Smaller and Specialist Institutions and Research Integrity

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Start with the Concordat

"The concordat is a helpful tool in and of itself to us - in that it gives us a clear steer on the remit of our University Ethics Panel and what we need to be able to demonstrate to adhere to it."

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

"We have a Research Integrity Implementation Framework that maps how the University is responding to the principles and commitments of the Concordat."

Specialist Institution, Emergent environment

"...a commitment to the principles outlined in the concordat to support research integrity needs to be part of our research culture whatever our shape or size."
Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

Groundwork - embedding the principles

"...we utilise the UKRIO checklist and guidance and use this as a foundation for updating / supporting knowledge building in this area. Outside of this we have tended to work with one of our regular consultants (ex PVC Research) to support wider implication / application."

Specialist Institution, Aspiring environment

"...the key challenge is often embedding ethical practice (e.g. outside of "that form you fill out at the start of your project) into the everyday - encouraging constant reflection from researchers, thinking of RI as part and parcel of generating excellent research."

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

"The issue is how best to *embed* the tenets of research integrity into the culture rather than to ensure that we are meeting Concordat commitments and policing ethics and integrity. This will be a challenge as the research environment and culture change over the next five years."

Specialist Institution, Emergent environment

Training: learning moments and mentors

"An ownership of the process has been critical and our scale – c. 80 academic members of staff — means that information can circulate and filter through the institution. Once a year, we have a session for all staff on developments in ethics and integrity. Discussions about integrity have therefore become part of the fabric of what we do"

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

"there have been a lot of new academic staff over the past 18 months, so training is work in progress. It is a capacity issue of a small number in the research team serving a growing academic community… there have a been a lot of structural changes at the University over the last 2-3 years which have dominated consultation with and communication to staff"

Specialist Institution, Emergent environment

"...fostering awareness, learning about best practice, sharing thoughts and discussing possible options. Training, the previous Chair of our Ethics and Integrity Committee observes, involves opening up research meetings, PhD supervisors meetings as well as committee meetings as "training moments as well as business". Training, as one ECR notes, improved their ability to think about their role and agency within a wider research environment."

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

GuildHE Research

Small and (Im)perfectly formed

"Sometimes we need to bring in external assistance to help with the management of perceived conflicts of interest or possible infringements– publishers for example. Honest errors and minor infractions can often be handled through mentoring, training and guidance but not always… putting together a screening panel and investigation panel isn't always easy in a single subject institution with a pool of 35 rather than 3000 researchers and conflicts of interest that need managing across all levels."

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

"due to having a diverse research portfolio but a smaller staff team, having expert voices who are subject specialists (e.g. academics with interests in things like animal research, but also voices from external bodies such as businesses, representative groups, charities etc) is almost always done ad-hoc and voluntarily"

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

The named contact for allegations of misconduct may also have four or more responsibilities within the institution.

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

GuildHE Research

It's good to be small! Specialisms, and Proximity

"Cross disciplinary review has been something we've really been starting to engage in - its been really insightful, for example Psychologists reviewing creative practice pieces that have human participant engagement. Its led to lots of lessons learned 1.) by our psychology staff who are applying their human-focused skillset in a different context, and 2.) our creative practice staff learning best practice from a subject area that has a high degree of regulation."

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

Inclusion

"About 24% of our researchers are neurodivergent and we have worked with our Neuro-Inclusion and Disability Service (NDS) unit to ensure we have <u>reasonable adjustment with support</u> taking different shapes and forms…"A nuanced response to individual researchers and their needs and circumstances that understands that a diverse research team has different requirements and adjustments, the genuine understanding that research incorporates a variety of styles and approaches." Supporting researchers in ways that recognise their needs is a matter of integrity and institutional accountability."

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

"guidance produced in relation to research is fashioned with large multi-faculty higher education institutions in mind so it's not easy for bodies who don't fit that size and shape to always see what fostering excellence might look like or how they adhere to sector guidance that might relegate their type of institution to a footnote."

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

GuildHE Research

Addressing structural barriers

"We have recognised the labour involved in supporting research through subject association and editorial roles, providing financial support (in the form of teaching buy out or research assistance) that acknowledges the work involved, allowing a broader number of researchers to take on these roles. This work cannot and should not remain invisible. It's key to the effective operation of peer review, to disciplinary development, to the allocation of funding."

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

"Accountability needs to be recognised across an entire HEI from academics to HR and Finance offices, Estates and IT."

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

"Administrating it alone is a huge challenge - especially without an online ethics system. We are in the process of commencing procurement for one, which we hope will give us better visibility across the instituion and help us to better target our support in areas that need it."

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

GuildHE Research

Taking the principles beyond research

"we're delving into a lot more public engagement/impact focus, and that has required us to have lots of conversations about how we pitch ethics - e.g. moving beyond that traditional "ethical approval is a research thing" mentality. We're looking at how we pitch the process for those more intereted in KE/Public Engagement/Impact Evaluation and making sure it all still feels relevant across these strands."

Smaller Institution, Consolidating environment

"[The institution] has a significant proportion of staff who have come from industry that work on professional practice and knowledge exchange but don't undertake research-led practice or what are seen as more traditional forms of arts and humanities archival research; their work however does crucially feed into the research environment because we know that the relationship between knowledge exchange and impact is porous and not all impact is necessarily research-led. Terminology needs rethinking here so that those who work in these areas understand why issues of integrity, honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect and accountability are equally important to public engagement or the knowledge exchange work they undertake.

Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

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Making change

"a national research culture is only effective when it is sensitive to the needs of the diverse research topics, methods and structures across the research sector in the UK (and particularly those of SSIs). We can't build research cultures on the highest common denominator"

ECR, Specialist Institution, Consolidating environment

- Translatable, scaleable guidance, advice, models, and templates
- Access to people, networks, and expertise
- Examples of good practice that are possible to emulate at a smaller scale
- A equitable seat at the table and inclusive practices

GuildHE Research

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