

# Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance

## Research Integrity and Ethics Policy

### Background

Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance first established a Code of Practice for Research Ethics in 2016. The Code has been reviewed in the light of recent developments in the sector, including the publishing of the revised and strengthened Concordat to support Research Integrity in 2019.

The College has a responsibility to undertake research of the highest possible standards of integrity and to foster a culture of good research practice amongst researchers at all stages of the research cycle. This will also accord with the expectations of key stakeholders, such as professional organisations, funding bodies, the funders of research, collaborators and, in the case of sensitive or extremism-related research, with the UK Government's *Prevent Duty*.

This document sets out the College's overarching policy, principles and commitments for research integrity and sets out the responsibilities of all stake holders within the College. It forms part of a suite of policies and guidance relating to research integrity and ethics as set out below (these documents are under development):

- A document setting out guidance on how to get started in research for those at the early career stage, and providing principles underpinning good practice in research, maybe in checklist form.
- A student guide to research ethics and integrity.
- A research misconduct procedure (approved 24 November 2020).
- A framework for research ethics, setting out the policy, terms of reference, forms and processes underpinning ethics review.

### Scope

As set out in the Concordat for Research Integrity, the definition of research covered by this policy is '**a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared...** It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction'.

This policy covers all people who conduct research within the auspices of Rose Bruford College, including but not limited to academic and research staff; students (on research, taught and foundation degree programmes); visiting or emeritus members of staff; staff on joint or honorary contracts; independent contractors or consultants; and volunteer researchers.

### Underlying principles and commitments

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 all academic 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.

Research should be conducted for the purposes of furthering knowledge or establishing new insights. The creation of new knowledge should be for public, rather than private, benefit. This document and the others listed above aim to ensure that all researchers based at the College can conduct their research to the highest professional and ethical standards. It is presented with the intention of facilitating (rather than inhibiting) research and to promote a culture where staff and students consider and reflect on the ethical implications of their work.

All research undertaken by the students and staff of our College, wherever it takes place, must be carried out in accordance with the Concordat for Research Integrity (2019), <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf> and all other relevant professional and legal standards, or codes of conduct. In line with Commitment One of the Concordat, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of our research. The core elements as quoted from the Concordat are outlined below:

- **Honesty** in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings
- **Rigour** in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results
- **Transparency and open communication** in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and to the public
- **Care and respect** for all participants in research, and for the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record;
- **Accountability** of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals

and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this concordat

In accordance with Commitment Two of the Concordat, we are also committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

All research undertaken by staff and students under the aegis of the College should only be undertaken after effective consideration of its ethical implications with full regard to the College's Code of Practice on Research Ethics and related documents. The College has/will set out a full framework on the requirements for the rigorous and proportionate ethical review of all research conducted.

All research undertaken within the institution by staff and students should accord with diversity and inclusion policy, risk assessment procedures, data protection legislation and general standards of good practice in the treatment of others (including non-humans). Staff and students are encouraged to engage in a process of critical self-reflection in relation to intellectual work and practice, and it is expected that attention to social and ethical issues in research will be at the forefront of academic endeavour. Staff and students engaged in research are expected to foster good practice and intellectual integrity in all professional circumstances.

Non-compliance with this policy will constitute research misconduct and be subject to the College's appropriate procedures. A fuller definition of what constitutes research misconduct can be found at <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf> and is set out in Appendix 1.

## Responsibilities and Governance

**Board of Governors:** The ultimate responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of research integrity at the College lies with the College's governing body. In line with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, in the autumn of every year the Board will receive and assess, through Academic Board, **a short annual statement from the Principal that will then be made publicly available on the College website.**

**College Academic Board:** The primary oversight of all matters relating to research ethics and research governance within the College rests with Academic Board, which devolves operational ownership of this function to College's Research Committee. The Academic Board will have the following responsibilities:

To receive and approve a short annual statement that:

- provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and

- application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews);
- provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct relating to ethics and integrity are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
  - provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken. This statement will be published annually on the College Research web pages in accordance with Commitment 5 of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.
  - To receive an annual summary report each year from the Research Committee of the activities of the previous years of all the various ethics-related issues, to include details of decisions made, training delivered/received, changes in committee membership, etc.
  - To ensure that all other College processes allow for appropriate and timely review of ethical matters related to research in our taught and research programmes and those involved in research funding processes.
  - To receive, and consider for approval, any recommendations from the Research Committee for changes to the College's research ethics and integrity system and procedures, including changes to the terms of reference for the College's Research Committee.

**The Research Committee** has responsibility for ensuring that a framework for the ethical conduct of research is in place within the College. Until such time as the framework is being revised and put in place, it will act as the College Research Ethics committee responsible for reviewing research ethics applications, or will delegate this responsibility to a sub-committee.

It will conduct its business in line with The Association of Research Ethics Committees' "A Framework of Policies and Procedures for College Research Ethics Committees," (2013), and other documents published on good practice in research ethics.

