

Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2021

Introduction

This document constitutes the annual statement on research integrity that is a requirement of the Concordat to support Research Integrity (2019). It was approved by Chairs action subsequent to the College Academic Board in December 2021 and was made publicly available on the website on February 2022.

The College is committed to promoting the highest standards of integrity in the conduct of all research undertaken within the auspices of the institution, and to supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and supported by the development of researchers. It is committed to providing an environment that is equally supportive and encouraging to all staff and students to undertake research, and to foster a culture that is open and diverse and in accordance with the College core values of integrity, creativity and inclusion. Our research culture will continue to develop and we are committed to ensuring that staff and students who have not engaged in research previously are equipped with the skills and tools to be able to undertake research, by means of mentoring, training, information and other forms of support.

The College is a member of GuildHE Research, which is a signatory to the Concordat to support Research Integrity on behalf of its member institutions.

Activities over the past year

The primary focus during the past year has been on the review and redevelopment of a framework relating to research ethics. This constitutes the second phase of activity, following the decision last year to undertake a wide-ranging review of policy and activity relating to research integrity and ethics, which started with a review of the College Code of Practice for Ethics, and the development of a bespoke procedure for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct.

An update on progress to date is provided below.

Research Ethics

Rose Bruford College has established a standalone committee reporting into the Research Committee and is in the process of reviewing and developing policies, forms and procedures.

The review is covering all elements of academic activity where research ethics has relevance. The College has agreed a policy statement on research ethics, which is included here as Appendix 1.

Research misconduct

As indicated in the previous statement, the College has developed a procedure for the investigation and resolution of allegations received relating to research misconduct. This can be seen [here](#) and is on the public facing website, which also contains information on the Named Person and the confidential liaison point for people wishing to raise such matters.

The procedure was developed following best practice within the sector and is based around the principles set out in the UKRIO model procedure. It has undergone a light touch review during this year, and we are confident that it will ensure that the College is able to investigate any matter that arises in a way that is transparent, timely, robust and fair, and in accordance with the requirements set out in the Concordat to support Research Integrity and with good practice within the sector.

A more comprehensive review is planned for the next academic year, subsequent to the anticipated publication of the revised UK Research Integrity Office model procedure on research misconduct. For openness, it is noted here that the Research Manager at Rose Bruford College, Nicola Sainsbury, also works part time for the UK Research Integrity Office.

We will also be taking steps to ensure that all staff and students are aware of the procedure and their responsibilities under it.

The College did not receive any allegations of research misconduct over the previous year and hence did not undertake any formal investigations of research misconduct.

Future plans

During the remainder of this academic session, the focus will be on the development of a suite of guidance and support to staff and students, to accompany the revised framework for research ethics and to embed research ethics into the undergraduate curriculum. This will include an update/development session for academic staff and research students in February 2022 and training for the Research Ethics Committee.

We also plan to prepare a short document setting out how to get started in research for those at the early career stage, and providing principles underpinning good practice in research, possibly in checklist form.

We will also be considering what mentoring, training and guidance needs to be provided, and what further ongoing activity we need to undertake to ensure development and fostering of a positive and open research culture.

Enquiries

Please address any enquiries about this statement to research@bruford.ac.uk.

Appendix 1

Research Ethics Policy statement

Rose Bruford College is reviewing and updating its framework for managing research ethics at the College. It has established a standalone committee reporting into the Research Committee and is in the process of drafting policies, forms and procedures to underpin the framework.

The review is covering all elements of academic activity where research ethics has relevance. Further information is provided below on each area:

Undergraduate research projects

The Research Ethics Committee has determined that research ethics and other approvals should be built into the undergraduate curriculum as part of the curriculum review that is currently taking place. This will include education in how to conduct good research, and training on research ethics for students at the end of level 5 (or at an appropriate point for online students) prior to undertaking their individual research project at level 6. The approval process that students undertake prior to commencing their IRP will include a consideration of the ethical and other issues involved in undertaking the research project, as well as considering risk assessment and data management (including GDPR). The academic tutors/supervisors will also receive appropriate training in research ethics and the process to be followed (including consideration of processes for external supervisors).

The College is establishing a set of risk levels for research conducted at the College, which will determine the process to be followed. It is likely that a significant majority of undergraduate research projects will sit at the lowest risk level, since students are learning how to undertake research and the processes that need to be followed. Project proposals that involve a higher risk level will generally require revision to reduce risk. Exceptionally, such projects may seek approval from the Research Ethics Committee, where the proposed research methods are shown to be appropriate to the project and to undergraduate research.

As part of the assessment of the project, the students will need to reflect on the ethical implications and issues encountered.

Taught postgraduate research projects

As with undergraduate students, students on taught postgraduate programmes will undertake research ethics training prior to starting their research project. This will take them through the process of developing their draft project and the issues they need to consider.

The application that they develop will be considered by their academic tutor, based on the risk levels established by the College Research Ethics Committee. The tutor will be able to approve low risk projects subject to reviewing the documentation provided (such as consent forms and information sheets) and ensuring that the student has considered all the issues involved.

For research that is of higher risk, and does not fall within the areas that individual tutors are able to approve, the student will have the option either to review and resubmit the project to ensure that it does fall within the lower risk category, or apply to the College Research Ethics Committee for approval.

The Research Ethics Committee will maintain oversight of research conducted at this and the undergraduate level and will require an annual report from each academic area on the numbers of projects reviewed, approved and carried out, and the issues encountered.

Research student (PhD) projects

Research degrees at Rose Bruford College are awarded by the University of East London as part of the collaborative degree programme agreed between the two institutions. Research students are therefore required to apply and obtain ethical approval from the University of East London. The RBC Research Ethics Committee will keep a watching brief to ensure that the standards and requirements at both institutions are broadly consistent, and the research students will be able to seek guidance from the Committee should they wish to. The Research Committee regularly monitors progress of PhD researchers within the collaborative programme and can raise any issues arising with UEL.

Staff research

Staff research at Rose Bruford College will require ethical approval where the research to be conducted involves human participants or raises other ethical concerns. Staff planning to undertake funded or unfunded research will need to complete a form, which will determine whether ethical approval is required.

For research conducted at the lowest risk level, staff who have received approved research ethics training within the past five years will be able to self-certify that this research is at the appropriate risk level and that they are ready to proceed, by notification to the Chair and Secretary of the Research Ethics committee. For staff who have not undergone the training, or

where the research is at a higher risk level, an application will need to be made to the Research Ethics Committee for approval.

For all the above areas, risk assessments will be needed in addition to ethical approval where the activity is not already covered by an existing risk assessment.