

Research Integrity Annual Report 2025-26

LSTM is a subscriber to the Concordat on Research Integrity. We are required to compile an Annual Report following the headings set out below. This Report will be discussed at Research Integrity and Governance Committee and shared with LSTM Executive as well as UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), as per the terms of our membership.

This report covers the period 01 August 2025 – 31 July 2026.

A. Key Contact Details

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B. Summary of actions and activities to support research integrity (RI)

1. Research Integrity Strategy

A three-year RI Strategy was developed in 2025, led by Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture & Integrity, with input from across senior leadership. The Strategy includes 16 specific objectives spanning training, sample management, data management, open research, equitable partnership.

Research Integrity & Governance Committee (RIGC) is overall responsible for the implementation of the RI Strategy. Additional scrutiny is conducted by Research Integrity Assurance Group (RIAG). Since implementation of the Strategy commenced, there has been regular review and update to the status of each action point.

2. Research Integrity Assurance Group

- a. From January 2026, the Research Integrity Working Group adopted a new title 'Research Integrity Assurance Group (RIAG) and updated Terms of Reference, revising the objectives of the Group to focus on four key areas:
 - i. Promote research integrity across LSTM, connecting researchers through Research Integrity Champions, fostering strategic links across groups and Hubs & Partners
 - ii. Support implementation of, and monitor impact of LSTM Research Integrity Strategy 2025-28
 - iii. Ensure LSTM is compliant with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity
 - iv. Promote adherence to UKCORI recommendations
- b. RIAG reviewed progress against a number of LSTM RI Strategy actions, providing feedback to key teams on procedures and guidance produced. RIAG will continue to act as reviewer of documents in preparation for meeting RI Strategy goals and monitoring whether the goals have been met.

- c. RIAG reviewed LSTM's performance against UK Research Integrity office (UKRIO) Self Assessment Tool, identifying gaps in staff awareness of policies, a need to raise the profile of RI resources at LSTM through induction and on-going activities, and amongst partners.
- d. RIAG reviewed LSTM's performance against UK Committee on Research Integrity (CORI) Indicators, identifying areas to improve upon including incorporating RI into job descriptions & annual appraisals, conducting a mapping exercise of RI resources to share with all staff and students, addition of RI and Equitable Partnership categories at staff awards. There was lengthy discussion of the Indicator asking whether researchers have sufficient time to conduct their work in accordance to RI principles.
- e. RIAG finalised LSTM RI Survey, based on questions produced by partners at MLW and including benchmarking questions from the Vitae CEDARS survey. The final survey will be circulated in Autumn 2026 across all LSTM departments. Hubs colleagues will also be asked to respond to the survey.

3. Research Integrity Champions

- a. RI Champions initiative continued with the following steps to spread awareness and increase engagement:
 - RI Champions promoted the initiative at staff and student events during the past year.
 - RI Champions produced a document providing a good practice guide for validation of methods, systems and databases.
 - Departmental meetings adopted a standing agenda item for RI Champions to share specific messages with their departments on a quarterly basis although this has not happened uniformly
 - Messages via screens around LSTM provide good practice messages on topics such as recognising RI as part of promotion criteria and guidance on acknowledgements
 - RI Champions from across LSTM Hubs formed a RI Champions group which will meet separately to the LSTM group, enabling knowledge exchange and support for training. Hubs members will continue to be part of the LSTM-wide group and two-way communication between both groups will be maintained.
- b. One aspect of the RI Champions' role as per LSTM Publication Policy, is to sit on Authorship Dispute Panel to support resolution of authorship issues. One such case brought via this process was managed over the course of the past year, whereby the recommendations were implemented. There were some challenges in doing so, due to the difficulty of ensuring the actions were followed through by organisations or individuals over whom we can exert limited control. Over this time, lessons were learned including a decision to handle this specific case through a third party provider – Vault – to ensure sensitive information is not saved on shared drives. The first use of this informal process was a useful learning process and highlighted requisite improvements in management of sensitive data

4. Training

- a. All new starters attending 'LSTM Welcome Event' access an introductory presentation on research integrity at LSTM.
- b. LSTM adopted the UKRIO Research Integrity Training Package in place of the Epigeum package. The Learning and development site 'LSTM Learns' guides researchers on which modules to complete depending on their role. Research-active staff must complete Modules 1, 2 and 3 while new starters are encouraged to complete Module 1.

- c. A Training Matrix was introduced via LSTM Learns where researchers can identify which in-house and externally-provided courses they should complete, depending on the type of research they conduct such as clinical trials, human participant research or working in a lab where human tissue is not handled.
- d. PhD and Masters course programmes include an introductory session on research integrity; three such sessions were delivered this year.

