



UKCORI
UK Committee on
Research Integrity

Research integrity indicators project

World Conference on Research Integrity, June 2024

UK Committee on Research Integrity

Established to deliver on recommendations by the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee.



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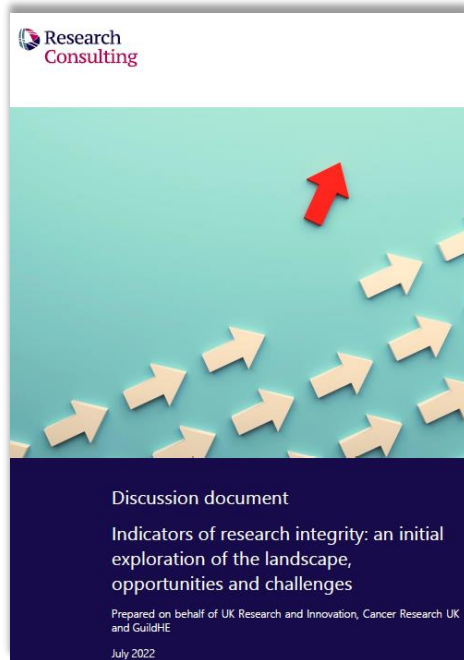
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To learn more about the UKCORI's remit and work, please visit <https://ukcori.org/>

Building on the 2022 initial exploration work

Cancer Research UK /
GuildHE / UKRI project to
explore landscape,
opportunities and
challenges in relation to RI
indicators



[Indicators of research integrity - An initial exploration of the landscape, opportunities and challenges](#)

Established principles for future work

Refine the goals of indicators

Continue the discussion and further refine the possible purposes of indicators.

Kick off a broader discussion

Do not focus on wholly quantitative indicators and engage the research community.

Foster integrity and avoid rankings

Ensure that indicators are used to foster and promote good practices rather than for ranking organisations.

Remain aware of challenges

Remember that miscalculation, gaming and misalignment should be considered.

Examine a range of approaches

Build on the range of approaches we have highlighted and minimise burdens.

Pursue co-creation in any next steps

Arbitrarily set indicators will be opposed: focus on co-creation to make progress.

Consider equality, diversity and inclusion

Indicators will apply to a wide range of contexts: consider equality, diversity and inclusion.

Legend

- 1. Foster and share good research integrity practice
- 2. Consider a breadth of approaches
- 3. Ensure co-creation and inclusion

What do we mean by indicators?

For the purposes of this project, we define an “indicator” as a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a reliable means to evaluate achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance or state of play of an actor or system.



Project objectives

To determine whether indicators and evidence can be identified (or not) that will:

- support UK higher education institutes (HEIs) to monitor RI and improve;
- provide the committee with evidence at UK scale.

Piloting, developing and further refining indicators = separate programme of work.



Related external projects

REF2029

Indicators for people, culture and environment

Consultants to run a project from Jan 2024

UKRN

Open research indicators

Underway, piloting indicators in small number of HEIs.

US
Strategic
Council

Markers of trustworthiness for research findings

Developing a framework for adoption by community (2024). Focused on integrity of outputs.

Finding indicators - framing

We focused on the *conditions* that enable research integrity at UK Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs).

Why?

- To avoid overlap with other indicator projects focussing on research outputs.
- A focus on research outputs could shift focus to individual researchers rather than recognising and addressing the role of institutions.



Five areas that influence RI within HEIs



Domain = An area over which HEIs have control that can influence RI within a context of internal/external factors.

Following stakeholder & advisory/project group discussions & inputs, two domains removed:

- Investment
- Research culture

To co-produce indicators with stakeholders:

UKCORI held 5 stakeholder events across the UK

- **Oct 23:** Pilot event in Belfast, hosted by UKCORI
- **Jan 24:** In person event in London, hosted by Wellcome
- **Jan 24:** Online stakeholder event
- **Feb 24:** In person event in Manchester, hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University
- **March 24:** Online event for AHSS community



To co-produce indicators with stakeholders:

UKCORI held 5 stakeholder events across the UK

Used World Café style format

- One discussion table per domain
- Participants chose where to go: 10 mins at each table
- Followed by ~45 mins for more detailed discussion of a particular domain
- Reflections and survey
- Tried to replicate online (not easy!)



