**Annual statement from the Medical Research Council on Research Integrity and Scientific Misconduct for the period 1st April 2013-31st March 2014**

1. Summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues

* In October 2013, staff from MRC Head Office delivered a training course on the importance of Good Research Practice at the MRC Biostatistics Unit.
* An on-line introductory e-learning module based on the MRC’s Good Research Practice Guidance has been developed and is being tested
* The RCUK [Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/Pages/grc.aspx) includes “Peer reviewers must declare any conflicts of interest, including professional, personal or commercial conflicts, and must not take advantage of any information received as a result of their peer reviewing role”. New guidance on declaring interests was issued to all MRC Board and Panel members and updated declarations have been published on the MRC web site.
* New guidance on conflicts of interest is being developed for MRC staff.

1. Assurances that the processes employers have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

* The MRC’s ‘Scientific misconduct policy and procedure’ was first published in December 1997 and was updated in December 2008[[1]](#footnote-1). An updated version is being prepared and consultations with staff are ongoing.
* Recent experience in handling allegations of misconduct has shown that the MRC’s procedure has been fit for purpose.

1. High-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct/statistics

The following information concerns allegations made against current or former MRC employees or PhD students in MRC establishments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of investigations that were underway during the year | 1 |
| Of these the number that started during the year | 0 |
| Number of investigations completed during the year: i) upheld  ii)not upheld | 1 |
| 0 |
| Number of allegations that did not proceed to a full investigation\* | 38 |

*\* Allegations of inappropriate image manipulation from an anonymous source, relating to multiple images in each of 38 papers with authors based in 2 different MRC units.*

As an indicator of scale, the number of MRC employees as at 31/3/13 was 2560[[2]](#footnote-2).

[However, of course this does not represent a true denominator as it includes many staff unlikely ever to be in a position to commit research misconduct].

1. [www.mrc.ac.uk/Utilities/Documentrecord/index.htm?d=MRC005820](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Utilities/Documentrecord/index.htm?d=MRC005820) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This does not include locally employed staff in the MRC Units in The Gambia and Uganda [↑](#footnote-ref-2)