



The bureaucracy of research integrity

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Registered charity no: 1147061

What we do

Our vision

Through our activities, the UK research community is supported to produce work of the highest integrity, quality and efficacy.



Champion high quality research

Champion the governance, management and conduct essential for high quality and ethical research



Lead and shape conversation

Lead and shape conversations about research integrity in the UK and beyond



Offer independent advice and guidance

Give confidential, independent and expert advice and guidance on all forms of research integrity challenges and opportunities as they arise



Cultivate and share best practice

Create and share knowledge of best practice and positive research cultures and conduct

In (some) defence of bureaucracy

Research integrity relies heavily on ensuring systems are in place to safeguard honesty, transparency, rigour, and accountability.

- Often 'red tape' is seen as holding back progress, innovation, and growth – but it's important we resist this oversimplification.
- Research bureaucracy is often the means by which we ensure research serves the public good.
- The push to make research “more efficient” is often shorthand for “faster and cheaper”. But true efficiency is not about speed alone. It is about ensuring that time, money, and talent are invested wisely.
- Bureaucratic systems are imperfect, but they exist for a reason: to make research accountable, transparent, and fair.

How we support

Tickell Principle	How we support
Harmonisation	Encourage the use of common systems and processes
Simplification	Provide guidance to cut unnecessary layers and make compliance more straightforward
Proportionality	Help institutions design processes that are rigorous where needed, light-touch where feasible
Flexibility	Provide adaptable templates to allow variation in contexts while maintaining sector-wide coherence
Transparency	Communicate the rationale for systems, processes, and mechanisms that uphold research integrity
Fairness	Support institutions to develop approaches that support fairness
Sustainability	Input into conversations around efficiency while ensuring research integrity continues to be upheld and safeguarded

Information, advice, & guidance

- **Guidance** that considers regulatory and funder requirements in the round
- **Templates** to reduce duplication of effort
- **Universal procedures and processes** to create consistency within and across organisations

Training & bespoke support

- **Expert and training webinars**
- **Confidential advisory service**
- **Bespoke policy review and consultancy**

Core IAG from UKRIO

Document	Description
Self-assessment tool for the Concordat to Support Research Integrity	A practical and strategic resource to support research organisations in aligning their policies, systems, and culture with the commitments of the Concordat
Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research	Step-by-step manual, designed to be used as an adaptable template
Code of Practice for Research and Recommended Checklist for Researchers	Sets out general principles and standards of good practice in research, applying both to individual researchers and to organisations that conduct, fund, host, or otherwise support research
Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations	Provides benchmark policies and processes that organisations can use to develop or revise institutional practices in support of research ethics committees

Collaboration and knowledge sharing

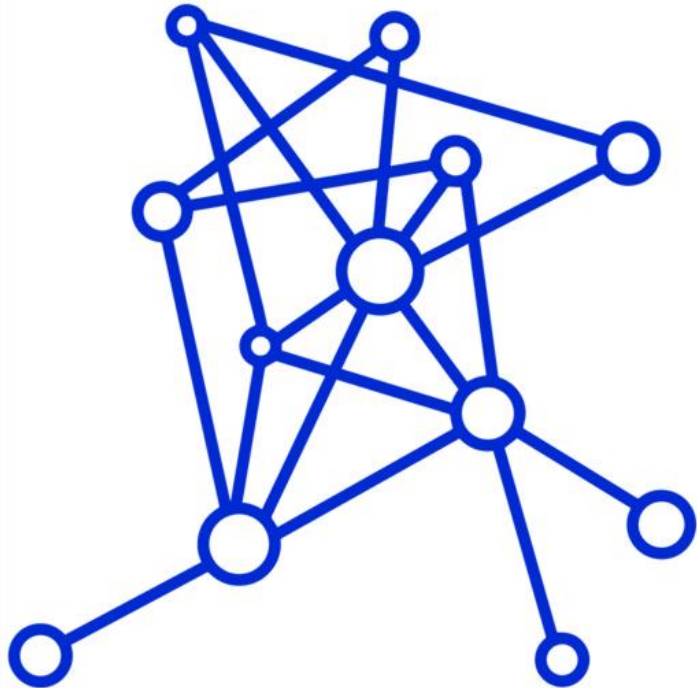
- **Annual symposium:** bringing together research organisations and expert speakers from across the research ecosystem to discuss key challenges and sector developments
- **Good practice forums:** trusted, peer-led spaces for research organisations to share experiences and approaches and foster collaborative problem-solving
- **Subscriber portal:** virtual space for subscribing institutions to access and share good practice examples

Thought leadership and convening

- **Cross-sector workshops and roundtables:** facilitated discussions bringing together cross-sector perspectives to tackle urgent challenges and publish community-driven recommendations



Bureaucracy creep



Burdens often arise from incremental additions over time:

- New processes, safeguards, and checks accumulate, creating a layering effect
- Often implemented in isolation, without considering existing requirements