5. Research Culture

- a. A new People, Culture and Engagement Committee was established in 2026 which led the development of our first Research Culture Strategy. There are three pillars to the strategy: investing in colleagues; creating a world class environment; and celebrating team science. Across the pillars we have identified 11 outcomes to target over the remainder of the LSTM strategy period (2023-2028) and identified indicators of success. The culture strategy is available on LSTM's website [here](#).
- b. In early 2026 we launched our new website which provided an opportunity to recommit to our values and actions to create an inclusive positive research culture. We are currently finalising work on the Virtual Academy for Education, Enterprise and Research which is designed to make it easier for staff and students across LSTM to access support and engage in opportunities.
- c. A revised format for our staff forum is now providing more opportunities for staff to input into decision making across LSTM via our staff dialogue group. We have reviewed the role of Champions and Staff Networks and are meeting with coordinators of the groups to strengthen routes to engagement with senior leadership and to raise the visibility of these key staff groups.
- d. An event to promote the work of all Champions and Networks was held, including lightening talks from each group including RI Champions, Sustainability Champions, LGBT+ Network, BAME Network, Neurodivergent Network and Open Research Network. This event was well-attended demonstrating LSTM's commitment to equity, diversity & inclusion, and encouraging citizenship activities.
- e. Our weekly seminar series, showcasing current research and findings from across the institution is well attended and is supplemented by monthly inaugural lectures from our new Professorial staff. A new Professor's forum is providing an informal opportunity for greater engagement across senior colleagues.
- f. We have developed a resource pack for staff submitting fellowship applications and are introducing monthly drop-in sessions and enhanced mentorship.
- g. A programme of positive action and support for BAME early career researchers was launched which included seed funding and fellowship support for minoritised ethnic groups.
- h. Our quarterly CPD days continue to provide support for Research Group Leaders and Early Career Researchers
- i. We are piloting a Programme Management Resource Centre to provide flexible support to developing and managing complex programmes and to increase awareness and support retention of the role of this key cadre of staff. Demand has been high in the first year of the pilot with positive feedback received.

6. Animal Research

- a. LSTM is a signatory of the [Concordat on Openness in Animal Research](#). AWERB is working toward collating information on metrics of animal use at partner international sites for transparent reporting, in line with the ethos of the Concordat

These can be found on the animal research LSTM webpage, including international numbers this year. We are currently undergoing a rework of the information on this webpage and will enhance our sections on 3Rs commitment, Culture of Care, and Concordat on Openness.

- b. LSTM Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board (AWERB) is engaged in an on-going discussion with the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) regarding joining the association, specifically relating to the Herpetarium. Benefits would include knowledge exchange and training on handling and care of venomous snakes, for instance.
The department will go ahead with a BIAZA application once Herpetarium expansion has completed (mid-August 2026). London Zoo and Chester Zoo have both agreed, in principle, to be LSTM's sponsor for the BIAZA application. We will host them both to confirm sponsorship before submitting a BIAZA application.
- c. LSTM AWERB has reviewed the recent UKRIO framework 'Obtaining Materials from Sentient Animals' which provides clear guidelines about ethical decision-making. AWERB is currently assessing the effects of the framework upon LSTM-led projects in partner countries, and will report any formal decisions on further action to the relevant internal Committee.
Consulted academic colleagues agreed with the AWERB consensus that signing up to the framework would not have a negative impact on our research and passed recommendations up to RIGC. This will be followed up at the forthcoming RIGC meeting.
- d. Training: an online training module for staff conducting animal research is in development under the banner of research integrity training. The module covers regulatory requirements, the Concordat on Openness in Animal Research, PREPARE and ARRIVE guidelines and principles of experimental design, and oversight of animal research at LSTM. Once produced, this training will be mandatory for all staff conducting animal research and will be a requirement as part of the approvals process at AWERB. It will also be available across the LSTM as part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) initiative, as well as part of new starters induction. This also serves to fulfil the commitments of the Concordat.

7. Equity

- a. An Equitable Partnerships Guidance Document has been finalised. Discussions are on-going as to how this will be implemented and monitored across LSTM. Indicators of equitable partnership in practice will be captured on LSTM's research management system PURE, currently in development and expected to go live this year.
- b. LSTM has recruited a Strategic Partnerships Lead, who has produced a Partnerships Framework, with equity embedded across all 4 pillars.
- c. Building on the capacity assessments and training completed in 2024/25, the Wellcome Trust Institutional Funding for Research Culture programme has moved into an embed and sustainability phase over the past year. Communities of Practice have now been established across several professional services functions (including Programme Management, IT, Data Management, Research Governance, HR, Safeguarding, and Knowledge Exchange), with regular joint meetings bringing members together across all four partner hubs to share learning and develop institution-specific sustainability plans. A resource pack and toolkit for project start-up has been piloted among LSTM programme managers and is being adapted for use at partner institutions, supported by a shared repository. The Research Administration and Management (RAMP) training has progressed to a Training-of-Trainers model, delivered jointly in Nairobi, Kenya and LSTM, UK, with representatives from all partner hubs. Further, RAMP training material has been translated into

French to extend the reach of RAMP to Francophone partners. A mentorship programme has also been launched, pairing professional services staff across institutions. The project has secured a no-cost extension to September 2026, providing further time to consolidate these initiatives and plan for their continuation beyond the funding period. The team is preparing a set of publications capturing key learning, including on the Communities of Practice model itself, for wider dissemination.

