

Wednesday late morning session Track B, Wednesday, Sep 24 2025, 11:30-13:00

Location: Seminar 1

Session: RI Governance

Chair: Grace van Arkel

OR-49

Updating the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity: Modernising to Embed Good Practice and Increase Alignment across the Research System

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Since 2012, the UK has used the Concordat to Support Research Integrity ('the Concordat') as the main framework which unites expectations around practice for those conducting research, governing it, and funding it. It originally set out four principles for working in the research system and encouraged adherence to these through a set of responsibilities aimed at researchers, employers and funders. In 2019 the Concordat was updated to reflect changes to the system and opportunities raised by the UK's House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee, adding a fifth principle: accountability.

In 2024 the Concordat signatories began a process for refreshing the Concordat. This presentation will guide participants through the process and describe how the Concordat has changed. The focus of the refresh was to i) ensure it remained relevant in changing times and supported continual improvement; and ii) increase accessibility of the document and reduce repetition so that members of the research community could more easily engage with it. It was not about revisiting the five principles which are well embedded across the system.

The presentation will highlight the Concordat's connection to other frameworks as part of efforts to build upon and support good practice worldwide. The presenters will consider how responsibilities within the UK system can support European expectations, enabling high integrity practice internationally and across disciplines, and serving as an example when needed for systems looking to improve their approach to building good practice.

This will consider how the responsibilities set out in the Concordat support behaviour that leads to trustworthy research. People working across the UK's system were invited to participate in consultation opportunities on the Concordat refresh in 2024, providing key input on how/where strengthening the wording in the Concordat would help improve practice. This work highlighted how there is not a great separation in responsibilities across the different groups: in order for their to be progress, everyone must work together towards the same aims.

Finally, the presenters will reflect on their experience as part of the working group to refresh the wording in the Concordat, considering the time and effort involved in the process. They will discuss what they have learned, which will guide and inform future development of the Concordat and its implementation.

Acknowledgements: The presenters wish to acknowledge the other signatories of the Concordat who all participated in the refresh, and the UK Committee on Research Integrity which chaired the review process and now hosts the Concordat. Our appreciation goes out to the members of the research community who participated in the consultation exercises and replied to the online survey, providing key feedback on where the Concordat could be strengthened or improved.