Our approach: iNORMS SCOPE model as a framework

START WITH WHAT YOU VALUE



Evaluate only where necessary



Evaluate with the evaluated



Draw on evaluation expertise

At the Belfast pilot workshop, we asked

- What evidence would you look for to indicate the presence of high levels of research integrity at an HEI?
- Their answers identified **characteristics** of an HEI with high levels of research integrity across the 7 domains

At subsequent events, we asked stakeholders:

- To consider, question and discuss evidence for these characteristics
- To add to new evidence / characteristics
- To place the evidence for each characteristic on a maturity scale to demonstrate healthy, strong or exemplary practice.



Procedures: High research integrity is supported, recognised, rewarded and made visible

Healthy

PR1: HEI reflects research integrity standards in research policies, practices and decision-making and policies and practice are sensitive to, and support, the working practices and disciplinary norms of colleges/ faculties/ schools/ etc.

PR2: HEI has a data availability policy.

PR5: HEI has research integrity procedures and policies that apply to anyone conducting research under auspices of the institution, e.g., contractors, consultants, visiting staff etc and these are publicised and included as part of induction.

PR4: Research integrity related procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

PR7: HEI invests in systems and procedures to support open access and open research practices, including appropriate data management resources.

PR8: HEI has conflict of interest policy that applies to all staff.

PR3: HEI research integrity procedures and processes consider issues beyond research e.g., ethics and governance of grants and finances, appropriate stakeholder engagement, service evaluation.

PR6: HEI has procedures in place to support transparent workload allocation.

PR9: HEI has procedures on authorship that set clear expectations on good practice in authorship, including fair and transparent criteria for determining authorship, and a policy on author contribution statements.

Strong

PR10: Researchers are recognised and rewarded for improving skills associated with high integrity. Evidenced through the appraisal system.

PR11: HEI collates evidence that expectations for research integrity have been met and evidence of how they are rewarded.

PR13: HEI provides point of contact for authorship questions, if not the named person.

PR12: HEI can evidence that it has carefully reviewed the financial investment it needs to support open research and has met these needs.

Exemplary

PR14: HEI publicly shares and promotes case studies relating to good research practice/high research integrity.

PR15: HEI has a procedure to support an independent arbiter for authorship disputes.

PR16: HEI disseminates examples of expectations met/exceeded relating to research integrity and included in appraisal system.

Stakeholders were also asked

To select evidence to probe for its possible impacts and in a more in-depth discussion to consider:

- How might this evidence affect particular disciplines?
- How difficult might it be for HEIs to supply?
- How might it be gamed?
- What might its (foreseeable) unintended consequences be?
- Who might be affected or disadvantaged?

