



Research Ethics Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 As a publicly funded institution, Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) has a responsibility to ensure that the funds it receives are accounted for in accordance with the expectations of the funding providers, the law and the public interest. This includes the responsibility to encourage the highest possible standards of intellectual honesty and integrity among its research staff: curators, research fellows and all other staff funded by the Museum, even if they are also employees or associates of other institutions. For the purposes of this policy, all of the above are referred to as 'research staff'.

1.2 Wilful misconduct is undesirable because it is incompatible with the standards of honesty and responsibility that the Museum is proud to uphold; misconduct is also damaging to the Museum's reputation with its funding bodies, peer groups and the public.

1.3 This document sets out the policy and procedures of RMG for promoting and maintaining good practice in research and for investigating allegations of misconduct.

2. Principles of good practice in research

2.1 Good practice in the context of research at RMG is defined as:

2.1.a Applying the highest possible standards of honesty, confidentiality (where appropriate) and integrity

2.1.b Positive and fair behaviour and leadership when working in teams

2.1.c Encouraging cross-and inter-disciplinary work both within the Museum and with external research partners

2.1.d Ensuring that the Museum's collections are treated with care and respect and that the Museum's guidelines for access to the collections are complied with fully

2.1.e Ensuring that the Museum's intellectual property rights are protected and maintained in all parts of the research process

2.1.f Recognising the training needs of research staff, especially those at the beginnings of their careers

2.1.g Ensuring integrity in applications for research funding and in using funding for the purposes for which it was given

- 2.1.h Documenting research methods and processes and ensuring that a record is lodged within the Museum's archive
- 2.1.i Taking responsibility for the contents of a published work by all listed as authors, and for ensuring that the contributions made by others are acknowledged and listed in an appropriate manner
- 2.1.j Ensuring that research furthers the Museum's ambitions to increase access to its collections and subjects

3. Nurturing good practice

3.1 The Museum's principles for good conduct in research are supported by the following:

- 3.1.a A firm commitment to nurturing good practice by all research staff, non-research staff, managers, directors and trustees of the Museum
- 3.1.b A formal system for mentoring and training new researchers, and for the development of established research staff
- 3.1.c A line management structure that encourages and facilitates staff research
- 3.1.d The operation of the RMG Research Group, comprising the Senior Curator: Research, the Research & Heritage Partnerships Manager, and the Conference and Fellowships Manager
- 3.1.e The Collections and Research Committee which is responsible to the Director and Board of Trustees of the Museum for the overall direction of RMG research

4. Defining misconduct in research

4.1 Misconduct in research is broadly defined as a *serious* breach or deliberate neglect or avoidance of the Museum's principles for good conduct in research. It is taken to include in particular the following (although it is not limited to them):

- 4.1.a *Piracy*: the deliberate exploitation of others' ideas without proper acknowledgement or permission
- 4.1.b *Plagiarism*: the deliberate copying or misappropriation of ideas, text, data (or a combination thereof) without proper permission or acknowledgement
- 4.1.c *Misrepresentation*: the deliberate attempt to represent falsely or unfairly the work of others, whether or not for personal or professional gain
- 4.1.d *Fraud*: deliberate deception, including the fabrication of data
- 4.1.e *Neglect*: the wilful failure to adhere to the Museum's principles for financial management, good conduct in research and/or the Museum's ethical standards

5. The structure for investigating misconduct in research

5.1 The principles for investigation are as follows:

- 5.1.a** An allegation of research misconduct is serious and could lead to disciplinary or legal proceedings. Allegations will be dealt with promptly and with due care
- 5.1.b** We will investigate any misconduct through the Research Group, the Collections and Research Committee and the museum's HR department. The accused person can be advised by an independent representative. The Museum is not liable for legal costs so incurred
- 5.1.c** A written record of all stages of the investigation will be kept

5.2 The procedure for investigating complaints is as follows:

- 5.2.a** Allegations of research misconduct will be put in writing to the Head of Research and Information in the first instance and the accused person or persons must be named. The complainant may or may not be a member of the Museum's staff
- 5.2.b** The Director, RMG, shall have overall responsibility for ensuring the integrity of any proceedings under this procedure and shall determine the procedure to be followed in cases of doubt. He or she will, under normal circumstances, depute responsibility for the investigation to the Head of Research and Information
- 5.2.c** The preliminary investigation of a complaint will be conducted by the Research Committee and a senior representative from Human Resources. Those who have a personal interest in the allegation shall be disbarred from this group
- 5.2.d** Following investigation, the group will report to the Head of Research and Information who, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and the Director RMG, will decide on the course of action to be followed. This would normally be a) complete rejection of the allegations if they were considered unfounded; b) the acceptance that an infraction of the policy had taken place but that it was of a level that it could be dealt with by a verbal or written warning; or c) that an infraction of the policy may have taken place that was of a level of seriousness that the complaint should be investigated further
- 5.2.e** The result of further investigations shall be presented to the Director, RMG, for a decision on further action
- 5.2.f** If the accused person is found guilty of an infraction of the Museum's principles of good conduct in research he or she has a right of appeal to the Director, RMG