

A gravel path winds through a dense forest of evergreen trees. In the foreground on the left, a wooden signpost with a blank sign stands on a grassy area with scattered rocks. The path leads into the distance, curving slightly to the right.

# Research Integrity: Crises and Culture

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# What do I mean by Research Integrity?

- The integrity of our published research findings – i.e. their trustworthiness.
- Underpinned by:
  - The integrity of the processes that went into creating those findings – i.e. their rigour
  - The integrity of those who created those findings – i.e. their honesty
  - The integrity of how the findings are presented – i.e. transparency and openness.
- Also acting with integrity in our relationships with others in the research process:
  - Care and respect for participants in and subjects of research
  - Honest presentation and recognition of the contributions of other researchers to a piece of research
  - Honesty and transparency with those who read our research




# Concordat to Support Research Integrity

- Revised in October 2019
- Expanded responsibilities and expectations for universities and researchers
- Stronger compliance and monitoring expectations



**Universities UK**



# What are we required to do?

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- Training and guidance
- Appropriate sources of advice and support
- Ethical review and misconduct investigations
- Regular review
- Build a research culture that encourages integrity

# What are we required to do?

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- Take personal responsibility for acting with integrity
- Understand expected standards
- Comply with ethical, legal and professional obligations
- Declare conflicts of interest
- Design, conduct and report research in ways that embed integrity throughout
- Collaborate to maintain a research culture that encourages integrity





## A Research Integrity Culture

“Researchers will ensure their own integrity and help to develop a culture of integrity in their groups, departments and institutions.”

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity  
(October, 2019)



Why Crises and Culture?



Research  
Misconduct: Bad  
actors and Bad  
Decisions

## Facilitators and Causes

Perverse incentives

Lack of oversight

Pressure

Fear

# Practical steps

## **Team leaders**

- Hold regular lab meetings and other opportunities to share data – many eyes
- Make it easy for lab members to admit mistakes and unacceptable to hide them – admit your own mistakes
- Be accessible or delegate

## **Researchers**

- Shared responsibilities
- Know your sources of help – and get help (colleagues, Department, me!)
- Create networks of advice and data sharing

# The dangers of disorderly files



## Causes

Lack of systems

Too busy

Assuming the best

Lack of skills

# Practical steps

- Use the University's Data Management guidance (<https://www.data.cam.ac.uk/>)
- Consider electronic lab notebooks
- Make it a shared, cultural approach – share best practice, set standards, no weak links.





Warring authors

# Causes

Lack of shared understanding

Lack of agreements

Failure to consult

Sudden changes

# Practical steps

Talk and explain

Talk and explain – set expectations.



Talk and review

Talk and review – make changes where necessary.



Talk and agree

Talk and agree – finalise authorship, ensuring all are aware of their responsibilities.

# School of Clinical Medicine Code of Practice on Authorship

The decision as to who shall be cited as an author shall be guided by the prevailing **ICMJE criteria**...:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

...the **Principal Investigator may choose to identify additional individuals who do not fully meet any one of these criteria**, but whose contributions across all three have provided essential support.

<https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/research/research-governance-information/useful-guidance-clinical-school-researchers/>

# A culture of research integrity

## To Summarise:

Not necessarily about 'imposing best practice' or 'telling people to be good'

### Actually about:

- A supportive environment
- Help where it is needed
- Interconnectedness
- Good established and rigorous processes
- Shared understandings
- Communication

Decreases the chance of a crisis

What does  
the University  
do?



Training



Central specialist advice



Support when things go wrong



Help for those seeking to innovate locally

# What is the University doing?



Expanding and improving training



Research Integrity Advisory Panel



Cultural review and action plans

# Questions?

What can we do to work together?