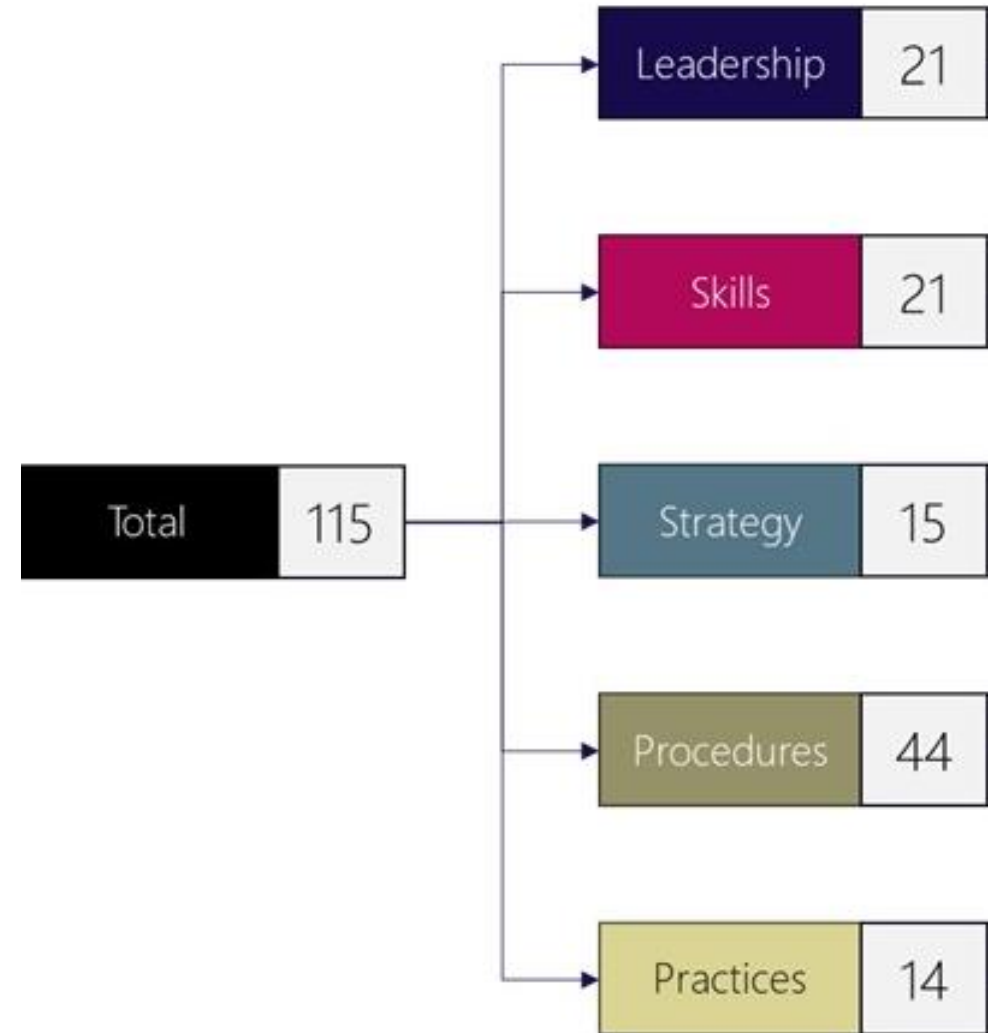


Making sense of inputs

Summary of inputs

Through the iterative SCOPE process

- Through stakeholder engagements and convergence work, we distilled inputs to a final list of 115 indicators
- these 115 indicators provide evidence for 12 different characteristics across the 5 domains of leadership, strategy, procedures, practices & skills



Domain	Characteristic	Examples of Indicators
Leadership	Institutional leaders create organisational cultures that support research integrity (RI).	HEI ensures RI is reflected in all HR processes (research-related job descriptions, recruitment outcomes, annual review, & promotion).
Strategy	Joined up strategies & policies exist that support RI across the HEI & that apply beyond research.	HEI institutional RI strategies have an associated action plan with clear lines of responsibility.
Procedures	High (levels of) RI are supported, rewarded and made visible.	HEI has procedures in place to support transparent workload allocation that acknowledges time needed for researchers to do their research with integrity.
Practices	Practices [exist] to ensure appropriate evaluation of research processes, governance & leadership.	HEI has procedures to monitor compliance with institutional and external requirements (eg. internal audits & risk review).
Skills	RI-related training and support is accessible, inclusive, provided at all career levels, & across a range of roles.	HEI provides accessible, RI skills-related training/PD to suit different roles, disciplines, and career stages, undertaken by all research-active students and staff.

Making sense of inputs: ongoing work

- Consideration needs to be given to the use of maturity scales, how indicator evidence can be reported by HEIs, and their costs and administrative burdens.
- We encourage HEIs (and wider research sector) to consider the full indicator dataset we will share to assess which indicators are of value to them.



What next

- Full indicator set will need further probing, piloting, testing (including measures to evaluate their effectiveness and impacts) as a separate programme of work.
- We hope our project's insights and inputs will inform other indicator projects underway
- Look out for our full project report due later this summer with full indicator dataset and methodology



Project team & acknowledgements

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