



**UKCORI**  
UK Committee on  
Research Integrity

# Strategic plan 2023 to 2025

November 2022 DRAFT for consultation

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# Preamble

UK research has an international reputation for its strength, creativity, and innovation. At a time when the relevance of research to society and the economy is widely recognised, continuing the UK's tradition of high calibre research requires a clear focus on research integrity.

UK research takes place in many types of organisations and encompasses diverse disciplines and approaches. Research structures, systems and processes are complex, and include those relating to funding, education and careers, publication, information sharing, governance and other aspects of regulation and assurance. Everyone within these complex and mature structures has a responsibility to support and enhance research integrity. Providing those working in the system with the opportunity to conduct research to high standards is key to enhanced research integrity and excellence.

The UK Committee on Research Integrity was established in 2022 with formal responsibility for promotion of research integrity across the UK. The Committee reaches across the research system, including higher education institutions; research institutes; research funders; and public, private and third sector organisations that include research-active organisations and publishers of research.

This strategic plan is the UK Committee on Research Integrity's first description of its scope, mission, vision, approach, and values. It outlines an understanding of what research integrity is, and the principles that underpin research integrity. The strategic plan covers the period from January 2023 to May 2025 (2 years and 4 months). As the UK Committee on Research Integrity progresses in its work, the plan will need to evolve. Therefore, the strategic plan will be reviewed annually.

# What is research integrity?

Research has integrity when it is carried out in a way that is trustworthy, ethical, and responsible

Research integrity is, therefore, about doing research that not only leads to results that people can trust and have confidence in but is carried out in an ethical manner with care and respect for those involved in the process.

When research is carried out with a high degree of integrity, other researchers, those who wish to apply the research, and members of the public have confidence in the results. While the nature of our understanding of the conclusion drawn from research may change in time, if the research was conducted with high integrity people will still feel able to trust the results as they were understood at the time.

## Principles of research integrity

The principles of research integrity we will be using to frame our work are taken from the Concordat to Support Research Integrity<sup>1</sup>. These principles are delivered by individuals, institutions, publishers, funders, and other stakeholders working together:

**Honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions, and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings

**Rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results

**Transparency and open communication** in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public

**Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record

**Accountability** of funders, employers, and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research should ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this concordat.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>

# Mission

The UK Committee on Research Integrity works across all research environments and disciplines to promote and strengthen research integrity throughout the UK, and in the UK's international research partnerships

# Vision

The UK Committee on Research Integrity's vision is that the UK's research system continues to be known for its high integrity, and in which research integrity

- 1) is **central** to all work and actions of all individuals, groups, and organisations in the research system
- 2) enhances and protects the **quality** of research
- 3) safeguards **confidence** in research

