

# RCA Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2022/23

## Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
<b>1A. Name of organisation</b>	Royal College of Art
<b>1B. Type of organisation:</b>  higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education Institution
<b>1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)</b>	TBC
<b>1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)</b>	<a href="https://www.rca.ac.uk/research-innovation/research-ethics/">https://www.rca.ac.uk/research-innovation/research-ethics/</a>
<b>1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity</b>	Dr Emma Wakelin, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation  <a href="mailto:emma.wakelin@rca.ac.uk">emma.wakelin@rca.ac.uk</a>
	Corinne Smith, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education  <a href="mailto:corrine.smith@rca.ac.uk">corrine.smith@rca.ac.uk</a>

**1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity**

Susan Hamilton, Head of Research Development

[ethics@rca.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@rca.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

The RCA refreshed and updated its Research Ethics Policy in 2017, ensuring it met the good practice set out in the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity and in the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Code of Practice for Research. The RCA became a UKRIO subscriber in 2016.

A new Ethics Committee was established in 2017/18, co-chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education. The Committee meets termly, and reports to the Research & Innovation Committee (which reports to Senate). The Research Staff & Students Ethics Sub-Committee, co-chaired by the Head of Postgraduate Programmes and the Head of Research Development, and the Taught MA Ethics Sub-Committee, chaired by the Deputy Director of

Academic Development, report to the Ethics Committee.

In 2017/18, the RCA introduced the Epigeum online “Ethics: Good Research Practice” training course to all research staff (including doctoral supervisors) and to MRes and first year PhD students. All research staff and research students are expected to have undertaken the Epigeum course prior to submitting a request for research ethics approval to the Ethics Committee. Additional research ethics training is also provided to research students through the College’s MRes and doctoral training provision and to research staff through Research Supervisor training.

The RCA’s policies and codes of practice can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.rca.ac.uk/more/organisation/policies-and-codes-of-practice/>

## **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.

New guidance on the following areas was produced for research staff and students:

- Responsible Investment Policy (approved February 2024)
- Draft Research Misconduct Policy (to be approved and published in 2024)
- Safeguarding Policy (to be approved and published in 2024)

Epigeum training for research staff and students is continuing, and further expansion of the current ethics training module from Epigeum is being considered for the 2024/25 academic year.

## **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.

Given the progress achieved over the last few years in the ethics and research integrity space, a decision was made to dissolve the Research Staff & Students Sub-committee to form an Ethics Network and Review Panel which will expand the current ethics review panel and allow more research staff and students to engage in ethics and research integrity issues.

The purpose of the RCA's Research Ethics Network is to be a forum to review research ethics applications from staff and students and to exchange knowledge and share good practice about research ethics, contributing to a culture of continuous improvement, and supporting all staff and students to develop an understanding of the importance of research ethics, in line with the College's commitments under the terms of the UK Research Integrity Concordat, our Research Ethics Policy, and the requirements of UKRI's ethical and responsible research and innovation agenda.

Following a call for academic staff and doctoral students to join the Network, it was launched in June 2024 with an introductory training session for members of the Network.

Future plans for ethics training involves encouraging academic staff and doctoral students to undertake a refresher course, in addition to offering enhanced ethics training.

## **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.

The RCA is committed to the highest standards of integrity, probity and accountability in the conduct of research, in accordance with the principles of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2019).

Currently, those who wish to raise concerns, complaints or allegations about research being conducted by the RCA or its researchers are referred to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.

However, a separate RCA Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure has now been developed, which will be approved and published in 2024. It is intended to address such allegations of research misconduct and was developed in line with the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* (2019) and the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) *Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). The Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure sets out the RCA's expectations and requirements for staff and research students regarding good practice in research to ensure that research conducted at the College is of the highest standards of integrity, and also outlines the actions to be taken when

concerns are raised about the conduct of research undertaken under the auspices of the RCA.

Staff and students are encouraged to get in touch with [ethics@rca.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@rca.ac.uk) or with the Co-Chairs of the Ethics Committee if they have any questions.

### **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				
Falsification				
Plagiarism	1			
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	1			
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification;				

and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
<i>Other*</i>				
<b>Total:</b>				
<p><b>*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.</b></p>				
<p>There were two cases of alleged research misconduct in 2022/23. The RCA's procedure for managing allegations of research misconduct was followed in both cases, and the Screening Panel agreed no formal investigations were necessary.</p>				