

Introduction

Good research practice underpins high-quality science and supports the robust evidence base needed to drive improvements in health. It provides strong foundations for research careers, supporting high quality education and training, and delivers assurance to those whose work builds on the findings of others. Good research practice also helps to increase public confidence and trust in the research process and its outputs.

The responsibility for promoting and delivering good research practice is shared by the whole research community. Researchers should strive for the highest achievable standards in the planning, conduct and reporting of their research and demonstrate integrity in their dealings with others. Research organisations should foster a culture which supports and embeds good research practice and aims to prevent research misconduct. Researchers and research organisations have a duty to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear, and that appropriate resources and skills are in place to deliver the research and maintain high standards of integrity, either by seeking access to training or developing collaborations with others with the necessary expertise.

Achievement of the highest quality and ethical standards in research depends on the integrity, honesty and professionalism of all individuals involved in the research process. Research organisations' staff recruitment practices at all levels should reflect the importance of these qualities.

The MRC expects that all MRC-funded research is conducted to the highest levels of integrity, clarity and good management. Researchers supported by the MRC must adhere to the highest ethical standards, and conform to requirements and guidance set out in this document and by national and international regulatory bodies, professional bodies, and local research ethics and governance frameworks.

This document aims to clarify these expectations and how they apply within the MRC's own research units and institutes and to research supported by the MRC in university units, centres and grants, fellowships and studentships. It includes both high-level principles and more detailed guidance to ensure the standards can be achieved in practice. It builds on the joint research council policy and code of conduct on the governance of good research conduct issued by Research Councils UK, *RCUK Integrity, Clarity and Good Management* (1), the Health Departments' Research Governance Frameworks (2), the Government Chief Scientific Advisor's Universal Ethical Code for Scientists, *Rigour, Respect and Responsibility* (3), *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (4) and the UK Research Integrity Office, *Code of practice for research: promoting good practice and preventing misconduct* (5).

The principles and guidelines outlined in this document are intended to complement not replace statutory or regulatory requirements and codes of conduct and ethical standards relating to specific professions, research areas or research environments and settings or the guidelines of other research funders. They also recognise local organisational policies and procedures and relevant MRC policies and position statements, including those within the MRC's ethics series (6).