

Wellcome Sanger Institute

# Annual Statement on Research Integrity

2025



# 1. Introduction

The Wellcome Sanger Institute is a world leader in genome research that applies and explores genomic technologies at scale to advance understanding of biology and improve health. We undertake large-scale research and, core funded by Wellcome, we have the freedom and support to push the boundaries of genomics. We are open and collaborative and our ambition is vast – we take on projects that are not possible anywhere else. As a leading genomics research centre, we are committed to ensuring high standards in the design, conduct and reporting of our research.

## 2. Research policies and procedures

The Institute has a number of research policies designed to assist our researchers in navigating ethics and legislation related to their research. These policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are kept up-to-date, transparent and relevant in a changing research environment.

### 2.1. Good research practice

Our [‘Good Research Practice’ guidelines](#) outline the Institute’s expectations with respect to good research practice, the core behaviours that support our research culture, and the importance of compliance with the Institute’s research policies and regulatory and legal requirements. In 2026 these guidelines will be updated to incorporate the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) framework.

### 2.2. Use of animals and animal materials in research

The Institute may commission research involving the use of live animals where the use of laboratory animals is the only practicable technique available. However, the majority of our work currently uses materials obtained from non-laboratory animals from a variety of sources. These include zoos, veterinary surgeons, collaborators, fieldwork or the food supply chain, and may have been obtained through taking samples whilst the animal was alive or post mortem. Our [‘Policy on the Use of Materials from Sentient Animals’](#) covers the principles to which our researchers adhere when utilising these sources of materials. The Research Governance team carry out an ethical assessment ahead of the utilisation of any materials from sentient animals, in-line with the [‘Ethical Framework for Obtaining Materials from Sentient Animals’](#). This Framework supports responsible, transparent, and proportionate ethical decision-making when sourcing materials from sentient animals.

## 2.3. Use of human materials in research

The Institute uses human tissue samples, DNA and RNA donated by the living or deceased in their research as well as induced pluripotent stem cells and human embryonic stem cell lines. Our [‘Integrated Human Materials policy and ethical guidelines’](#) outlines the measures required for our researchers to fulfil the requirements of the Human Tissue Act (2004) including the need for research participant consent, research ethics committee review and Health Research Authority (HRA) approval where needed. Research projects using human material are registered and tracked via an internal human materials system, HuMFre.

## 2.4. Use of genetic resources in research

The Institute’s [‘Access and Benefit Sharing \(ABS\) Policy’](#) summarises our internal processes for enabling our research to be performed legally with respect to global and national access and benefit sharing legislation. This includes how we work within the UK’s legislation established to ensure adherence to the Nagoya Protocol. Our ways of working have been reviewed by the UK regulator, OPSS, and are recognised as best practice by DEFRA. Regardless of whether or not a country is a signatory to the Nagoya Protocol, they may still have their own national ABS legislation and access procedures in place relating to their genetic resources. The Sanger Institute respects the sovereign rights of each country over their own resources and is committed to making sure that all access procedures are followed.

## 2.5. Representative research strategy

In December 2024, the Institute published a [Representative Research strategy](#), which outlines its vision for Sanger science to be designed and conducted in an equitable and more representative way and delivering research outputs that benefit our planet and societies around the world. The strategy recognises the lack of representativeness in genomics research and how this has become an increasingly important issue as the real-world impacts of genomics are realised (e.g. precision medicine).

## 2.6. Equity in international research collaborations

Our researchers collaborate with partners around the world and much of our research involves collaboration with partners based in low- and middle-income countries. Embedding equity into these research partnerships is a priority for the Institute as we work towards a culture of research excellence and mutual benefit. Following extensive engagement with a range of internal and external experts, we developed guidelines for Sanger research teams to embed equity in their international collaborations. The [‘Embedding equity in international research](#)

[collaboration guidelines](#) are centred around the research collaboration process – from partnership building through research design and execution to result dissemination.

