

11 May 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

The concordat to support research integrity

The Institute of Physics (IOP) is a leading scientific society promoting physics and bringing physicists together for the benefit of all. It has a worldwide membership of around 40,000 comprising physicists from all sectors, as well as those with an interest in physics. It works to advance physics research, application and education; and engages with policy makers and the public to develop awareness and understanding of physics. Its publishing company, IOP Publishing, is a world leader in professional scientific communications.

The IOP welcomes the opportunity to offer its response to the draft concordat to support research integrity.

Overall, the IOP is of the view that the five concordat commitments listed in the draft document are eminently sensible and workable, and provide a robust framework for researchers, employers and the funders of research to undertake and support research whilst maintaining the highest achievable standards of conduct and integrity.

In response to the question about the role of professional and learned societies, there indeed is an important role for them to play in supporting the UK's research integrity. Professional and learned societies such as the IOP have a strong relationship with their members, and many will have membership guidelines in place on research integrity. For instance, the IOP's guidelines on codes and rules of conduct can be viewed at http://www.iop.org/about/royal_charter/file_38393.pdf. These guidelines, which are approved by IOP Council and subject to periodic review, expect all members of the IOP, particularly those involved in research, to adopt the most stringent standards of research conduct and integrity. For instance, the IOP expects its members to practice due diligence in presenting research findings, alert the wider public to any potential consequences arising from their research, and ensure their work does not unnecessarily put at risk the health, safety or welfare of any person.

As a next step we suggest that Universities UK should organise a roundtable meeting of the major scientific professional learned societies in order to facilitate discussion towards shaping potential roles and responsibilities in the concordat. A potential outcome of this meeting could be that individual societies sign up to become formal supporters of the concordat.

Yours faithfully,



Professor Peter Main
Director, Education and Science