

Research Ethics and Integrity Annual Statement 2021

1. Introduction

This report outlines the work across the academic year 1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021.

1.1 *The Concordat and RNCM*

All research at RNCM is conducted according to the principles of research integrity. Their core elements are as follows:

- **honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings
- **rigour**, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results
- **transparency and open communication** in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public
- **care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record
- **accountability** of funders, employers and researchers collectively to create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by the Concordat (Concordat, Commitment 1, p. 6).

1.2 *RNCM policies and procedures in relation to research integrity*

The RNCM's commitment to the promotion of research integrity can be found in its

- Ethics Framework (<https://www.rncm.ac.uk/download/rncm-ethics-framework/?wpdmdl=274354&refresh=6171af473b4be1634840391>)
- Good Research Conduct Policy (<https://www.rncm.ac.uk/download/good-research-conduct-policy/?wpdmdl=274371&refresh=6171af6494e851634840420>)
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy (<https://www.rncm.ac.uk/download/public-interest-disclosure/?wpdmdl=274358&refresh=6171af471058c1634840391>)
- Research Degrees Handbook (<https://www.rncm.ac.uk/uploads/RNCM-Research-Degrees-Handbook-2021-2022-V.0.pdf>)

1.3 *Activities*

Training in research ethics and integrity is delivered to undergraduates and taught postgraduates taking courses in music education and music psychology, and to all postgraduate research students on an annual basis; it is also offered regularly to staff.

Processes for applying for ethical approval for practice-based research in composition and performance, non-practice-based research (typically involving interviews, observations, experiments etc.) and questionnaire research with adults differ slightly, but all applications are reviewed and approved by the RNCM Research Ethics Committee, which reports three times a year to the RNCM Research and Knowledge Committee. It currently has eight members, including the Chair (see below). They represent all RNCM research pathways (performance, composition, music education, music psychology and musicology). One member is external to RNCM and another is a PhD student. The Committee meets virtually. Initial comments on applications are made by members, independently, only to the Chair and the Programme & Assessment Coordinator (PGR), who provides administrative support. These comments are collated by the Chair, and final decisions are made by consensus following discussion via email.

Both the Associate Director of Research and Dr John Habron (john.habron@rncm.ac.uk), the Head of Music, Health and Wellbeing, are Institutional Representatives of RNCM and Deputy Chairs of the Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Committee. Staff and students wishing to undertake research with the participation of colleagues and peers at conservatoires besides RNCM are encouraged to seek approval from the CUK Research Ethics Committee (see <https://conservatoiresuk.ac.uk/about-us/research-integrity-governance-and-ethics/>), rather than making multiple applications.

2. Developments in 2020-2021

In June 2021 the Associate Director of Research stepped down from her role as Chair of the RNCM Research Ethics Committee, which she had held since its inception in 2006, and was replaced by Dr Michelle Phillips (michelle.phillips@rncm.ac.uk). It was decided that the role should rotate between members of the committee every three years.

3. Applications for ethical approval received by the RNCM Research Ethics Committee between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021

Received from	Successful	Unsuccessful or pending resubmission	Total
Staff	10	1	11
PhD students	2	0	2
PG taught students	10	1	11
External	3	1	4
Total	25	3	28

In addition, the RNCM Research Ethics Committee reviewed two applications, one from a member of staff and one from an external researcher, that were made to and approved by the CUK Research Ethics Committee.

4. Research misconduct

The procedures RNCM has in place for dealing with allegations of research misconduct are outlined in the RNCM Good Research Conduct Policy. Research misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations, misrepresentation, breach of duty of care, and improper dealing with allegations of misconduct.

The Unacceptable Research Conduct procedure links to the RNCM's staff Disciplinary Policy and the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy, and complements the Public Disclosure Policy. The procedure applies to allegations about RNCM staff and research students from inside and outside the RNCM.

The unacceptable research conduct procedures are guided by the following key principles:

- The procedures are driven by the requirement for the even-handed treatment of both the complainant and the respondent
- The presumption of innocence should be maintained throughout the investigation
- The complainant and respondent should expect a just decision following a fair and speedy process involving an impartial, informed and independent investigation
- The responsibilities of those dealing with the allegation must be clear and understood by all interested parties
- Proper records of the proceedings should be kept while ensuring that the confidential nature of the allegation and investigation safeguard the rights to confidentiality, and to disclosure, of the interested parties.

No formal investigations of research misconduct were made in the academic year 2020-2021.

By providing clear policies, practices and procedures to support researchers, guidance and training on research ethics and research integrity for staff and students at all levels, and clear procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, the RNCM aims to create and embed a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct.



Professor Jane Ginsborg
Associate Director of Research

18 November 2021