



Ministry
of Defence

Annual Statement of
Compliance with the
Concordat to Support
Research Integrity
(2022-23)

Key Contact Information

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Introduction

Over the next 4 years, the MOD will invest at least £6.6 billion in research and development (R&D) ([Ministry of Defence's Science and Technology portfolio - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/science-and-technology-portfolio)). Research and development helps ensure Defence incorporates cutting edge science across every role; all in aid of harnessing the latest capabilities and best results for our armed forces, including looking at how AI-enabled machines interact with humans, developing next-generation capability and improved protection for our armed forces, military medical research and important social research.

Placing high quality science, analysis, research and evidence at the heart of Defence is critical to us making the right decisions and protecting the UK, its territories and its allies. As part of this, the MOD commits to good research practices in all the work it does. The MOD already has policies that ensure it upholds core ethical principles in the delivery and deployment of its findings and the introduction of a policy on research integrity ("JSP 732" Research integrity (JSP 732) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) is intended to build on, and cohere, the existing policies, procedures and good practice found across Defence. This includes aligning the scope of "research" with JSP 536 on Governance of Research Involving Human Participants; offering a clear definition of the activity that should be scrutinised through a research integrity lens.

The MOD commits to uphold the 5 core principles, set out in the Concordat to

Support Research Integrity, and the related GO-Science Guidance to implement the Concordat to Support Research Integrity within government, honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability.

Promoting good Research Integrity

The MOD has developed and published JSP 732 to support and strengthen research integrity and promote a healthy, inclusive research culture. This policy will be implemented through the creation of "Research Champion" roles. These are sufficiently senior (suggested Deputy Director or equivalent) representatives for an area or organisation within Defence, who are responsible for ensuring researchers and funders deliver research integrity within their area, and for providing assurance to the responsible owners that the research conducted, sponsored, or funded by their area meets the principles set out in the JSP. This group will meet annually to provide assurance on research integrity within the department, with "Research Champions" encouraged to remain joined up throughout the year.

Furthermore, a secondary part of JSP 732 will be developed to outline guidance on how to implement the policy effectively. This will assist Research Champions to deliver communications and training to each of their areas and offer practical advice on what the MOD expects of staff involved in research.

MOD, through the Defence Science and Technology (DST) Policy team, is a member of the Concordat Working Group (CWG) which meets regularly since March 2022 to discuss the practical considerations of implementing the principles of the concordat in government. Officials from across government attend the CWG to discuss and address issues arising from applying the Guidance to implement the Concordat to Support Research Integrity within Government and to share approaches on areas of common interest.

The Government Office for Science convene the group, provide its secretariat, and communicate with UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and the Research Integrity Concordat Signatories (RICS) on its behalf. Department officials also attend teach-ins on the concordat and research integrity delivered by the Government Office for Science and UKRIO. The Government Science and Engineering Profession (GSEP) Career Framework, which is applicable to scientists and engineers, lists understanding and application of the Concordat to Support Research amongst the technical skills for the GSEP. For analysts in government, there are a range of professional groups and learning and development connected to sound research. Key guidance is provided within the The Government Social Research Technical Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), the Government Economic Service GES Technical Framework 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), the Competency Framework for the Government Statistician Group and Code of Practice for Statistics.

As referred to in JSP 732, MOD recognises it must be as open and transparent as possible with publicly funded research, which should be free to access wherever possible, and released promptly and in a way that promotes public trust. When research is conducted, funded, or sponsored, open science principles should be adhered to, as much as is consistent with security considerations, across the entire research lifecycle. While there is no formal agreed set of open science principles across all of research, they are generally about increasing the rigour, accountability, and reproducibility of research, as well as working to promote inclusion, collaboration, and information-sharing.

Since the development of JSP 732; DST has engaged with international partners (such as the USA and Sweden) to discuss the importance of research integrity, how HMG is acting upon its commitment to research integrity and how the MOD is developing

policy and implementation plans to support and hold to account the Defence research environment.

Research Misconduct

Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity requires the right environment. The MOD is committed to the ongoing development of a culture that supports and nurtures such standards.

Research misconduct is characterised as behaviours or actions that fall short of the standards of ethics, research and scholarship required to ensure that the integrity of research is upheld. Allegations of research misconduct are rare but if not addressed appropriately, risk causing harm to MOD personnel, and to the environment in which we operate, waste resources, undermine the MOD's research record and damage the credibility of the MOD's research.

Where misconduct hasn't taken place but there are honest errors or differences in, for example, research methodology or interpretations, these should be responded to, where appropriate, with training and cooperation from supervisors rather than through misconduct procedures.

Research Champions are responsible for ensuring the appropriate systems are in place in their area, as per commitment 4 of the concordat, through clear, well-articulated policies to address confidential reporting for allegations of research misconduct, investigating infractions and handling disputes.

The MOD already has robust procedures in place for experiments that include human participation through the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC) [<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/mini-stry-of-defence-research-ethics-committees>]. The MOD will work to ensure that across all research misconduct is appropriately addressed and systems are simplified and coordinated wherever appropriate.