# Our approach: pillars

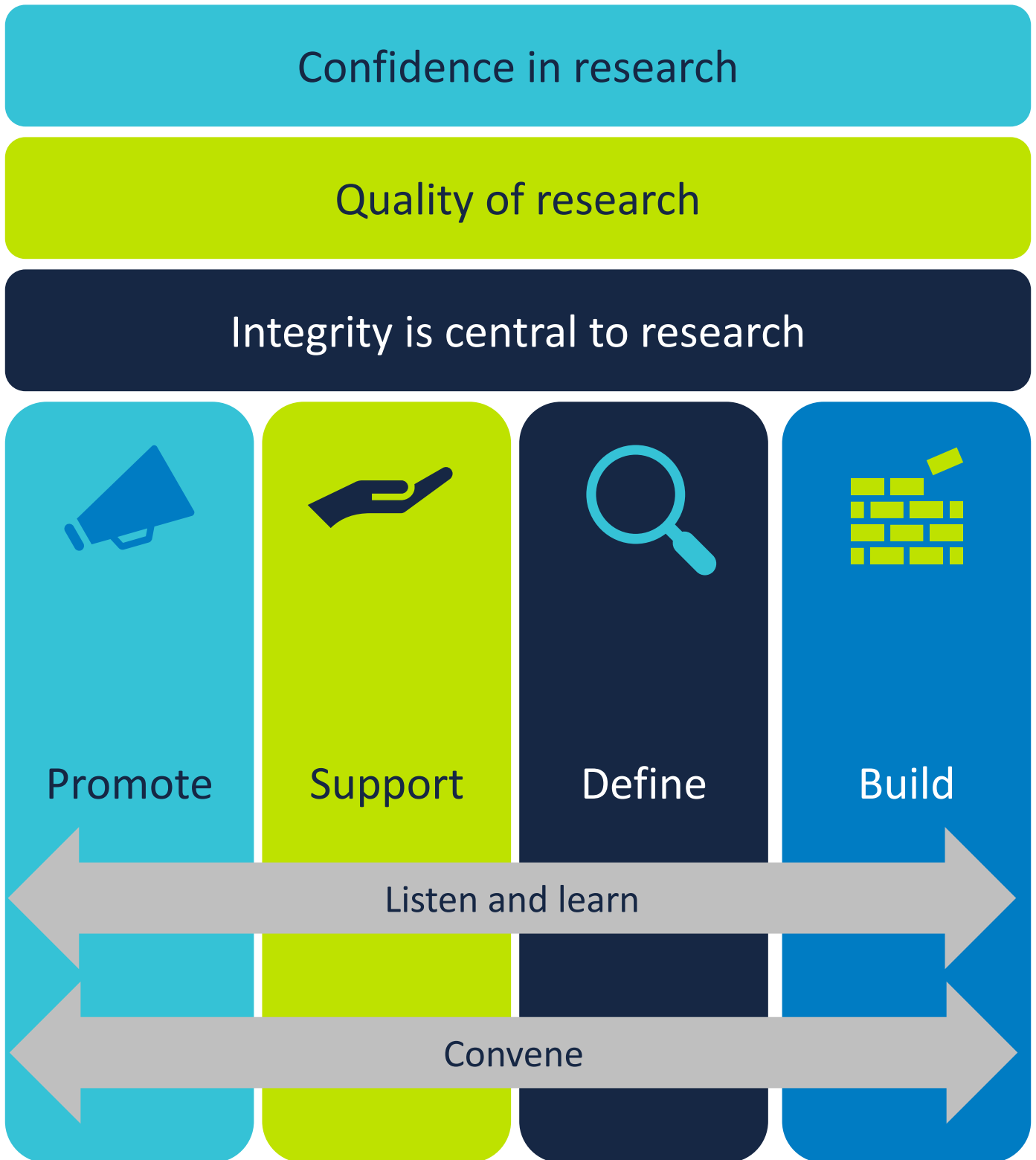
The UK Committee on Research Integrity is focused on four pillars of work:

- 1) Promote research integrity
- 2) Support research integrity
- 3) Define the evidence base
- 4) Build new directions

## Our approach: embedded ways of working

There are 2 approaches that are embedded across all 4 pillars; in particular, the UK Committee on Research Integrity will:

- 1) **Listen and learn** from individuals, groups, and organisations across the UK's research system so that the committee's work is well-informed by diverse views
- 2) **Convene** experts and groups across the system to support a unified approach to research integrity in the UK



UK Committee on Research Integrity strategic pillars

## Pillar 1: Promote research integrity

Promotion of research integrity involves identification, recognition, and amplification of good practice. Fostering collaboration, trust, sharing, continual development and learning will support high integrity. By embedding research integrity in existing systems and processes, it becomes a foundation on which excellent research is conducted.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Why we need to do this</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
Identify and amplify examples of good practice	To demonstrate the value of good practice	Engage across the research system and showcase evidence and practice in an annual report
Embed research integrity in discussions about research culture	To address principles of integrity in initiatives relating to research culture and environment	Engage with key stakeholders and members of the research community to understand practices and encourage focus on integrity
Work across the UK research system to bring together existing groups	To foster learning and sharing of best practice	Partner with others for distinct projects, co-design and co-deliver events, and participate in forums led by others



## Pillar 2: Support research integrity

Members of the research community want research to be conducted to high standards. Understanding and clarifying the current research integrity landscape, supporting collaborations to promote knowledge sharing, and making recommendations to bodies in the research system are mechanisms that can support and enhance integrity.

