

Respect and dignity of those involved with research funded by the Royal Society

1. Purpose

The Royal Society's fundamental purpose is to recognise, promote and support excellence in science. This includes advocating for the excellent conduct of research, and for a culture of research that sustains and rewards this. The highest standards of professional conduct are expected from all those participating in research funded by the Society.

This policy sets out the Royal Society's commitment to a research culture where all involved with or contribute to Society-funded research activities are treated with dignity and respect. The Royal Society has no tolerance for bullying, harassment, or exploitation of any kind, in any context and believes that organisations that host researchers and activities funded by the Royal Society have a duty of care to safeguard all those involved in research against inappropriate behaviours, enabling all staff to work without fear.

The Royal Society is [committed to protecting from harm](#) all those who benefit for its work, including staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. This policy forms part of our Terms and Conditions of Award for research and should be considered in parallel with the Royal Society's Code of Conduct for Fellows and [Policy on Research Misconduct](#).

2. Definitions

Board is responsible for Governance activities of the Royal Society, whose membership comprises the Officers of the Society - the President and four Vice Presidents.

Bullying is any offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, whether this is verbal or non-verbal. It is the abuse or misuse of power through means that aim to undermine, humiliate, threaten or injure a person.

Code of Conduct for Fellows of the Royal Society is the set of principles by which Fellows of the Royal Society are expected to adhere.

Exploitation is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person, taking advantage of that person or the situation usually, but not always, for personal gain. Exploitation comes in many forms, including but not limited to slavery, being controlled by a person or a group, forced labour, sexual violence and abuse, and human trafficking.

Harassment is, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, unwanted conduct towards an individual based on their protected characteristics with the purpose or effect of violating that individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This can be behaviour can be of an unwanted sexual nature that has the same purpose or effect. Protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender (including gender reassignment), race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation; however, the Royal Society also includes relationship status, pregnancy and maternity within these characteristics.

Host Organisation means the UK University, institution, research council or other body at which some or all of the research funded by the award will be carried out or which employs one or all of the Award Holder(s), and which takes responsibility for the management of the research project and the accountability of funds provided.

3. Scope of policy

The Royal Society expects all those involved with or contributing to Royal Society funded research to treat each other with dignity and respect. These contributors include:

- Award holders
- Co-investigators
- Collaborators
- Sponsors and supervisors
- Research staff and consultants
- Students
- Fieldworkers
- Sub-awardees and sub-contractors.

4. Provision of work environments where everyone is treated with dignity and respect

It is the Host Organisation's responsibility to:

- a) Adopt a formal policy that clearly sets out the standard of behaviour expected from its staff and the procedures for making and responding to complaints, including having an appropriate first point of contact. The policy should be readily available to all staff, ideally via the organisation's intranet, and training for staff is strongly encouraged.
- b) Ensure an equivalent policy is in place at any partner, collaborating or sub-contracted organisation.
- c) Take reasonable steps to ensure the policy is implemented effectively. The Royal Society will require Host Organisations to provide evidence of the steps taken to effectively and consistently implement the policy, either on request and/or during grant audits.
- d) Investigate all allegations of bullying, harassment, exploitation and other breaches to duty of care in an impartial, fair and timely manner, as well as take appropriate action. If the Host Organisation is advised by the investigator(s) that disciplinary procedures are warranted, the Royal Society expects organisations to complete these procedures fully so a formal conclusion can be reached.

Ensure that no agreements are entered which will prevent Host Organisations from telling the Royal Society of investigation findings and complying with this policy.

5. Protection of those who report allegations of professional misconduct, bullying, harassment or exploitation

All individuals working in research should feel able to raise concerns about professional standards and whistle-blowers who report allegations of professional misconduct, bullying, harassment or exploitation should suffer no detriment for making allegations in good faith.

Research organisations must have procedures in place for whistle-blowers in line with The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) and associated legislation. Individuals making an allegation in good faith must be protected and supported. Similarly, all staff must be protected from malicious

allegations.

Whistleblowing must be made in good faith, and not out of spite or for personal gain. If a false complaint is submitted in bad faith, the Host Organisation should seek to take appropriate disciplinary action.

6. Notifying the Royal Society of professional misconduct against or by applicants, award holders and others contributors by Host Organisations

- a) In supporting a grant application, the Host Organisation is confirming to the Society that there have been no upheld allegations of bullying, harassment or exploitation against any of the proposed contributors or if there is an active formal disciplinary sanction. Should allegations be made and/or upheld during the course of an application's consideration, notification must be sent to Director of Grants Programmes via grantsoperations@royalsociety.org, including the details outlined in Section 6(c).

Please note that upheld allegations of bullying, harassment or exploitation may result in an application being rejected or a request for relevant individuals to be removed from the application.

