2024).
- Engagement with HR to incorporate the presence of research integrity and ethics in staff induction processes, and consider whether a specific Research Misconduct process may promote further awareness of research integrity;
  - To be considered through the UKRIO self-assessment tool exercise conducted by the Research Office, as this topic has emerged from the phase 1 work undertaken in this area so far.
- Exploring options for external peer review of how Academy research integrity and ethics processes are designed;
  - Deferred until the success of current improvements put in place through the 2023-24 Handbook revisions can be fully understood at an internal level.
- Grow ethics and training procedures embedded within taught programmes, particularly at the MMus level.

Deferred due to maternity leave in the Research Office, so will form part of activities planned for 2025-26 in collaboration with Programme Heads.

The Academy's scale as specialist institution with a small Research Office means that fluctuations in staffing levels have the potential to alter timescales for the implementation of plans. Whilst progress in growing the Academy's research culture has been significant since 2023 in particular, the Research Office underwent a period of restructure in 2024-25 following maternity leave and the recruitment of a new role incorporating Knowledge Exchange. Future developments in the areas of research integrity and ethics will therefore focus on completing the deferred tasks listed above and continuing with those that are ongoing.

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's policy for research misconduct is that it is a disciplinary matter dealt with 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 HR intranet page and signposted in section 4.2 of the Research Integrity and Ethics Handbook. 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:

- AI Policy (approved November 2024, due for review September 2026)
- Conflicts of Interests Policy (approved September 2022, due for review September 2025)
- Dignity at Work Policy (approved October 2024, due for review October 2027)
- Data Protection Policy (approved March 2025, due for review March 2027)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (approved October 2020, due for review 2025)
- Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (approved June 2025, due for review June 2026)
- Financial Regulations Policy (approved March 2025, due for review 2028)
- Health and Safety Policy (approved October 2024, due for review 2026)
- Open Access Policy (approved April 2022, due for review in 2025 but deferred to 2026 due to maternity leave in the Research Office)
- Safeguarding Policy (approved July 2025, due for review July 2028)
- Whistleblowing Policy (approved March 2025, due for review September 2027)

The Academy's small scale means that instances of research misconduct or breaches of research integrity and ethics continue to be 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
Other*	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.				