What we will do	Why we need to do this	How we will do it
Define the current landscape of research integrity	To provide clarity to the research system about how integrity is supported	Produce a map of existing bodies and their roles in the supporting high integrity
Enhance collaboration between existing bodies	To promote knowledge sharing and action that drives enhancement of integrity	Create opportunities for discussion by convening forums, providing connections, and making introductions nationally and internationally
Make recommendations for/to the UK research system	To shape and inform opportunities in the research system to enhance integrity	Provide strategic input into policies, processes, and guidance, including through international and national initiatives and consultations (for instance, input into REF)

### Pillar 3: Define the evidence base

To enable the research system to ground approaches to research integrity in the best possible evidence, the UK Committee on Research Integrity will identify and characterise the current national and international evidence base on this topic. Work to define the evidence will underpin recommendations about approaches and initiatives that can be developed, in addition to evidence gaps that need to be filled. This includes exploring ways to assess integrity through qualitative and quantitative indicators. Assembling the existing evidence about the link between research integrity and quality could boost confidence that attention to integrity is crucial to UK research.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Why we need to do this</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
Advance discussions about integrity indicators	To establish an agreed framework for assessment of integrity that is appropriate and proportionate	Work with stakeholders to define and describe current evidence, practice and needs and to produce a report to prompt further work
Gather evidence about systemic pressures and enablers	To develop a strong evidence base for interventions that can enhance integrity	Identify and characterise current evidence about research integrity and the context and opportunities to enhance research integrity
Assemble existing evidence and knowledge about the relationship between research integrity and research quality	To provide a compelling case and resource for research integrity activities in all parts of the system	Consult experts and key stakeholders, alongside published evidence, to develop a clear narrative about the relationship between integrity and quality

## Pillar 4: Build new directions

The UK Committee on Research Integrity will create the path towards a future in which all research has integrity at its core. Building new directions depends on the Committee’s work to understand evidence about the structures, systems, processes, pressures, and approaches that hinder or enable integrity.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Why we need to do this</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
Advise the sector about future opportunities to address questionable research practices and misconduct	A clear understanding of options for handling questionable research practices (QRPs) and misconduct, including understanding potential consequences of these, will improve confidence in necessary processes	Consult and describe current reporting processes for investigations, identify any need for further initiatives, and suggest ways to improve confidence in processes
Define the future structures needed to best support research integrity	To embed integrity within the UK research system	Consult across the research system and work in partnership to consider what the system needs to give confidence that UK research is of high quality  Produce a roadmap for how this could be achieved
Foster innovative thinking and approaches to research integrity	To consider and plan for future developments in research	Consult, develop and lead work to build the UK’s focus on innovation in integrity

# Values

The UK Committee on Research Integrity's work is underpinned by eight core values:

1. **Integrity:** We commit to integrity in our own actions, policies, and processes
2. **Collaboration:** We endeavor to work collaboratively and respectfully
3. **Respect for diversity:** We recognise and respect diversity of approach, thought, and opinion
4. **Understanding:** We understand that systemic pressures impact on individual actions
5. **Curiosity:** We recognise the importance of curiosity and an open-minded approach
6. **Encouragement:** We support and encourage the research system
7. **Courage:** We speak up and challenge when values are not upheld
8. **Care for the environment:** We consider environmental impact when we plan and deliver our activities

All members of the UK Committee on Research Integrity endeavour to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).



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