- b) Where a Host Organisation employs contributors to Royal Society-supported research and a decision has been made to formally investigate an allegation of bullying, harassment or exploitation by or of a contributor, the Host Organisation must inform the Society's Director of Grants using the process outlined below in Section 6(c).

The Host Organisation must inform the Society of any decision to formally investigate an allegation of bullying, harassment or exploitation by or of contributors and the outcome of the investigation.

Where feasible, the Host Organisation is strongly encouraged to also notify the Society of any allegations made by or about contributors at the point of a grievance is lodged.

The Royal Society will reserve any judgement about an allegation until an investigation is completed and the outcome has been reported by the Host Organisation.

- c) When providing information about a bullying, harassment, or exploitation investigation, the Host Organisation must provide the Royal Society with only the information outlined below.
- The name of the person against whom a formal investigation has started or an allegation has been upheld;
 - The Royal Society grant(s) with which the person is connected;
 - A brief factual statement about the nature of the allegation and, if formal investigations have been completed, the outcome including whether the allegation was partially or fully upheld along with any sanctions and/or follow-on activity, such as training or mediation;
 - The date the complaint was lodged and the timescales within which the allegations will be investigated and managed, including the date of the outcome of the investigation;
 - The name and position of the relevant HR contact at the Host Organisation. Please note that the Royal Society cannot act on unverified and/or anonymous information.

The information provided **must not** include any sensitive personal information (e.g. relating to criminal convictions) or personal information about other parties (such as the person making the claim).

All information sent to the Royal Society will be:

- Stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Royal Society's [Privacy Policy](#);
- Communicated on a restricted-access basis.

7. Consequences of upheld allegations of bullying, harassment or exploitation

If the Host Organisation upholds an allegation of bullying, harassment or exploitation against anyone involved in a Royal Society supported award, the Royal Society reserves the right to apply its own sanctions. These will be independently to those applied by the Host Organisation and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Board of the Royal Society.

Sanctions might include but are not limited to:

- Require workplace behaviour training and/or supervision;
- Removal of individuals from the affected award(s), panels or committees and prevent them from attending Royal Society events;
- Withdraw funding from the Award holder;
- Reclaim from the Host Organisation any and all funds awarded by the Royal Society for research involving the individual;
- Prohibit that person from supervising Royal Society funded students;
- Temporarily or permanently restrict them from future grant applications.

The Royal Society may apply sanctions against a Host Organisation if it is believed that:

- The Host Organisation failed in its Duty of Care or has failed to respond to a bullying, harassment or exploitation complaint promptly and objectively;
- There has been a failure to report allegations and the outcomes of investigations to the Society;
- There have been organisational-level failures to complete investigational or disciplinary procedures;
- There have been organisational-level failures to ensure that appropriate workplace conduct standards are observed.

Organisational-level sanctions might include but are not limited to:

- Regular monitoring of the Host Organisation's policies and practices;
- Preventing new grant applications from the Host Organisation for a period of time;
- Restricting funding for specific types of activity, such as overseas research or PhD studentships;
- Suspending funding to the Host organisation in extreme cases.

8. The Role of the Royal Society and the handling of allegations

The Royal Society will not carry out its own investigations but, as part of its standard grant audits, ask for information about a Host Organisation's policies and processes and how they are implemented and also check that any partners, collaborators or sub-contractors have policies in place that are being followed.

Reported cases and allegations of misconduct will be:

- managed by the Director of Grants with support from the Head of Grant Operations.
- reported to the Executive Director and other appropriate senior staff.

- Reported to the Royal Society's Trustee responsible for safeguarding.
- reported to the Officers of the Royal Society's
- reported through the Society's internal safeguarding monitoring
- reported to partners and other funders, including Government Departments where relevant.

Based on the outcome of the formal investigation, the Officers and Executive Director of the Royal Society will agree on any sanctions to be applied, as outlined in Section 0.

In cases when allegations of bullying, harassment or exploitation are made directly to a member of Royal Society staff or via email to grantoperations@royalsociety.org rather than a directly to the Host Organisation, the following steps will be taken.

- a) A senior member of Royal Society staff will discuss the circumstances with the complainant and refer the details to the Director of Grants and the Head of Grant Operations.
- b) The Royal Society will encourage the complainant to report the allegation to their Host Organisation via appropriate channels or will report the allegation to the Host Organisation.
- c) If a complainant wishes to remain wants to remain anonymous, the Royal Society will respect their decision unless there is a legal obligation to reveal their identity; however, the complainant will be informed if this is the case.
- d) The Host Organisation is responsible for following its policy and procedures for handling allegations.

Notification of allegations about professional misconduct, bullying, harassment or exploitation received by the Society will, in the first instance be directed to Host Organisation's HR department.