## 3. Commitment to open science

The Sanger Institute is wholly committed to sharing the research data, resources, materials and publications it produces. We firmly believe that rapid and open access to these outputs enables research and accelerates translation.

### 3.1. Open science

Beyond allowing others to build on our research, open science is also integral to a research environment that values transparency, reproducibility, inclusivity and collaboration. We have articulated these values that underlie open practices in an Open Science position statement and we are reviewing our institutional policies that underpin open science.

### 3.2. Data sharing

Our recently refreshed '[Data sharing policy](#)' requires our researchers to share data as widely and effectively as possible in line with the FAIR principles, with careful consideration to data accessibility (open versus managed access), privacy and confidentiality of research participants, and the acknowledgement of data providers.

### 3.3. Publications

Sanger researchers are required to publish all original research Open Access by making it freely available in EuropePMC under a CC-BY licence. Our '[Publication policy](#)' outlines the possible compliance routes our researchers can take as well as general guidance on good publication practice. The Institute is developing its own Rights Retention policy that will be included in the updated Publication policy to facilitate the self-archiving route to Open Access compliance.

### 3.4. Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH)

We have been a host institution of the [Global Alliance for Genomics and Health](#) (GA4GH) since 2014 and many of our staff are actively engaged across the GA4GH workstreams. We work with

the international GA4GH community to develop frameworks and standards to enable responsible and secure sharing of genomic and health related data.

## 4. Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is extremely serious and any allegation of academic misconduct by our researchers will be investigated by the Institute in accordance with our '[Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct](#)'. When a formal allegation is made, a screening process will be undertaken to determine whether there is a need for a full investigation. Where necessary following a full investigation, the allegation can be concluded to be not upheld or upheld in full or in-part.

We have not received any allegations of academic misconduct in 2025.

## 5. Activities to support research integrity

### 5.1. Mandatory Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) training

In September 2025 and in partnership with Catalyst Editorial, we launched a mandatory training program on Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) for all scientific staff at the Sanger Institute. The program builds upon the former Good Research Practice training and aims to make research more open, transparent and inclusive, while maximising the positive economic, environmental and societal benefits of innovative research. The program is facilitated via a discussion-based workshop with practical case studies to equip participants with the skills required to conduct their research at the highest standards.

### 5.2. Research Governance support and training

The Institute's Research Governance team provides training on the use of human materials, use of animals and animal materials, and access and benefit sharing to strengthen compliance and an open dialogue with the Research Governance team. Short bitesize videos are also available on our intranet to serve as refresher training and to further enhance understanding and awareness of Institute policies.

## 5.3. Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

We are committed to recognising the value of all scientific contributions and are proud signatories of the [Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA). We consider all research outputs (publications, data, resources etc) and a range of impact measures when assessing research quality and our promotion and hiring criteria is based upon the scientific merit of publications rather than the journals in which they are published.

## 6. Contacts for research integrity

The Institute Director, Prof Matt Hurles, ultimately oversees research integrity at the Wellcome Sanger Institute. The Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Innovation (SPI), Dr Julia Wilson, is the 'Named Person' for overseeing our Academic Misconduct Procedure.

Concerns relating to research integrity and academic misconduct can be complex and challenging and are unique with each case. We recognise that multiple avenues for raising concerns are required to reflect the uniqueness of each case. As such, any individual who wishes to raise a concern can do so by contacting any of the following:

- Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Innovation, Dr Julia Wilson
- Good Research Practice Advisory Group
- Head of Policy and Advocacy, Dr Sarion Bowers
- Head of Research Governance for Trusted Global Compliance, Carol Smee
- Head of Research Governance for Trusted Human Research, Dr Joanne Doleman
- Sanger Leadership Team (SLT) leads
- Head of Academic Programmes, Dr Alice Mann
- Policy and Advocacy Lead, Dr Hayley Clissold
- HR Partner for Scientific Programmes, Lucy Whatmough
- Strategy, Partnerships and Innovation (SPI) department
- Director's Office team
- 'Speak Up' support line