Result: an ever expanding and overly complex system

Bureaucracy creep: example

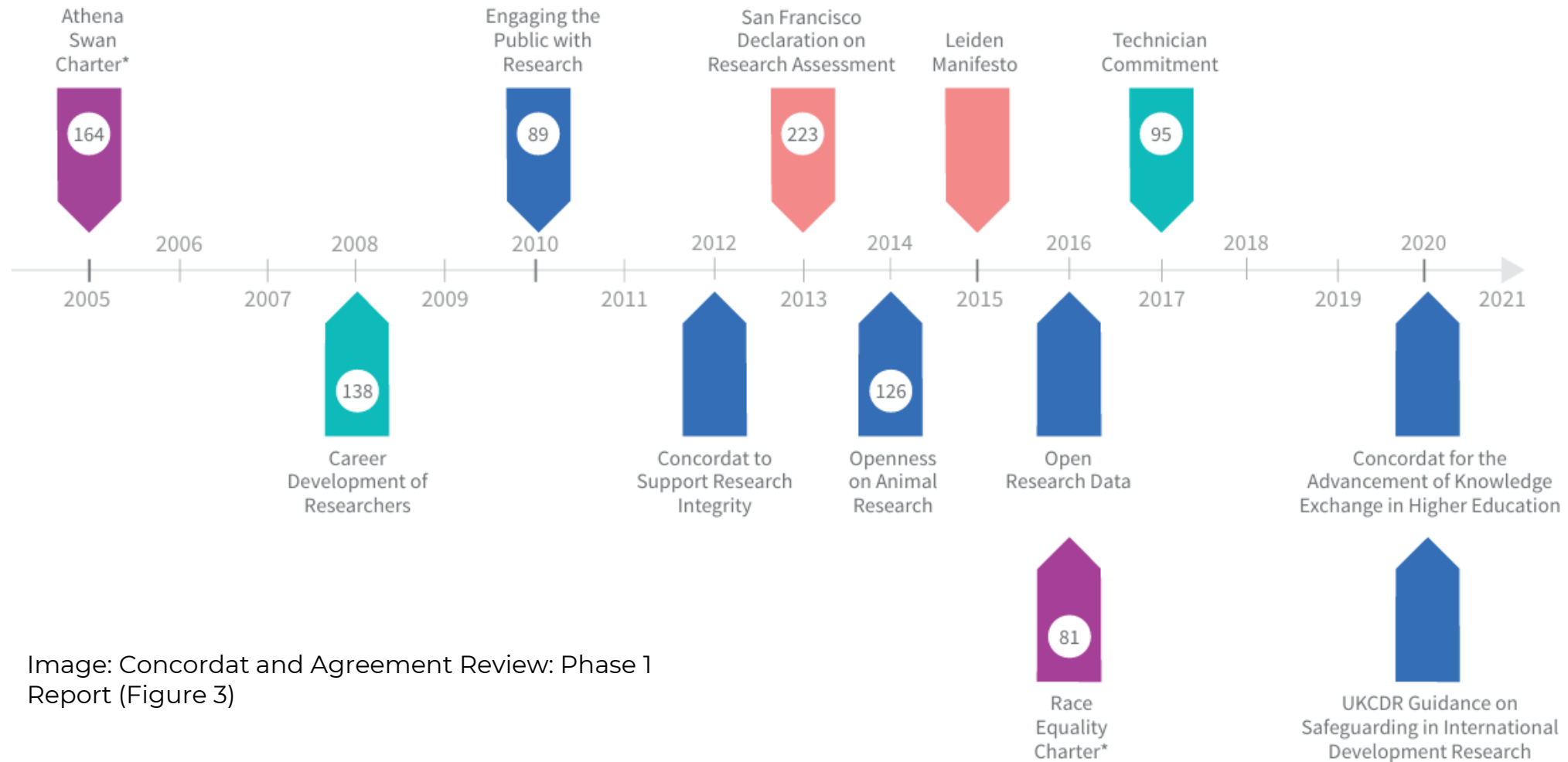


Image: Concordat and Agreement Review: Phase 1 Report (Figure 3)

Final thoughts

Principles of a well-functioning research environment

1. Emergent
2. Inclusive
3. Clear
4. Efficient
5. Reinforcing
6. Integrated
7. Situated
8. Flexible

Concordat and Agreements Review:
Phase II final report, 2023

The landscape is not static. Our bureaucracy must evolve too.

- Government focus on growth, alongside financial pressures in HE, makes efficiency vital
- Rapid digital transformation and increasing global competition/collaboration bring both opportunities and risks

Some bureaucracy is necessary – and valuable.

- Resist the temptation to cut without considering downstream implications
- Reclaim the term ‘bureaucracy’ – done well, it enables trust
- Systems should be light-touch where feasible, rigorous where necessary
- Ask for information once, wherever possible

Streamlining requires shared understanding and collective action.

- Tickell and CAR Reviews highlight the need for change, but progress is slow
- Joined-up thinking is needed to align research management requirements
- While we talk about transformation, it’s more likely that what we need is step-change and regular review