

Written Evidence Submitted by Scottish Research Integrity Network

(RRE0030)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Scottish Research Integrity Network is a member-led forum founded in November 2019 with the aim of sharing excellence, good practice and expertise in the field of research integrity across all research active institutions in Scotland. We currently number over sixty members, drawn from research, teaching and professional services backgrounds at some twenty Scottish universities, research institutes and funding bodies. The purpose of our submission is to draw attention to the role of grassroots networks in the research and innovation sector in responding to challenges to the integrity of research.

2. Submission

2.1 For all of us working in the research and innovation sector, integrity in research lies at the heart of everything we do. The reason that integrity is vital relates to trust. Without the trust of funders willing to invest their precious resources in our ability to deliver robust and credible results, much of the vital research conducted across the sector could not be funded and would not happen. Without the trust of collaborators willing to stake their own professional reputations on working and publishing alongside each other, the free flow and exchange of knowledge, ideas and expertise that is the lifeblood of research would slow to a trickle. Without trust in our commitment to doing the right thing, research as we know it simply wouldn't be possible.

2.2 The reproducibility crisis matters because it calls into question the credibility of research findings. In doing so, it has the potential to put that trust in jeopardy and to threaten the success that researchers across the UK have worked so hard to achieve. Worrying as that is however, a threat to the credibility of research also underscores the importance of promoting integrity in research. By raising the profile of research integrity and advocating for good research practice, we can address the threat and make a difference.

2.3 The Scottish Research Integrity Network was founded in November 2019 with the aim of sharing excellence, good practice and expertise in the field of research integrity across all research active institutions in Scotland. With over sixty members drawn from research, teaching and professional services backgrounds at some twenty Scottish universities, research institutes and funding bodies, we represent a formidable body of professionals committed to excellence in research practice.

2.4 In common with other regional grassroots networks that have sprung up around the UK in recent years, we provide a forum that facilitates collective engagement between our members and the many advocacy groups and organisations that are active in the research integrity space. By using our meetings to host colleagues who advocate for best practice in areas like reproducibility, we can help to raise awareness of these pressing issues and to support initiatives at Scottish institutions aimed at addressing them. As a cross institutional body, we also bring

together a breadth of interdisciplinary experience that one institution alone cannot provide. That breadth of experience means that we gain multiple perspectives in understanding what topics like reproducibility mean for different disciplines.

2.5 The questions raised by failures in reproducibility are challenging for all of us and they need to be addressed. We want to send a clear message from the grassroots that we acknowledge the challenge and that we're committed to meeting it head on.

(September 2021)