8. Reproducibility

- a. LSTM Open Research Network was launched in February 2026, bringing together colleagues from Library Systems, Data Management, Research Departments and Research Integrity. So far, information and training on open research has been provided, as well as promoting the Network at events such as Student Conference. Future plans include targeted 'hands-on' sessions for students and identifying Open Research Champions across LSTM departments and Hubs.
- b. A new Senior Research Data Manager was appointed in January 2025 and is taking forward improvements in central research data management. Since this appointment, there is oversight of Data Management Plans, web pages, and other forms of guidance, training sessions, new policy is in development and a Data Management Community of Practice as part of the CoPs programme also described under section 7.c above.
- c. A working group to transition to Electronic Laboratory Notebooks (ELNs) platforms to meet LSTM's diverse research needs has continued over the past year however, no agreement has been reached on a LSTM-wide ELNs approach. Due to lack of capacity within the teams, it has not yet been possible to implement a new solution. The challenges include, storage capacity and labs refurbishment programme, ELN development has not been a priority this year.

9. Transparency in Processes: Infonetica

- a. LSTM is now using Infonetica for Sponsorship and Ethical reviews processes and on-going oversight such as protocol modifications and deviation reporting. This has brought greater transparency to the review process and has led to improved communication between research teams and the research governance team. Some further process improvements are needed to realise the full benefits of the system.

10. Artificial Intelligence

- a. LSTM Legal & Governance has compiled an interim guide to support staff and students when using AI, while a comprehensive framework will be released in coming months. Colleagues from IT, computer science, research data management, research integrity and research governance contributed to the guidance.

11. Resources for Research Integrity

- a. The departure of the LSTM Research Compliance Officer, responsible for delivering training, and coordinating RIAG and RI Champions, is a risk for the continuation of these activities. A plan to cover these functions is being actively worked on.
- b. will be directly replaced due to recruitment freeze. Therefore the sustainability of these initiatives is in doubt over the coming year.

C. Statement on process for dealing with research misconduct

As there have been no new cases of misconduct, the process has not been tested in practice.

The Policy for Handling Misconduct Allegations is currently being finalised.

D. Statement on formal research misconduct investigations

There were no formal research misconduct investigations in 2025-26.

E. Statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct

There were no cases of misconduct to learn from.

F. Statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct

Conducting research to the highest ethical standards, embedding equity in all our partnerships, and seeking to influence others to do the same, are key behaviours underpinning LSTM's values ([Vision, mission and values | LSTM \(lstm.ac.uk\)](#)). The use of Reading Panels to assess the quality of papers (thereby reducing the reliance on unfair metrics), the introduction of workshops to informally discuss concerns over questionable research practices, the commitment from LSTM Executive to make research integrity training mandatory for all staff, regardless of seniority, work of the Research Integrity & Governance Committee and the Research Integrity Assurance Group and Research Champions, all speak to LSTM's commitment to value research quality over quantity and create an environment in which all are empowered to question poor practice.

Staff can raise concerns over research integrity or misconduct via a multitude of routes. These include informal discussions with our Research Integrity Champions, the Research Governance and Ethics team or the PVC for Research Culture and Integrity and formal reporting via Vault. We are striving to normalise conversations around Questionable Research Practices via regular updates at Departmental meetings, staff newsletters and digital screens but recognise more work is needed to ensure that all feel safe and empowered to speak up.

G. Gaps identified and being addressed

1. Our new website is now live and includes some of our policies however not all policies are as yet published on the [LSTM Policies page](#).
2. A programme of internal monitoring of LSTM-sponsored studies conducted by Research Governance, Ethics & Integrity Office is to be continued and expanded focussing on high risk studies. This will be particularly relevant when the Human Challenge Facility opens over the coming year.
3. Expand training programme to be inclusive of staff based in Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal and Zimbabwe.
4. Establish links with LSTM KEF (Knowledge Exchange Framework) group to build research integrity into public engagement and dissemination work.
5. Improve package of online resources providing guidance on research integrity.

Compiled by Lindsay Hunt, Research Compliance Officer with input from Professor Hilary Ranson, Pro Vice Chancellor of Research Culture & Integrity

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Shared with Research Governance & Integrity Committee, a devolved authority of LSTM Executive on: 21 July 2026