**Research Office:** This has the following responsibilities:

To work with other support areas in the College to ensure that the College has processes to meet the expectations of the Concordat for Research Integrity, and to monitor compliance so that the highest standards of rigor and integrity are maintained in all aspects of the College's research. That includes ensuring that all researchers and potential researchers are fully informed, supported and trained in the conduct of research and the importance of good research conduct and are aware of and understand policies and processes relating to good conduct, including the requirement for ethical approval. Researchers will be encouraged to reflect on best practice in relation to ethical, legal and professional requirements; the Research Office will ensure that arrangements are put in place through which researchers can access advice and guidance on ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards.

In due course, it will carry out audits to ensure and monitor compliance across the College.

**Individual Staff Researchers:** These have the following responsibilities:

To meet the expectations of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity by:

- understanding the expected standards of rigour and integrity relevant to their research;
- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in their work at all times;
- complying with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards as required by statutory and regulatory authorities, and by employers, funders and other relevant stakeholders.
- ensuring that all research is subject to active and appropriate consideration of ethical issues.
- ensuring that, if ethical issues are identified in any research that they are involved in, that it is subject to appropriate review by relevant Ethics Committee(s).

To meet the above by continuous updating and familiarisation of their own understanding and practice by self-directed or organised reading/training, pro-actively taking advantage of training and support offered by the College or elsewhere.

To adhere to the College framework on research ethics and ensure that the research they undertake has ethical approval where appropriate and that it is conducted in line with the highest standards of research integrity.

**Research Student Supervisors:** In addition to those of individual staff researchers, staff who supervise research students are required to be familiar with and to ensure that the students they supervise are familiar with, and have procedures that conform to the relevant **University of East London**, College, professional and legal ethics matters relevant to their research; to train and support their students to enable them to achieve their responsibilities under this Code, and those under the relevant University of East London policies; and to ensure that their overarching concerns are of the progress and development of the student as an independent and ethical researcher

**Staff who deliver undergraduate or taught post-graduate programmes that contain a research element are responsible for ensuring that College policy and procedures relating to ethical approval are carried out.** Ethical approval of research undertaken by taught students is devolved to programme level. The responsibilities are/will be set out in the research ethics framework. *[We can modify this if necessary – eg if we decide that higher risk projects do need full ethical approval from the full committee].*

**Research Students:** Research degrees at Rose Bruford College are currently awarded by the University of East London (UEL). Research students are therefore required to abide by the requirements relating to research integrity of the University. They are required to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the standards set out here for research integrity at Rose Bruford College **and** of the University of East London. The policies, procedures and application processes to be followed where ethical approval is required for research undertaken are those in place at UEL.

**Individual undergraduate and taught postgraduate students:** Students undertaking research projects are required to act in accordance with this policy and to ensure that any research they undertake has the appropriate ethical approval **before** they start. They are required to follow the requirements of their programme leaders in ensuring that the research they undertake is conducted ethically.

## Appendix 1

As set out in Commitment 4 of the Concordat to support Research Integrity, definitions of research misconduct are as follows:

'Research misconduct is characterised as behaviours or actions that fall short of the standards of ethics, research and scholarship required to ensure that the integrity of research is upheld. It can cause harm to people and the environment, wastes resources, undermines the research record and damages the credibility of research.

The concordat recognises that academic freedom is fundamental to the production of excellent research. This means that responsibility for ensuring that no misconduct occurs rests primarily with individual researchers.

Research misconduct can take many forms, including:

- **fabrication:** making up results, other outputs (for example, artefacts) or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, and presenting and/or recording them as if they were real

- **falsification:** inappropriately manipulating and/or selecting research processes, materials, equipment, data, imagery and/or consents

- **plagiarism:** using other people's ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without acknowledgement or permission

- **failure to meet:** legal, ethical and professional obligations, for example:

- \* not observing legal, ethical and other requirements for human research participants, animal subjects, or human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment

- \* breach of duty of care for humans involved in research whether deliberately, recklessly or by gross negligence, including failure to obtain appropriate informed consent

- misuse of personal data, including inappropriate disclosures of the identity of research participants and other breaches of confidentiality

- \* improper conduct in peer review of research proposals, results or manuscripts submitted for publication. This includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence; misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for the purposes of peer review

- **misrepresentation of:**

- \* data, including suppression of relevant results/data or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence presenting a flawed interpretation of data
- \* involvement, including inappropriate claims to authorship or attribution of work and denial of authorship/attribution to persons who have made an appropriate contribution
- \* interests, including failure to declare competing interests of researchers or funders of a study
- \* qualifications, experience and/or credentials
- \* publication history, through undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication

• **improper dealing with allegations of misconduct:** failing to address possible infringements, such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers, or failing to adhere appropriately to agreed procedures in the investigation of alleged research misconduct accepted as a condition of funding. Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct includes the inappropriate censoring of parties through the use of legal instruments, such as non-disclosure agreements.

Honest errors and differences in, for example, research methodology or interpretations do not constitute research misconduct.

Approved by Academic Board on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Due for review: November 2022